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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Humanistic Buddhism and Climate Change: Propagating the Bodhisattva Ethic of Compassion
for People and the Planet

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of
Philosophy

in

Sociology

by

Teresa Zimmerman-Liu

Committee in Charge:

Professor Richard Madsen, Chair
Professor Fonna Forman
Professor Bennetta Jules-Rosette
Professor Ping-hui Liao
Professor Christena Turner

2019

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Chair

University of California San Diego

2019

DEDICATION

This Dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my Aunt Lynn (1937-2015), who strongly encouraged me to seize the opportunity and set out along the path to my degree.

EPIGRAPH

鞠躬盡瘁，死而後已

--Romance of the Three Kingdoms

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Humanistic Buddhism and Climate Change: Propagating the Bodhisattva Ethic of Compassion
for People and the Planet

by

Teresa Zimmerman-Liu

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California San Diego 2019

Professor Richard Madsen, Chair

Although the climate scientists of the IPCC and the UC posit that religion may be helpful in persuading world populations to adopt the sustainable lifestyles necessary to mitigating climate change, the academic literature does not necessarily support this contention. One exception seems to be the case of Taiwan where two humanistic Buddhist groups have influenced the majority of Buddhists on the island to adopt important aspects of sustainable lifestyles. This multi-sited ethnographic study uses participant observation with formal and informal interviews to research these two groups—the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain—in the two different social contexts of Taiwan and California. A comparative analysis of the results finds that the believers' adoption of pro-environmental lifestyle changes is strongly influenced by their membership in a strong moral community, by sensing the material and social, or “terrestrial,” strain of environmental degradation coupled with a feeling that the government and other official institutions are not doing enough, and by

integrated religious teachings, which include theory and praxis, from authoritative figures who model the desired behaviors. Moreover, this study shows the power of the sacred to inspire behavioral change, which, in the context of Buddhism, is cultivation of the bodhisattva ethic on the path to attaining enlightenment. The biggest difference between the two social contexts is that Taiwan's Confucian cultural roots produced a relationship-based society, while American society is more institutional. This difference creates challenges for the groups in America; nevertheless, they have enjoyed some success among immigrants and people who resonate with them and appreciate their help. These Buddhists' success in the U.S. and Taiwan shows that religion's "power of the sacred" can have a positive effect in contemporary, post-modern society, when religious groups effectively reflect the immediate concerns of their local communities. Hence, the process by which these groups responded to the strain of environmental degradation by integrating pro-environmental teachings, practices, and behavioral norms into their spiritual cultivation and their deployment of local cultural symbols to facilitate adoption of those norms may serve as a pattern to other religious groups responding to environmental degradation in other communities.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The inspiration for this study came to me in the spring of 2013 from a series of discussions about saving the world from climate change with my friend and mentor, James William Gibson, who described his research on the connection between religious values and environmentalism in the United States. Gibson (2009) had found that most committed environmentalists, such as the Green Peace ecowarriors, felt totemic kinship to the animals they fought to save, as they had been deeply influenced by the Native American and Eastern religions of the New Age movement. Gibson's theory was that non-Christian religions, which "reenchanted" the world after its disenchantment in modernity, could inspire humanity to change their ways, thus, saving themselves and the world from environmental destruction. When this hypothesis was tested against data from the General Social Survey, the results showed that, in the United States, religious beliefs must be combined with political leanings before they strongly correlate with a person's attitudes and actions towards the environment (McInnis and Zimmerman-Liu Unpublished). At that point, I took the advice of my dissertation committee chair, Professor Richard Madsen, and turned my focus to studying two Taiwanese Buddhist groups that preach pro-environmental lifestyles as part of their faith practice. I sought to understand when and how they had adopted these teachings, how they socialized their members into such lifestyles, and how they spread this message to the society around them. I found that the groups in my study had developed integrated systems of pro-environmental teachings, practices, and norms at a time when Taiwan was severely impacted by dangerous levels of environmental degradation, which strained all parts of society across the island. They had then canonized these pro-environmental adaptations into their sacred faith practices by tapping into

important cultural symbols, such as the Buddhist bodhisattva ethic, Confucian ethics for community relationships, and Confucian symbols of moral authority that resonate well with Taiwan's culture. What follows is the story of my quest to understand religion and environmentalism through my study of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation (Tzu Chi) and Dharma Drum Mountain (DDM) in Taiwan and California.

The Existential Threat Facing Humanity

Environmental degradation is one of the most pressing problems of modern life. According to the World Health Organization, 9 out of 10 people in the world breathe polluted air, the cause of many serious health problems (World Health Organization, n.d.). One fifth of the US population, or 63 million people, have been exposed to drinking water that has been contaminated by "industrial dumping, farming pollution, and water plant and pipe deterioration" (Philip, Sims, Houston, and Konieczny 2017). Our consumer society produces 320 million tons of plastic waste globally every year, and there is now an 80,000-ton patch of floating plastic debris covering 600,000 square miles of water in the Pacific Ocean, where it threatens marine life, especially fisheries (Alfonseca 2018). Our industrial economy is dependent on burning fossil fuels, a process which releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and which has caused earth's temperatures to rise by 1.62 degrees Fahrenheit since the late 19th century (NASA 2018a). The earth continues to warm at an increasing rate, and these changes in temperature are producing dramatic changes in climate patterns across the globe with increased drought, increased heat waves, and increasingly strong hurricanes and typhoons all threatening human populations around the globe (NASA 2018b). The continued existence of humanity is even at risk from the environmental degradation produced by our modern industrial, capitalistic society.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change regularly produces reports on the status of climate change and on the latest research about ways to mitigate its effects. Its Fifth Assessment Report came out in 2014. The 2014 “Summary for Policymakers” of the IPCC’s Fifth Assessment Report (Endenoffer, et. al. 2014) repeatedly refers to the importance of individuals and of the influence that “behavior, lifestyle, and culture” have on various aspects of climate-change mitigation. The report suggests that policy makers work among the general population to change consumption patterns of energy and transportation, to promote dietary change, and to work for the reduction of food waste.

People on earth need to reduce their carbon footprints by switching to renewable energy sources. They need to reduce their use of fossil-fuel-powered vehicles. Meat consumption needs to be reduced, as the meat production industry produces methane, which is a super-pollutant contributing to global warming. Meat processing plants also use large quantities of water in their production methods, and the run-off contaminates surrounding rivers and streams. Moreover, food waste in the landfills produces methane. Plastic waste does not degrade quickly, but when it does decompose, it, too, produces methane and contributes to global warming. Hence, the IPCC report’s suggestions for individual lifestyle changes are important components of a comprehensive plan to mitigate and reverse the effects of climate change. Such lifestyle changes will also help solve many of the other environmental problems facing the world today. University of California scholars of climate change concur with the IPCC report and further advocate that government officials and scholars work with community and religious leaders to “deepen the global culture of climate collaboration ... to mitigate climate disruption” (Ramanathan, et. al. 2015: 10).

The Function of Civil Society in Solving Environmental Degradation

The recommendation that governments work with academics, community leaders, and religious leaders to advocate for lifestyle changes among the citizenry suggests that a partnership between the state and civil society is necessary to resolve the existential crisis which environmental degradation poses to humanity. Civil society consists of the institutions and relationships that exist apart from the state, the market, and the family. Conceptually, the notion of civil society began with Alexis de Tocqueville's (2000) observations that democracy in America was strengthened by the many societies and civic organizations, which occupied so much of American life in the early 19th century. Habermas (1991) developed the theory of civil society and posited that free associations, which are the hallmark of civil society, began in the 17th century when Europeans met to discuss political events in the coffee houses of Europe. Interest in studying civil society has been strong since the fall of the Soviet Union and the turn to neoliberal policies in the US and Europe. With the neoliberal emphasis in public policy, many former functions of government have been relegated to the non-governmental organizations of civil society (Wuthnow 2004).

Religion in Civil Society

But civil society is not just a matter of NGOs providing social services in lieu of state bureaucracies. Madsen (1993a: 185) explains that Habermas saw the political discussions of civil society as the modern, democratic polity's way of generating moral and reasoned grassroots consensus about how to best solve society's problems. Madsen sees civil society as a collection of "moral communities and communities of memory" (193-194) that are able to help bridge contemporary society with its market economy and "premodern religious and moral traditions" (188) to arrive at collective notions of morality and the public good.

Hence, civil society consists of social relationships and the horizontal ties among members of society apart from kin and families (Wuthnow 2004). The social capital derived from these relationships is the source of social norms that make complex societies function smoothly because there is no way for state bureaucracies to regulate every move of every citizen (Fukuyama 2001). These social norms are the professional standards of behavior that Durkheim saw as the foundation of ethics in modern complex societies with organic solidarity (1947; Bellah 1973). Because the organizations and relationships in civil society are related to social norms and services instead of political power and economic profit, they are generally seen as social entities that promote the public good. And, it is under this aspect of promoting the public good that religious organizations best fit into the framework of civil society (Hardacre 2004), to the extent that membership in these organizations is voluntary and that the organizations themselves are separate from the state (Casanova 2001). Hence, it would be an important, strategic move for states to partner with community leaders from civic organizations and, especially, with religious leaders to promote, as social norms, the lifestyle changes needed to help mitigate climate change and to otherwise ameliorate environmental degradation of the planet.

This reasoning is further bolstered by the theories about the importance of religious norms and values in promoting social action in modern life. Bellah (1973) notes that Durkheim (1947) posited the continued importance of religion and morality to human society, even as society became increasingly rational and individualistic. Max Weber ([1968] 1978: 24) theorized the existence of two different kinds of rationality affecting human social actions: instrumental rationality, which is “determined by expectations as to the behavior of objects in the environment and of other human beings; these expectations are used as ‘conditions’ or ‘means’ for the

attainment of the actor's own rationally pursued and calculated ends," and value rationality, which is "determined in a conscious belief for its own sake of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behavior, independently of its prospects of success." Many of Weber's studies further develop his theory of how different religious values underpin the actions of populations in various socioeconomic systems, with the most famous of these studies linking the Protestant work ethic to Western capitalism ([1930] 2001).

Weber's studies are now considered outdated and too essentialist in their analysis of different world cultures and civilizations; however, Joel Robbins (2015: 19) persuasively argues that values are indeed "ideals that motivate human action" and that religious rituals enact ideals for believers to adopt, albeit only partially, in the complex milieu of each individual believer's daily life, where a host of values compete for adoption. Quantitative studies show that values do influence individual actions (Miles 2015), specifically with respect to environmentally sustainable behavior (Leiserowitz, Kates, and Parris 2005; Steel 1996; Stern 2000). Indeed, Smelser ([1962] 1965) developed an entire methodology for analyzing collective actions by identifying the effects of group values and norms; he bases this methodology on Parsons' ([1937] 1949, 1967a) theories of how values and norms underlie social action.

Religious organizations are particularly important with respect to norms and values because they are embedded in the culture of the societies where they operate (Wuthnow 2004). Durkheim (1995:9) argues that "religious representations are collective representations that represent collective realities." Religions divide the important matters, which a particular society holds sacred, from the profane matters of everyday life (34). And as Carolyn Chen (2008: 8) notes, the moral authority of the "sacred" has real power to cause people to change their lifestyles. Therefore, if pro-environmental lifestyles were considered sacred, human societies

would make the necessary changes to mitigate climate change and other environmental degradation. Unfortunately for U.S. society, the academic literature shows there is no consensus among American religious groups concerning the need for pro-environmental lifestyles. This lack of consensus is reflected in the inertia among most American citizens to make the lifestyle changes necessary to save the planet.

Academic Studies on Religion and the Environment in America

What, then, does the academic literature say about the effect of religious values and their ability to influence people to make environmentally sustainable lifestyle choices in the United States? Perhaps the best-known study is Lynn White, Jr.'s 1967 article in *Science*. There, White argues that Christianity promotes certain values, which allow humans to dominate nature and make sweeping changes to eco-systems. He also argues that this Christian value of dominating nature is the historical root of the world's present-day ecological crises.

Over the past fifty years, White's article has spurred a host of studies to test his theory. Taylor, Van Wieren, and Zaleha (2016) did a comprehensive survey of this literature and found that these studies fall into several major categories: 1) articles that tout the potential of religion to promote environmental sustainability and almost act as apologetics for religious influence on sustainable behavior; these studies sometimes include historical anecdotes of how certain religions have helped preserve the environment (c.f. Banderage 2013; Cain 2012; Dalai Lama 2012); 2) qualitative studies/ethnographic studies on various religious groups, examining their beliefs and practices related to environmental sustainability (c.f. Tucker and Williams 1997; Darlington [1998] 2014, 2012); and, 3) quantitative studies on religion and the environment. Most quantitative studies have focused on Christianity in the United States. In general, these empirical studies support White's contention that the Christian notion of human mastery over

nature influences people to oppose changing their lifestyles to be more sustainable, even causing people to deny climate change (Dietz, Stern, and Guagnano 1998; Greeley 1993; Guth, et. al. 1995; Schultz, Zelezny, and Dalrymple 2000; Wolkomir, et. al. 1997).

Hand and Van Liere (1984) were the first to find that there is some nuance to environmental attitudes among various Christian groups in America: namely, conservative Evangelical groups tend to adhere to the viewpoint that humans have dominion over nature and to deny climate change, refusing to modify their lifestyles, whereas more liberal Christian groups tend to advocate stewardship of the earth as God's gift to humanity. Believers in the more liberal Christian groups are amenable to living sustainably, but environmentalism is not a major doctrinal emphasis in their churches, and the actual impact of their beliefs with respect to living sustainably seems to be small (Taylor, et. al. 2016). Studies on Buddhism and other non-Christian religions show a similar potential for positive impact with respect to holding beliefs that may promote sustainable lifestyles, but their pro-environmental impact remains untapped in all but a few isolated cases (Taylor, et. al. 2016).

Taylor (2016) also describes movements among academics, who are trying to revive religious faith by "greening" religion to save the planet. An example of such an academic project is Mary Evelyn Tucker and philosopher Brian Swimme's *Journey of the Universe* (2011), which attempts to combine science with aspects of Native American traditions to restore among humans a sense of awe and love for the universe. Sadly, Tucker and Swimme have been working to make religion a force for saving the planet for the past twenty years without any significant results. Moreover, the so-called "greening of religion hypothesis" has been challenged by the empirical record of quantitative academic studies (Clements, McCright, and Xiao 2014; Taylor, et. al. 2016).

Part of the reason that the American religions promoting stewardship of nature do not do well in changing the lifestyles of their believers is “the absence in them of practical technique, method, and discipline” (Needleman [1970] 2009: 17). Needleman contrasts American religious exhortations to do good without telling believers “*how to be able* to follow them” (18) with the integrated beliefs and practices of Eastern religions, such as Zen Buddhism, that made those religions so popular in the U.S. during the 1960s. Bellah and his associates (1985) found that having only spiritual feelings of oneness with the universe was not effective in getting people to adopt green lifestyles, unlike practicing Zen Buddhism, which changed the practitioners’ behaviors with its integrated system of beliefs, norms, and discipline. Although Needleman wrote more than 40 years ago, Western religions continue to contain more philosophical reasoning, than practical guidelines. One example is Pope Francis’s 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si*, which exhorts Catholics to care for the planet as a moral imperative, but which has also been criticized for its lack of suggestions on how to practically save the planet (Schwartz 2015; W2.vatican.va 2015).

The U.S. problem of religion and the environment is further exacerbated by the fact that the “dominion-over-nature” Christian believers in the U.S. are quite active politically and have been a major force in conservative politics since the late 20th century. These conservative Christians vehemently oppose pro-environmental policies, perhaps because the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States was closely linked to the 1950s Native American religious revival and the New Age religious movement (Gibson 2009: 29-33). Anti-environmentalist Christians have allied themselves with corporate interests in their political activities (192), and the corporations have engaged in a systematic campaign to cast doubt on scientific findings about climate (Oreskes and Conway 2011). The resulting doubts about climate

science have been widely promulgated among these “dominion-over-nature” Christian groups. The 2016 presidential election in the United States, in which a climate change denier was elected president with the strong support of 4 out of 5 conservative Evangelical Christian voters, underlines the negative impact of these religious groups with respect to environmentalism in America.

The lack of consensus among U.S. religions reflects the lack of consensus on the environment among the members of American society, which also carries over into secular institutions of civil society. American society is too diverse; different interest groups and different communities have different views on what is good and necessary for society. Indeed, the Yale Climate Change Project and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication (Leiserowitz, Maibach, and Roser-Renouf 2009) found that Americans are divided into six different groups with respect to attitudes and actions on climate change. These groups tend to belong to different religions and political parties and to get their news and entertainment from very different sources. In the March 2018 update to this report, only 21% of Americans fall into the group labeled “Alarmed,” people who believe that climate change is happening and who have begun changing their lifestyle practices. Another 30% of Americans are labeled “Concerned”; this group believes that climate change is happening, but they are not doing anything about it. The next three groups—labeled “Cautious” (21% of the population), “Disengaged” (7% of the population), and “Doubtful” (12% of the population)—are less convinced that climate change is a problem and even less apt to have done or to want to do anything to mitigate the problem. The final group of Americans, the outright deniers of climate change, is labeled “Dismissive.” They make up 9% of the population, and most of them are politically conservative Evangelical Christians. Just as the Alarmed group has started acting to

mitigate climate change, so also the Dismissive group is active politically to thwart policies designed to check climate change and environmental degradation.

This lack of consensus about climate change is reflective of a greater lack of consensus about broader definitions of public good, which would define it in such a way as to ensure that said good equally and fairly benefits all groups in our diverse American society (Mansbridge 1998, Calhoun 1998). Madsen (1993a: 185) notes that Habermas concludes his discussion of the public sphere with the observation that in the twentieth century in the West, ordinary people are increasingly less able to have the reasoned, civil discussions that lead to a consensus on the public good. Madsen further notes that Western theorists have “never resolved the issue of how to reconcile the modern market with the premodern moral traditions that have somehow made it function” (188). Hence, there is a disconnect in the West between our moral traditions, which emanate from our idea of the “sacred” and generate our behavioral norms, and our economic system of capitalism, which promotes the rational pursuit of profit at all costs.

In another essay, Madsen (1993b: 496) attributes our lack of consensus on the public good to our inability to harmonize three different themes of discourse in civil society: the market—issues of competition and consumption, behavioral sciences—issues related to human organization and efficiency, and community—symbols that define our identity and issues related to responsibility and commitment. Williams (1999) further finds that U.S. society has three competing notions of the public good, all of which have at least two subdivisions for the political left and the political right. He calls the first the “covenant” model, which is based on obeying a supreme authority and is mainly held by Christians in America (4-5). Williams’ second view of the public good is the “contractual” model, which is mainly concerned with human rights and liberties (5-6). His final view is the “stewardship” model, which holds that humans have a duty

to preserve the world for future generations (7). According to Williams, the “stewardship” view is used by many non-Christian religions, non-governmental organizations, and parts of the environmental movement. Mansbridge (1998), Calhoun (1998), and Ronald Jacobs (1996) further note how discussions of the public good in the United States are also complicated by racial, ethnic, and gender disparities. There is little wonder that civil society in the US has had difficulties arriving at a consensus about the existence of the problem of climate change, much less on the best ways to remedy the climate change crisis and other issues related to environmental degradation.

The Case of Taiwan

Taiwan, however, is a case that seems to demonstrate a consensus on the public good with respect to the environment and climate change. Taiwan has markedly improved its environmental rating over the past decade, according to the World Economic Forum’s Environmental Sustainability Index and its successor, Yale University’s Environmental Performance Index. In 2005, Taiwan ranked 145 out of 146 countries on the Environmental Sustainability Index (Arrigo and Puleston 2006: 17). In 2016, Taiwan had improved to 60 out of 183 countries on the Environmental Performance Index (Hsu, et. al. 2016) and had the greatest 10-year percentage improvement (26.96%) among all countries in East Asia.¹ News media reports hail Taiwan as a genius in recycling and garbage disposal with a recycling rate of 55% (K. Chen 2016). Taiwan is further touted as the top place in the world for vegetarians because, due to its large Buddhist population, it has the greatest number of vegetarian restaurants with a wide range of vegetarian cuisines, especially in its capital city of Taipei (Bryson 2016).

¹ The U.S. ranked 26th on the 2016 Environmental Performance Index with a 10.93% 10-year improvement. Japan ranked 39th, but its improvement score was only 5.72%; Singapore ranked 14th with an improvement score of -0.43%.

Weller (2006) identifies three social forces in Taiwan that contribute to environmentalism on the island: the government, secular environmental NGOs, and humanistic Buddhist groups. He describes how Taiwan's environmental movement began with the government's establishment of national parks in the twentieth century, as it emulated the Western model in its work to modernize Taiwan's society. Grassroots environmental activism arose in the 1980s in response to the lack of environmental impact planning during the government's efforts to industrialize the island's economy after the Kuomintang (KMT) government retreated to Taiwan from the mainland (Weller 2006; Arrigo and Puleston 2006; Prof. David Chang Interview 11/15/2017). The secular grassroots environmental movement reached a peak in the 1990s, but scholars document the stagnation of that movement in the twenty-first century (Arrigo and Puleston 2006; Weller 2006). Today Taiwan's secular environmental groups regularly engage in reactive protests whenever air pollution gets too bad or a development proposal may negatively impact nearby populations, but they seem to lack proactive, positive activism. Weller (2006:127) describes another pro-environmental social force that positively influences Taiwan's society: humanistic Buddhist groups,² which have built on the traditional Buddhist value of the equality of humans with all sentient life and its strong prohibition against killing any living thing to become a major factor promoting preservation of the environment in contemporary Taiwan. These three social groups: the government, secular environmental organizations, and humanistic Buddhist groups all fill unique roles in society to counter the generally recognized problem of environmental degradation, and they fulfill those roles with varying measures of success.

² Weller (2006) also discusses Chinese Taoist teachings that are compatible with environmentalism, but he does not identify modern Taoists in Taiwan as a significant pro-environmental social force; indeed, Madsen (2007a) describes only one modern Taoist group in Taiwan in comparison with three major humanistic Buddhist groups.

The contribution of Taiwan's humanistic Buddhist groups lies primarily with their ability to inculcate among a significant segment of the populace green lifestyle behaviors, such as recycling, vegetarianism, using mass transit, and reducing consumption. Lee and Han (Unpublished) confirm Weller's (2006) qualitative finding that membership in Taiwan's humanistic Buddhist groups is significantly correlated with adopting pro-environmental lifestyle habits, while having no religious faith most significantly correlated with failing to adopt pro-environmental behaviors. The quantitative component of Lee and Han's study is based on analysis of the fifth wave of the data in the Taiwan Social Change Survey (TSCS 2005-2009). Their qualitative discourse analysis of each group's website further finds that of the four largest humanistic Buddhist groups in Taiwan, the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain are the most active in promoting and teaching about pro-environmental lifestyles, although these pro-environmental behaviors are practiced by the majority of Taiwan's humanistic Buddhists, regardless of specific sectarian membership. Thus, Taiwan's humanistic Buddhists can be described as religious groups successfully working to mitigate climate change by inculcating pro-environmental lifestyles among their believers.

Humanistic Buddhism in Taiwan

Humanistic Buddhism belongs to the group of modern Chinese religions, which evolved in reaction to contact with the West, through globalization, and to industrialization (Jochim 2003; Madsen 2007a, 2007b, 2008a). Many of the changes in these religions began in mainland China (Welch 1968) during the Republican Era (1911-1949) and continued to develop in Taiwan during the second half of the twentieth century, after the Communist Revolution in China (1949). Madsen (2007b) and Jochim (2003) describe the updating of Confucianism in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan during the twentieth century. This modernization was carried out in secular

society outside the Confucian temples (Jochim 2003: 76; Zimmerman-Liu 2012). Pacey (2005), Madsen (2007a), and Huang (2009) describe the development of “humanistic” Buddhism in China and Taiwan during the same period. Western Christianity, too, was indigenized to fit Chinese society around this same time (Ng 2012, 2013; Zimmerman-Liu 2014, 2017).

Traditional Chinese Buddhism was influenced early in its history by Confucianism and Taoism, especially with respect to the view that humans and nature are part of a harmonious whole (Wright [1959] 1965; Weller 2006). Madsen (2007a) further notes that in its process of evolving, Taiwan’s “humanistic” Buddhism was heavily influenced by the updated New Neo-Confucianism and by Christianity.

Pittman (2001) describes how, in the 20th century, the mainland Chinese Buddhist monk Taixu and his later followers in Taiwan—Yinshun, Hsing Yun, Sheng Yen, and Cheng Yen—updated traditional Chinese Buddhism to make it more relevant to the modern world, thus developing “humanistic Buddhism.” Pacey (2005: 46) lists the major updates shared by the Buddhist groups following Taixu’s tradition: 1) interpreting Buddhism in accordance with “modern” ideas; 2) construing humanistic Buddhism as a return to the Buddha’s original teaching, purged of superstitions that were later added in; 3) denying sectarianism among Buddhist groups; 4) emphasizing the philosophical aspects over the ritualism in Buddhism; 5) practicing meditation; 6) teaching in accord with science; 7) strong involvement of lay practitioners; 8) much female involvement; and 9) concern for social welfare. Madsen (2007a) describes the strong educational component of these groups, which have founded schools at all levels from preschool to university, in order to develop and propagate Buddhist ideas and values.

Humanistic Buddhists are Mahayana Buddhists, and they promote the bodhisattva ethic of compassion for the world expressed in their active social concern (P. Harvey 2000). Madsen

(2018) follows Keown ([1992] 2001) to further describe their ethics as virtues developed by personal cultivation, instead of a list of rules, and Keown finds these ethics similar to Aristotelian virtues. Madsen (2018) also notes that these groups have taken the Confucian family ethics and expanded them to include all sentient beings in their advocacy of social concern and practice of the bodhisattva ethic.

Humanistic Buddhist groups have grown exponentially in Taiwan at the close of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. In 2001, there were more than 5 million Buddhists in Taiwan, compared with only 800,000 in 1993. In 2004, humanistic Buddhist organizations in Taiwan operated eight colleges and universities, three hospitals, and twenty-eight publishing houses, as well as four high schools, forty-five kindergartens, thirty nurseries, five orphanages, five retirement homes, three hospitals, four clinics, 118 libraries, and a center for the mentally handicapped (Pacey 2005: 446). By 2009, humanistic Buddhists made up approximately 20% of Taiwan's entire population (Lee and Han, Unpublished). Thus, their impact on Taiwanese society is significant.

The literature on socially engaged Buddhism (Snyder [1985] 1988, Thurman [1985] 1988, Queen 1996, King 2009), of which humanistic Buddhism is a part (Madsen 2007a, 2008; Pacey 2005; Pittman 2001), is growing. Several scholars have written about Buddhist ethics (P. Harvey 2000, Keown [1992] 2001, Madsen 2018). Some scholarship focuses on Buddhism and environmentalism (Barnhill 1997, Looi 1997). There are also studies of Buddhism in the United States (Needleman [1970] 2009, Fields [1981] 1992, Prebish and Tanaka 1998, C. Chen 2008, Seager 2012). Moreover, scholars are studying Chinese Buddhism (Gooeasart and Palmer 2011, Palmer, et. al. 2011, Yü 2001) and Buddhism in Taiwan (Jones 1999, 2004, Laliberté 2004).

According to Lee and Han (Unpublished), 93% of Taiwan's humanistic Buddhists are members of the four largest Buddhist organizations: Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, Buddha's Light Mountain, Dharma Drum Mountain, and Zhongtai Chan Monastery. As noted above, Lee and Han's study included an analysis of the groups' websites to determine the extent to which these organizations promoted environmentalism. Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation's websites had the greatest amount of pro-environmental discourse. Dharma Drum Mountain's websites had the second largest amount of pro-environmental discourse, which was mainly related to the group's core doctrine of "Four Environmentalisms" and its teachings on being right with nature in its Six Ethics of the Mind program. The websites of Buddha's Light Mountain had significantly fewer mentions of environmentalism than the preceding two groups, and those of Zhongtai Chan Monastery had the fewest references to environmentalism. Therefore, this study will focus on the pro-environmental teachings and practices of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain to better understand their contributions to the consensus among Taiwan's rank-and-file Buddhists concerning pro-environmental lifestyles and to Taiwan's improvement in global environmental rankings. It will also examine how these two groups have translated their pro-environmental teachings and practices to the social context of California, USA.

Overview of Environmentalism in Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain

The Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation was founded in 1966 by a Buddhist nun, Venerable Cheng Yen. Tzu Chi does much to incorporate environmentalism into its ethical and faith practice. In response to Cheng Yen's preaching, Tzu Chi volunteers began a recycling center in Taichung in 1990 (Pan 2016). Now the organization operates recycling centers all over Taiwan, and it promotes recycling, vegetarianism, reducing carbon footprints, and living sustainably on its Da Ai (Great Love) web TV channel. In its fifty years of existence, Tzu Chi has become an

international NGO with branches all over the world (Madsen 2007a; Huang 2009). Its U.S. headquarters is in southern California, and San Diego was home for three years (2013-2016) to Tzu Chi USA's pilot project, EcoVerse Jing Si Books and Café, which sought to teach its ethics and practices of sustainable living to non-Chinese-speaking Americans. The Tzu Chi USA website speaks of living in harmony with the Earth (Tzu Chi USA 2019). In Taiwan, the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation reported having 316 large recycling stations, 8,626 recycling collection points, and 86,594 volunteers engaged in recycling, all of which are described as part of Tzu Chi's mission to build community and improve society (2105: 99). Tzu Chi follows the line of Buddhist thought that compassionately doing good under appropriate guidance leads to wisdom, which eventually leads to enlightenment; in other words, Tzu Chi works from the outer practice to the inner mental and spiritual state, as it seeks to improve human society today through the bodhisattva ethic of compassion for people and the planet.

Dharma Drum Mountain was founded in 1989 by the Venerable Sheng Yen. In the early 1990s, Chan Master Sheng Yen developed an integrated set of teachings with four levels of environmentalism as the major core of Dharma Drum Mountain's doctrine and mission to build a pure land on earth today. This set of doctrines teaches believers to care for the Earth and the natural environment "just as one would care for her own body" (Dharma Drum Mountain 2003-2007a). Like Tzu Chi, Dharma Drum Mountain promotes vegetarianism, recycling, and simple lifestyles with reduced consumption. It also promotes organic burials and cessation of incense burning in worship for the preservation of the environment. Dharma Drum Mountain follows a different tack from Tzu Chi in developing ethical behavior among its practitioners. It teaches internal cultivation through Chan meditation as the foundation for developing ethical lifestyle practices with respect to society and the environment (S. Y. Shi 2012a). Master Sheng Yen

founded a Chan Center in New York in 1979, and he spent six months of each year in Taiwan and six months in the United States teaching his vision and practice of Chinese Chan Buddhism until two years before his death in 2009.

Much of the scholarship on contemporary Taiwanese Buddhism focuses on the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation (Huang 2003, 2009) with studies of its service model (O'Neill 2010), its modernization of almsgiving (Jones 2009), its medical mission (CP Lee 2017a), and its Buddhist praxis (Brummans and Hwang 2010). Many studies of Tzu Chi examine it from the angle of gender with respect to both its founder and its members (Cheng 2007; Lu 1998a, 1998b; Huang 2008; Huang and Weller 1998; Lee and Han 2016). The literature on Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation's environmental mission includes Lee and Han's (2015) analysis of the changes in discourse about protecting the environment in the organization's publications. It also includes Olivia Dung's (2016) ethnographic notes of her field work at a Tzu Chi recycling center in Taiwan. Brummans, Cheong, and Hwang (2016) describe the impact of Tzu Chi's promotion of vegetarianism on Singaporean youth. The only comparative study of Taiwan's humanistic Buddhist groups related to environmentalism is Clippard's (2012) comparative discourse analysis of the pro-environmental rhetoric used by leaders in Buddha's Light Mountain, Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, and Dharma Drum Mountain. The only other study of Dharma Drum Mountain's environmentalism is Bai's (2017) study of Master Sheng Yen's teachings on social environmentalism.

Overview of Findings

This study finds that the most important push-pull factors in both Taiwan and the United States for a religious organization to influence its believers to live more sustainably are the power of the sacred, a general consensus that environmental degradation is a material and social

strain disrupting the quotidian, an integrated system of religious doctrines and practices related to living sustainably, resonance with underlying cultural symbols, and facility using social symbols and structures to spread the message widely. The groups in this study, Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain, benefit from the confluence of all these push-pull factors in Taiwan and are more able to influence society there. In the United States, their influence is limited because there is less consensus, even among believers, regarding the severity of environmental degradation and because the groups belong to an ethnic, minority religion and reap fewer benefits from the underlying cultural symbols and social structures. Nevertheless, the groups are able to influence their believers and some members of their local U.S. communities to change their lifestyles and adopt more environmentally sustainable behaviors.

Data and Methods

My primary research methods were participant observation and interview. I conducted at least 20 formal interviews with monastic and lay leaders of each group, and I also held focus group sessions in each organization to increase my opportunities for gathering information. As noted by Hsiung (2004: 297), formal interviews “[fail] to provide the same high-quality data” as they do in the West to foreign ethnographic scholars in Taiwan. I encountered obstacles similar to those encountered by the Western scholars cited by Hsiung. I found it difficult to obtain formal interviews with Taiwanese research subjects without the help of the organizations’ top leadership. My interviewees generally preferred to be interviewed in public places, which were not conducive to tape recording; therefore, I took notes while conducting each of the interviews. I often felt that the formal interviewees saw my interviews as a kind of oral exam; they imparted copious amounts of information, but they did not generally relax and enter into a discussion with me about their groups. Hence, my study relies heavily on data from my participant observations

to contextualize the information obtained in the formal interviews. While doing my participant observations, I discovered that although most of the rank-and-file members did not want to do formal interviews, they were quite happy to talk to me about the groups informally.³ I learned much from informal discussions with members of both groups, as well as from discussions with people in Taiwan from outside the groups. Many “people in the street” were happy to share their perceptions about these Buddhists’ environmental work and their personal receptiveness (or lack thereof) to the groups’ teachings.

My discussions with Taiwan’s “people in the street” were conducted by striking up conversations with taxi drivers or with people in trains, restaurants, coffee shops, and other public places around the island. Many people were willing to talk with me, and I had numerous conversations with students, housewives, small business owners, employees, and professionals about Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain over the six months of my research in Taiwan. Most of my interviews and observations were conducted in Mandarin Chinese, but I did do participant observation of English activities at both groups, and a handful of my interviews were conducted in English. In addition to ethnographic data from my field work, I also read some of the writings by Master Cheng Yen and Master Sheng Yen in both English and Chinese, and I watched video lectures by the founding masters and by monastic and lay teachers in each group.

I utilized qualitative interview methods for my research because Wuthnow (2015) discusses the problems with using surveys as tools for research on religion. One of the biggest problems is that the results of any survey depend on the questions being asked by the interviewers. These questions are, in turn, influenced by the beliefs and prejudices of the people

³ Avron Boretz (2004) encountered similar preferences for informal interviews during or after his participant observations among his respondents in Taiwan.

developing the survey, making it very difficult to get an accurate understanding of what the respondents truly think. Such problems are compounded in studies conducted in multiple languages, as there are never exact conceptual equivalents in translation.

Van der Veer (2014) gives further warnings about generalizing religious concepts for cross-cultural analyses between Eastern and Western cultures. He makes this point with the example of “spirituality,” a term used by Weber ([1948] 1998) to show supposed Eastern deficits vis-à-vis the West in his comparative studies of civilizations. Van der Veer also describes the use of cultural and spiritual traditions in India and among certain groups of Chinese as a way of resisting Western colonialism and Orientalism. Other groups of Chinese intellectuals repudiated earlier spiritual traditions in favor of more modern, scientific approaches to society, which were imported and adapted from the West. Therefore, religious notions like “spirituality” are so fraught with nuances and historical complications in modern Asia that it is difficult to distill them meaningfully into the “predesigned questions [with] predesigned one- or two-word responses” (Wuthnow 2015: 4) that are standard in surveys. While I do not deal with the notion of “spirituality” in my study, I apply Van der Veer’s (2014) warning about the cross-cultural analysis of religious concepts to my work.

According to Geertz (1973), it is impossible to fully quantify the effects of religion on a society or group of people. Instead of quantitative analysis of religion, Geertz avers that the best way to understand the effects of a religion is to conduct a semiotic analysis of the religious symbols in the belief system motivating the group and then to provide a “thick” description of detailed observations of the group’s practices and their reception in society. Swidler (1986) suggests that an analysis of how groups use the tool kit of cultural symbols and structures to develop strategies for collective actions provides more meaningful results than mere “thick

description.” Swidler also suggests that the cultural “tool kit” is most important during “unsettled times,” when groups are reacting to social strain and attempting to update the social values and norms of a culture to ameliorate the situation. Scollon, Scollon, and Jones (2012) concur with Swidler’s method of analyzing how research subjects deploy their tool kit of cultural symbols.

Geertz’s method analyzes the underlying cultural ambience of every society that produces meaning and values; it can be considered as a method for understanding the cultural baseline or cultural foundation of any given society. It is particularly useful for cross-cultural studies because each society has its unique cultural underpinnings. Swidler’s method of analyzing culture as a “tool kit” is most useful for understanding how cultural elements are used during times of social strain to foment social movements and create change in society. Therefore, I have used a combination of Geertz’s and Swidler’s analytical methods for this study by doing ethnographic and textual research and then using “thick description” or cultural “tool kit” analysis of the symbols and narratives in my data, depending on which approach is most appropriate for the various angles of my work.

I am fluent in Mandarin Chinese and conversant in one of Taiwan’s Hakka dialects. My research is further informed by my experiences during my more than twenty years as the eldest daughter-in-law in a working-class Hakka family from Taiwan. Over the course of my marriage I lived in a multi-generational household in Taiwan and later in the Chinese immigrant community in southern California. I lived in Taiwan in Chinese-speaking households from 1982 to 1990; after returning to the U.S., I made regular visits back to Taiwan throughout the 1990s and early 2000s prior to my decision to pursue advanced degrees. These life experiences have made me both linguistically fluent and culturally competent to do ethnographic research in Taiwan. I am not a speaker of the Taiwanese or Hokkien dialect. While I do have a rudimentary understanding

of that language, I am unable to understand Master Cheng Yen's dharma talks in Taiwanese without translation into Mandarin or a written copy of the text. Nevertheless, my Mandarin and Hakka abilities enabled me to collect sufficient data for my study.

My experiences in a working-class Hakka family were quite helpful in my field work. My ex-mother-in-law did not speak Mandarin Chinese when I first married into the family, and I worked with my siblings-in-law to teach her. Her schooling had been interrupted by World War II, and she did not learn to read until she attended a church literacy class at the age of 60. I deeply respected my mother-in-law, and my interactions with her taught me how to interact with people like her in Taiwan. My informants for this project include former government officials, college professors, and wealthy professionals, as well as cleaning women, clerks, farmers, and other laborers. I truly talked to people from all walks of life in Taiwan; moreover, most of my informants were drawn to my status as a "Taiwan daughter-in-law" (*Taiwan xifu*). This meant that their responses to me were given more within the frames of the Confucian Discourse System than those of the Utilitarian Discourse System (Scollon, Scollon, and Jones 2012; see chapter overviews below for definitions of these discourse systems). On several occasions, a person who had just met me for the first time would begin speaking to me in the frames of the Utilitarian Discourse System, which is based on European Enlightenment texts and emphasizes science and reason. These new interlocutors would immediately be interrupted by other informants who knew me better and emphatically informed that I am a "Taiwan daughter-in-law" (*Taiwan xifu*) whose mother-in-law's household (*po jia*) are Hakka from Zhongli (Chungli). The person interrupting the conversation to introduce me would then conclude by saying, "She understands everything" (*ta shenma dou dong*). After such an introduction, my new informant would

generally frame his or her further conversations with me according to the Confucian Discourse System, which is based on Chinese Confucian texts and emphasizes harmonious relationships.

In terms of my religious beliefs, Buddhism as a lived religion, outside of textbook descriptions, was new to me when I began this project. I was raised Roman Catholic but left the church in high school to spend a few years as an active atheist, emulating Madeline Murray O'Hare. During my first year of college I converted to Protestantism and joined an indigenous Chinese church, which emphasized practicing Biblical doctrines in every aspect of daily life. The culture of that indigenous Chinese Protestant church was quite different from that of U.S. Protestant churches, to the extent that some U.S. Christians did not consider it to be an orthodox Christian group (Zimmerman-Liu and Wright 2015). Like the Buddhist groups in my study, my former church elicited extreme levels of participation and dedication to practice from its active members, to a degree that James William Gibson—friend, mentor, and author of *A Reenchanted World*, who was raised in the U.S. Bible Belt—once told me was “radical” (personal communication 2013). I was very active in the church for thirty years from 1978-2008. It is the second or third largest Christian group in Taiwan, and I found the Taiwan Buddhist groups in this study to share many similarities to my old church in their group cultures.

My attitude towards religion has been highly influenced by the decades I spent living among Chinese from Taiwan; this is especially evident in my feeling that religion should be practiced in a focused way or not at all.⁴ In many ways, the religious atmosphere of the Buddhist groups in my study made me feel like I had “come home” to my old church. Although the

⁴ Sixty percent of my people-in-the-street respondents in Taiwan told me that the Buddhist groups in my study did good things for society, but the respondents personally did not have the time or money to be able to join them appropriately. I even attended an event at Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation where graduating college seniors were told that they should first focus on establishing their careers and raising their families before becoming committed volunteers in retirement, or, at the earliest, in middle age, when their careers will not be affected by the group's heavy service requirements (field notes 2018).

practices and doctrines were different, the earnestness of practice among the believers was the same. This does mean that certain attitudes and practices in these groups, which may seem extreme and problematic to other Americans, seem quite normal to me. I may also view these groups more positively than other Americans might because their culture is similar to what I personally practiced for many decades.

The data for this study is drawn from three years (2015-2018) of multi-sited ethnographic research in both the United States and Taiwan. I obtained IRB approval and began doing my research at the San Diego chapter of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation as part of my field methods seminars in the spring of 2015. In 2016, I made a preliminary research trip to Taiwan where I visited various sites of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation (Tzu Chi) and Dharma Drum Mountain (DDM). I also conducted some preliminary interviews. Upon my return, I made a preliminary research trip to Dharma Drum Mountain's San Francisco Bay Area Chan Center in Fremont, California. In 2017, I was awarded a Taiwan Fellowship from its Ministry of Foreign Affairs to conduct six months of research (July 1, 2017 to January 10, 2018) in Taiwan. After my return and up through August 2018, I made several research trips to Dharma Drum Mountain's San Francisco Bay Area Chan Center, and I continued making regular research visits to Tzu Chi San Diego.

Overview of Chapters

The Power of the Sacred

Durkheim (1973, 1995) theorizes that religion is society operating within us. The first function of religion is to set apart from ordinary existence those things that a social group considers sacred. These sacred matters form the heart of morality and ethics in that society. Durkheim (1995) further notes that in Buddhism, the sacred is the believers' act of cultivating

themselves according to the Four Noble Truths. Therefore, matters related to Buddhist cultivation are sacred and powerful to the Buddhist faithful. Religions evolve over time to meet the needs of changing society. As religions evolve, so do conceptions of the sacred. Chapter 2 of this study will give a history of Buddhism with a brief archeology of knowledge concerning the bodhisattva ethic, which is an evolved articulation of the “sacred” for Mahayana Buddhists. It will then give brief histories of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain and describe those groups’ teachings about the bodhisattva ethic.

The Importance of Social Strain Materially Disrupting the Quotidian to Impelling Change

The theory of social strain states that social groups adapt their values, practices and norms in response to social strains (Smelser [1962] 1965). Smelser developed an entire analytical method of seeking the social strain, identifying the new value or the new adaptation of an existing value that emerged in response to the strain, and then finding the organizational processes and structures that developed to propagate the value with its supporting practices and norms. Geertz (1973: 207) argues that this method of analysis is weak, when studying new ideologies that arise in response to a social strain, because of its “virtual absence ... of anything more than the most rudimentary conception of the processes of symbolic formulation.” However, Snow and his associates (1998) find that strain is a useful concept for the analysis of social action when the strain is severe enough to disrupt the “quotidian,” as environmental degradation in Taiwan did in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Such findings dovetail with Latour’s (2018: 42) theory that climate change must be dealt with as the “Terrestrial,” an environment that reacts materially to human actions in our current geological epoch of the Anthropocene. Hence, I coin the term “terrestrial strain” to denote social strain from the material impacts of environmental degradation, including climate change, that disrupts the quotidian in any particular community.

Swidler (1986) does not refer to strain, but she does differentiate between strategies used in “settled” and “unsettled” times in her analytical methodology, and she notes that culture tends to be most valuable as a tool kit during “unsettled” times. Victor Turner (1977: 77) argues that religious ritual “[holds] the generative source of culture and structure, particularly in its liminal stage.” Moreover, he notes that religious ritual is associated with social action for the collective good, and religious symbols can be easily updated to meet new social needs. Hence, Chapter 3 of this study will analyze the social strain of environmental degradation facing Taiwan in the late 1980s and early 1990s and show how this terrestrial strain spurred the two charismatic religious leaders of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain to adapt the doctrines, practices, and norms of their groups to be more environmentally sustainable and to inculcate pro-environmental lifestyle practices among their believers, as these practices became part of “sacred” Buddhist cultivation in these groups.

Utilizing Chinese Cultural Symbols to Bring Pro-Environmental Updates to Religious Doctrine and Practice into the Canon of Taiwan’s Humanistic Buddhism

Pierre Bourdieu (1993) postulates fields of cultural production with elite producers, whose works become the canon for intellectual study, and producers for the masses, whose works are not as valuable, despite their greater popularity. I adapt this idea to humanistic Buddhism in Taiwan because the island’s various humanistic Buddhist groups do not directly compete in sectarian strife (Pacey 2005); rather, they develop different specialties of practice, and many of the rank-and-file believers hold overlapping memberships in two or more groups, as they attend the functions at each place to meet their various religious needs (Schak 2009; Lee and Han, Unpublished; c.f. Yang 1967). Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation is best known for its volunteer opportunities and good works. Dharma Drum Mountain is best known for the erudition

of its founder, Master Sheng Yen, who was the first Buddhist monk from Taiwan to obtain a Ph.D. in Buddhist Literature, and for its excellent classes on Buddhist Studies and Chan meditation. Buddha's Light Mountain is best known for its large and spectacular religious rituals and for its huge temple complex in southern Taiwan. Zhongtai Chan Monastery is known for its beautiful temple buildings. A smaller group, Fuzhi, is best known for its promotion of organic vegan food and its support of farmers who grow such food.

According to Bourdieu's (1977) schema of the field of literary production in late 19th century France, the status of the author determines whether a literary work is accepted into the canon of "classic" literature. In the case of the pro-environmental teachings and practices introduced into Taiwan's humanistic Buddhism by Master Cheng Yen of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Master Sheng Yen of Dharma Drum Mountain, I argue that their positions as leaders of two of the largest humanistic Buddhist groups in Taiwan combined with the way they framed their moral identities in a Confucian context contributed to the elevation of their environmental teachings and practices into the humanistic Buddhist canon for all Buddhist believers in Taiwan, regardless of sectarian memberships.

Umberto Eco ([1976] 1979: 8) argues that semiotics can study "all cultural processes as processes of communication, [which are] permitted by an underlying system of significations." He further notes that cultural systems of significations include "behavior and value systems" (12) and even gender roles (26). Scollon, Scollon, and Jones (2012) concur with Eco's approach to analyzing culture. They identify the Utilitarian Discourse System, which is based on the canon of European Enlightenment writings and which is the main discourse system for business in the globalized capitalistic market. The discourse in this system 1) defines the "good" as that which maximizes happiness for the greatest number of people; 2) sees progress as the goal of human

society; 3) views society as based on free and equal individuals (although people not included in the defined society can be exploited); 4) defines humans as rational and economic beings; 5) considers technology and invention to be the foundation of wealth in a society; 6) considers individuals who produce wealth to be the most valuable in society; and 7) views quantitative analyses as the best (117). Although the Utilitarian Discourse System is hegemonic, especially in the realm of globalized capitalism, there are numerous competing discourse systems that espouse competing values. Some of these competing systems in the U.S. are described in the writings of Madsen (1993a, 1993b) and Williams (1999).

Scollon, Scollon, and Jones (2012) further identify the Confucian Discourse System, which also competes with the Utilitarian Discourse System and is based on the canon of Chinese Confucian writings. The Confucian Discourse System corresponds with the underlying cultural system in most East Asian countries, such as China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. It emphasizes “harmony,” which can be defined as order and discipline (124). It also emphasizes the individual within a web of social relationships and considers progress to be moral and ethical instead of material (125).

According to Scollon, et. al. (2012), these discourse systems are based on the archaeologies of knowledge found in their respective canonic texts (Foucault [1972] 2010) and are transmitted through a combination of socialization at home and at work and of formal education. Most people with university educations in East Asian societies are competent in both discourse systems because they use the Utilitarian Discourse System for work and the Confucian Discourse System for matters related to family and their personal life. When establishing their moral authority in Taiwan, Master Cheng Yen and Master Sheng Yen tapped into gender norms

and symbolic identities of the Confucian Discourse System because it is the system that corresponds to Taiwan's underlying foundational culture.

Buddhism is gendered and has different rules for monks, nuns, lay men and lay women (Yü 2013). Confucian societies, too, have traditionally been heavily gendered, and Taiwan's society continues to be gendered (Weller 1999), even though gender roles are changing (A. Lee 2004, Lu 2004, Farris 2004, Lee and Han 2016). Both Master Cheng Yen and Master Sheng Yen framed their identities by tying into gendered symbols in a way that maximized their moral authority according to Confucian social norms. Master Sheng Yen's position as an elite Buddhist scholar gave him the greatest masculine moral authority, that of a scholar, to update the humanistic Buddhist canon of doctrines and practices. Master Cheng Yen presents herself as a caring mother figure (Lu 1998a, 1998b, Huang and Weller 1998, Pacey 2005), which is the identity with the greatest moral authority for females in a society under the influence of Confucianism, as filial piety is the basic moral imperative in Confucian culture (Confucius, *Analects* 1: 2. Translation by de Bary and Bloom 1999: 45).

I further argue that because traditional Confucian society considered males and females to be complementary to one another, with males embodying *cai* or literary, scholarly (doctrinal) virtue and females embodying *de*, or physical, practical (behavioral) virtue (Larsen 2002, Zimmerman-Liu 2012), the teachings of both these masters were needed to enshrine the full panoply of pro-environmental teachings, practices, and norms into the sacred canon of Taiwan's humanistic Buddhism. Moreover, the identities of the founding dharma masters created identities (Melucci 1996) for the members of each group that fostered a moral imperative among the followers of each leader to take social action by adopting pro-environmental lifestyle habits as part of their faith practice. Chapter 4 will cover the details of how these two groups utilized

Confucian symbols to make their updated pro-environmental Buddhism canonical in Taiwan for all humanistic Buddhists there.

Utilizing Taiwan's "Alternate Civilities"—Confucianized Social Structures—to Spread the Message

Weller (1999) argues that civil society is quite different in Asian societies that have been heavily influenced by Confucianism, like that of Taiwan. Civil institutions in Asia work differently from those in the West, as do religious institutions, and non-governmental organizations (Weller 2005). Ann Swidler (1995) argues that institutions, including defined relationships, shape and are shaped by culture, which I previously connected to a social group's discourse system (Scollon, Scollon, and Jones 2012). While Weller (1999) avoids *guanxi* studies in his exposition of the alternate civilities in Taiwan and China, other scholars (Kipnis 2007, Zimmerman-Liu 2017) see modern *guanxi* logic as the development from a premodern total social system (Mauss 2002) that constituted all Chinese social relationships with rituals and ethical expectations of each party to a relationship. Rigger (2011) emphasizes the importance of *guanxi* practices in contemporary Taiwanese society. Schak (2018) describes how Taiwan's premodern *guanxi* system was updated to become compatible with the global capitalist market economy and a democratic government under the Utilitarian Discourse System by highlighting Confucian texts and aspects of the Confucian system that expand the concept of family to include the entire society. Schak (2018) avers that modern Taiwan's society practices civility, which is comparable to civility in Western societies, but his data shows that Taiwan's civility was framed and conceptually based on the texts and practices of the Confucian Discourse System, as these texts were reinterpreted to create a cultural ethos compatible with the global economy. Therefore, Taiwan's civility is both similar to and different from civility in the West.

Because social relationships in a society rooted in the Confucian Discourse System follow certain premodern *guanxi* logic and ethics, religions have traditionally been organized differently (Yang 1967), modern organizations act differently (Weller 2005), and even social networks respond differently than they do in the United States. In Chapter 5, I argue that Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain used the two *guanxi* cultural scripts (Schank and Abel 1977) of expanded family⁵ and classmates⁶ (J. B. Jacobs 1979) to spread their pro-environmental ideas along Taiwan's social networks, especially the Buddhist social network (CP. Lee 2017a). Religious groups in Taiwan's society garner prestige and build trust (Fukuyama 1995) through *guanxi* ethical expectations, which are different from those in societies not influenced by the Confucian Discourse System.

Guanxi is a relationship system based on the expansion of kinship ties to non-kin that enables families to obtain resources in times of scarcity (D. Bell 2000). Chinese society has long valued the economic prosperity of all households (Mencius 2A: 5 in Chan 1963: 64-65). Therefore, during the imperial era, the Chinese developed cultural structures like the community compact (de Bary 1998) under which local gentry taught the populace morals and eventually organized the local community to help the poor (Bol 2008). To my observation, both during this study and in my time as the eldest daughter-in-law in a Taiwanese family, contributions to the community of material aid or timely assistance are the most critical factor in garnering sufficient prestige to have one's ideas accepted by society. I argue that this "potlatch" (Bourdieu 1977) aspect of *guanxi* culture is important to the acceptance of Taiwan's Buddhists' pro-

⁵ Filial piety is the most important cultural value related to expanded family *guanxi* relationships, and it is the one that Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation deploys the most.

⁶ An important cultural institution and value related to the classmate relationship is education. Dharma Drum Mountain, in particular, avails itself of this value and paradigm to spread its doctrines and practices through its well-planned courses and curricula.

environmental messages by the island's general population. Chapter 5 will analyze how Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain utilize education and the social structures, rituals, and mores of Taiwan's modernized *guanxi* society to spread their message widely.

The Comparative Case of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain in America

Operating as a Majority Religion within the Homogeneity of Taiwan's Society

Taiwan's population is very homogenous. With the exception of the Austronesian tribes, who make up 2% of the total population (Copper 2018), the rest of Taiwan's population consists of the descendants of various waves of immigrants from mainland China. Approximately 84% of the population is comprised of the Hoklo and Hakka linguistic groups, whose ancestors migrated from southeastern China to Taiwan in the 17th and 18th centuries. The remaining 14% of the population are descendants of those who retreated with Chiang Kai-Shek and the Nationalist army to Taiwan in 1949 (Copper 2018). Liao (1999) describes the tensions between the Taiwanese (early Hoklo and Hakka immigrants) and the Nationalists who came with Chiang, especially since Chiang's army used violence against the people already on the island. With the passage of time, however, these tensions have receded, especially since the end of martial law and the development of a multiparty political system, which gives the Taiwanese the opportunity to meaningfully participate in governance. Culturally, all the groups who came from the mainland hold to traditions that are deeply rooted in Confucianism, especially with respect to valuing family, personal relationships, and education. Thus, in Taiwan, the Buddhist groups in this study were able to enhance their social standing by tapping into cultural symbols and social structures that are widespread throughout the entire society.

Furthermore, Buddhism is the largest religion in Taiwan with 35% of the population identifying as Buddhist (Taiwan Population 2018). Committed Buddhists⁷ make up 20% of the population (Lee and Han Unpublished), and 93% of the committed Buddhists are humanistic Buddhists who belong to one of the four largest humanistic Buddhist groups on the island. The large numbers of humanistic Buddhists combined with Buddhism's traditional position as one of the Three Teachings (Yü 2001) in Chinese society give the Buddhist groups in my study particular influence in Taiwan's society.

As evidence of their social influence in Taiwan, the three largest humanistic Buddhist groups in Taiwan—Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, Buddha's Light Mountain, and Dharma Drum Mountain—perform simultaneous rituals every year in May at three important political landmarks in Taipei to celebrate Mother's Day (a symbol of Confucian filial piety) and Buddha's birthday and to pray for blessings on the country. Buddha's Light Mountain holds its May ceremony in the large open space in front of the Presidential Palace. Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation holds its May ceremony in Liberty Square in front of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial, and Dharma Drum Mountain holds its May ceremony at the Sun Yat-sen Memorial.⁸ These ceremonies generally take place on Mother's Day, the second Sunday in May, and are different from the solemn Buddha bathing rituals that are held later in the month on Buddha's birthday. The informants from Tzu Chi and DDM who told me about these concurrent ceremonies

⁷ According to Laliberté (2004), Academia Sinica surveys only classify as Buddhist the respondents who have participated in a "taking refuge" ceremony, which is analogous to baptism in Christian religions. These people tend to be more committed to the Buddhist religion and to not mix Buddhism with folk religion; therefore, I call them "committed Buddhists."

⁸ The Presidential Palace is analogous to the White House in U.S. society. Chiang Kai-shek is considered by many to be the first successful president of the Republic of China and the one who brought Taiwan into the modern world. Sun Yat-sen is renowned as the leader of the successful revolution that overthrew the imperial government and founded a Chinese democracy.

reported that the purpose of the Mother's Day rituals is to uplift Taiwan's society and to pray for blessings on Taiwan (field notes 2017). The groups' prominent position in society certainly helps them influence the general public with respect to living sustainably.

In addition to Taiwan's homogenous cultural background and Buddhism's standing as the largest religion on the island, there is a general consensus among the majority of Taiwan's inhabitants that environmental degradation is bad, that climate change is real, and that measures should be taken to ameliorate these problems. This consensus was manifested in Taiwan's November 24, 2018, election; the "Go Green with Nuclear" group had a referendum on the ballot to halt the government's planned phase-out of nuclear energy. That referendum won by a margin of 51% to 49% despite the fact that the pro-nuclear groups lacked the funding of the anti-nuclear efforts. The pro-nuclear advocates spread their myth-busting facts about nuclear energy through "volunteer-staffed events, inexpensive flyers, and Facebook" (Shellenberger 2018).

The social situation in Taiwan enhances the ability of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain to influence people to change their lifestyles. The population is ethnically and culturally homogenous. Furthermore, Buddhism is an important component of Chinese culture's Three Teachings, to the extent that the religion enjoys widespread prestige in society. Finally, there is a strong consensus among the general population on the island that actions must be taken to mitigate environmental degradation and climate change. In such a situation, Buddhism's features as a religion of principle and practice with its bodhisattva virtue ethic mean that the integrated doctrines, practices, and behavioral norms of the groups in my study can easily take root and flourish in the lives of many believers and their friends.

The Uphill Battle Faced by Minority Religions Operating in America's Diverse, Neoliberal Society

The United States population is ethnically much more diverse than the population of Taiwan. U.S. government estimates of the country's demographics in 2017, which are extrapolated from the 2010 census, show that 76% of the population is white, 13% of the population is African American, 1.3% is Native American, 6% is Asian or Pacific Islander, 3% is mixed race, and 18% is Hispanic (US Census Bureau 2017). America is also religiously diverse with 45% of the population identifying as Protestant Christian, 20% of the population identifying as Catholic, 2% Mormon, 1% Orthodox Christian, 1% Jehovah's Witness, 2% Jewish, 1% Muslim, 1% Buddhist, 1% Hindu, 1% Other Religion, 24% Unaffiliated, and 3% Refused to state (Cox and Jones 2017). These religious categories are further divided by race and political affiliations, making the US religious landscape fragmented and confusing. Even the 1% of Americans who are Buddhist are divided ethnically and among the many different Buddhist schools. The enormous amount of diversity in American society makes it difficult for any religious group to resonate with, much less achieve a consensus among, a majority of the population.

As noted above, the religious diversity in America is a reflection of the diversity of opinions among Americans related to the common good. Mansbridge (1998) and Calhoun (1998) describe the lack of consensus among Americans related to definitions of the public good and the ways to ensure that the good is equally and fairly distributed to all members of society. Madsen (1993b) attributes our lack of consensus on the public good to our society's lack of consensus on how to harmonize the three main strands of our discourse: economic, behavioral, and community. Williams (1999) identifies three different modes of discourse about the public good that are rooted in three different philosophical or theological traditions. Our general lack of consensus about how we should even talk about the common good undoubtedly has contributed

to the fact that U.S. society is divided into six major opinion groups with respect to views about climate change (Leiserowitz, et.al. 2009). Hence, it is extremely difficult for Americans to arrive at a majority consensus about the issue of climate change like that found in Taiwan.

This demographic diversity and diversity of thought are further exacerbated by an extreme emphasis on individualism in American society (Bellah et. al. 1985, 1991; Madsen 2009). In addition to the value placed on individualism by our dominant Utilitarian Discourse System (Scollon, et. al. 2012), extreme individualism has been strategically promoted by the elite scholars and politicians behind the neoliberal political and economic agenda. Margaret Thatcher, one of the architects of our current neoliberal world order, stated that there is “no such thing as society, only individual men and women” (in D. Harvey 2005). Thatcher also declared: “Economics are the method, but the object is to change the soul” (in D. Harvey 2005). The neoliberal agenda, which began to be implemented in the U.S. in the 1980s by Ronald Reagan and Milton Friedman, and which has been further promoted by other major politicians and academics of the late 20th and early 21st century, strives to “[dissolve all forms of social solidarity] in favour of individualism, private property, personal responsibility, and family values” (D. Harvey 2005: 247). After more than thirty years of this elite neoliberal agenda, the value of community has been nearly lost from mainstream American culture. Thus, the individualistic ideological bent of American culture is difficult for minority religions, such as Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain, to overcome, as they work to spread their message of kindness, love, compassion, and community among typical Americans.

An added challenge stems from different concepts of what constitutes a religious organization in each society. Wuthnow (2004) identifies two kinds of religious organizations in American civil society: religious organizations that focus on religious doctrine and rituals, and

faith-based non-profits that focus on community service. To American eyes, it would appear that Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation is a faith-based non-profit because it emphasizes community service and engages in disaster relief, running hospitals and medical clinics, and establishing schools at all educational levels, which are typical activities of faith-based non-profit organizations in the United States. However, in the context of Taiwan's society, Tzu Chi is a hybrid of a faith-based non-profit with a core religious organization that includes both teachings and ritual practice. I argue that the organization's core religious aspect elevates its activities into the realm of the "sacred" (Durkheim 1995) and supplies a moral imperative that its members follow all the teachings of Master Cheng Yen, including her teachings, practices, and norms for protecting the natural environment. Similarly, Dharma Drum Mountain would appear to be mainly a religious group, but in Taiwan, it also has numerous community service activities run out of several NGO foundations. Taiwan's social system allows more flexibility for these religious institutions because both religious organizations and faith-based non-profits are usually supported by private donations, as most NGOs in Taiwan do not take money from the government (Hsiao 2005). Faith-based non-profits in America tend to get most of their financing from government grants (Wuthnow 2004), and these Taiwanese hybrids experience difficulty with U.S. grant applications because they do not structurally match the boxes on the form (field notes 2015).

Another major challenge to the groups' ability to influence American society is racism against non-white minority groups (C. Chen 2008). Some scholars document the increasing individualism and loss of community that has been weakening the social ties in American civil society since the 1980s (Bellah et. al. 1985, 1991; Madsen 2009), while others argue that from the time of de Tocqueville's (2000) first observations of civil society in America, non-whites and

immigrants have been excluded from meaningful membership in those associations (Parsons 1967, Calhoun 1998). Gorski (2017) argues that the conservative religious faction of America, the same faction that denies climate change, is part of a racist Christian nationalist movement that wants to roll back the effects of the 1950s-1960s Civil Rights Movement, which opened the way to include non-whites and females in elite society. He attributes the loss of civility in American society to racist backlash against earlier gains made by minorities.

How, then, can these non-white, immigrant, non-Christians influence American society apart from their own small immigrant communities? Maffesoli (1993, 1996) offers hope with his theory that religious or moral traditions among the networked grassroots populations outside of elite power structures are what build community in Western society. Research by Cruz and Forman (2015) supports the notion that non-governmental sources are the best solution for marginalized populations in our neoliberal society, especially when the NGOs can find ways to bridge the gap between elite institutions and the marginalized communities. Victor Turner (1977) also notes the importance of liminal religious rituals as the locus of cultural creativity for finding new ways to alleviate social strain. Indeed, America's strong and successful environmental movement of the 1950s through the 1970s was mainly inspired by Native American and Asian religious symbols and practices (Gibson 2009).

Attitudes in America are turning against white conservative Christians, who are the politically active climate-change deniers mentioned above. This is demonstrated by the 2016 Public Religious Research Institute poll showing that white Christians are no longer a majority in the U.S. (Cox and Jones 2017). As the social strain of environmental degradation and climate change worsens markedly from year to year, more people may be interested in Buddhism, as they were in the 1960s and 1970s at the San Francisco Zen Center at a time when American

Christianity was not meeting the needs of the population (Needleman [1970] 2009). Indeed, my research found that just as contributions to the community are an important factor to spreading the message outside of Buddhist networks in Taiwan, so also making contributions to local people in U.S. communities seems to be an important factor to the groups' positive reception in America. Chapter 6 will give further analysis of the challenges faced by both groups in the US and the strategies that they use to overcome them.

Chapter 2

Buddhism: A Religion of Principles and Practice

Three important push-pull factors contributing to the success that the Buddhist groups in this study have had promoting pro-environmental lifestyle changes among their believers can be found in the nature of Chinese Buddhism itself. First, Buddhism is a religion that places equal emphasis on principles and practice and defines the “sacred” as the practice of Buddhist cultivation. This means that Buddhists are more apt change their behaviors as part of their faith practice than believers in religions that place greater emphasis on doctrines than practice. Second, Buddhism is one of the Three Teachings contributing to Chinese cultural traditions. As such, many Buddhist concepts have become embedded in the Chinese language and are readily accepted by Chinese-speaking populations. And third, the Mahayana Buddhist symbol of the bodhisattva and the concomitant bodhisattva ethic resonate strongly with the believers, becoming a strong impetus for behavioral changes. This chapter will give an overview of the history of Buddhism with emphasis on these three aspects that act as push-pull factors, contributing to the adoption of environmentally sustainable lifestyles among the members of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain.

Buddhism, Chinese Culture, and Taiwan

Taiwan is part of the “peripheral Chinese cultural zone,” which consists of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore (Tu 1991). These three regions in Asia are linguistically and culturally connected with the cultural traditions of premodern China. This is especially true in the case of Taiwan, which has historically been a province of China for hundreds of years (see Chapter 3 for an overview of Taiwan’s history). Traditional Chinese culture since the Song Dynasty (960-1279) has emphasized the “Three Teachings” of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism as its

main sources of cultural symbols, values, and norms. Therefore, Buddhism is culturally well-positioned to exert significant influence on Taiwanese society. It is an integral part of Taiwan's cultural foundation, and it includes many symbols and traditions that can be deployed as a "tool kit" (Swidler 1986; Scollon et. al. 2012) during times of social strain (Smelser [1962] 1965, Snow et. al. 1998).

To understand how Taiwan's humanistic Buddhist groups are a social force promoting pro-environmental lifestyles among the population, it is helpful to first trace an archeology of knowledge (Foucault [1972] 2010) of the Buddhist religion, especially focusing on its characteristics as a religion and on the trajectory of its development in China and its more modern manifestations in contemporary Chinese societies. This study argues that Buddhism is a non-theistic religion, which equally emphasizes principles and practice. The "sacred" matter of Buddhism is the believer's practice of moral and spiritual cultivation (Durkheim 1995: 35) to eventually escape the suffering inherent in *samsara*, the cycle of birth, death and reincarnation.⁹ Therefore, the Buddhist religion is particularly effective in causing believers to change their lifestyles because it includes disciplined practice and a notion of the "sacred" that serves to reinforce the discipline.

Overview of Buddhism

Buddhism began in India sometime between 400 and 500 BCE. It developed and flourished there until the Hun invasions in the 6th century CE. After those invasions, Buddhism in India began a long period of decline, eventually dying out approximately 500 years ago. Prior to its demise in India, Buddhism had spread throughout Asia to Southeast Asia, to China and other East Asian countries, and to Tibet and Central Asia. The three main types of Buddhism,

⁹ See Jules-Rosette (1985) for a discussion of analyzing the "sacred" in non-Western traditions.

still extant, are broadly divided among these three regions with Theravada or Southern Buddhism most prevalent in Southeast Asia; Mahayana or East Asian Buddhism most prevalent in China, Japan, Korea, and the northern part of Vietnam; and Tibetan or Northern Buddhism most prevalent in Tibet and Central Asia. This chapter will first summarize the basic teachings of Buddhism that are generally common to all its major schools before giving an overview of Buddhism's history in China and of the development of modern humanistic Buddhism¹⁰, including the founding of the groups in this study.

Basic Tenets of Buddhism

Like other Indian religions, Buddhists believe that all living things exist in an endless cycle of life, death, and reincarnation. A being's status in any given incarnation depends upon the karma it produced in past lives. Beings can fluctuate among lives in hell realms or lives as animals, as humans, and as gods. The cycle of birth, death, and reincarnation is called *samsara*, and it continues without beginning or end. Nothing in existence is permanent, and because one's present situation depends on the karma produced by one's past deeds, words, and thoughts, everything is interdependent. Nothing in one's life arises unless it is the result of the karmic

¹⁰ Humanistic Buddhism can be considered as the Chinese form of engaged Buddhism. Engaged Buddhism arose in Asia as early as the 19th century (Queen 1996). Scholars consider it a reinterpretation of Buddhist texts and teachings that was necessitated by the modernization of traditional Asian societies after contact with Europeans (Queen 1996: 8). Most schools of engaged Buddhism incorporate aspects of Christianity, to the extent that some scholars characterize engaged Buddhism, which is socially active, as Protestant Buddhism (31). Engaged Buddhists return to classical Buddhist texts and reinterpret them in ways to better fit modern social needs (Thurman [1985] 1988, King 2009). The most important aspects of any engaged Buddhist group are an emphasis on compassion for the suffering people in the modern world and an attempt to bring Buddhism out of the monasteries and into human society, where it can succor the suffering masses. There are engaged Buddhist sects in all three major schools of Buddhism: Theravada, Mahayana, and Tibetan. Some examples of these modern, engaged Buddhist leaders are the Dalai Lama, Thich Naht Hanh, Makaguchi and Toda Josei of Soka Gakkai, and Sulak Siveraksa and Buddhadasa of Thailand (Queen 1996:8). In addition to advocating on behalf of the suffering people in society around them, these leaders also encourage protection of the natural environment for the preservation of all life as an integral imperative of modern Buddhist practice (Snyder [1985] 1988, Barnhill 1997).

seeds one engendered through past actions, words, or intentions that produced the causes and conditions contributing to one's current situation. This endless cycle that entraps most beings is a cause of suffering to them. A buddha is a rare being who "awakens to the knowledge of the world as it truly is and in so doing finds release from suffering" (Gethin 1998: 8). Once awakened, a buddha feels compassion for the other beings still trapped in suffering and teaches others how to escape from the cycle of *samsara*.

Strictly speaking a buddha is not a god to be worshipped; rather, a buddha is a teacher and a role model for other living beings. Buddhist texts describe other buddhas from other ages, who awoke to the truth about the world and taught their contemporaries how to transcend the cycle of birth, death, and reincarnation. The Buddha of our current world is Shakyamuni, or the "sage of the Shakya clan." He was the son of an aristocratic family in northern India, who lived during the 5th century BCE. His name was Siddhartha Gautama. According to the Buddhist tradition, Siddhartha left his life of ease among the aristocracy to become a "renouncer," a wandering, mendicant mystic, who sought enlightenment through fasting and meditation. One night, after first breaking his fast, Siddhartha meditated under what is now called a Bodhi (enlightenment) tree until he understood "the nature of suffering, its cause, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation" (Gethin 1998: 15). After attaining enlightenment, the Buddha spent the rest of his life teaching others what he had learned about the truth of things and how to escape suffering. Although there is little historical evidence to verify the various stories about the Buddha's life, the myth of the Buddha can be considered an archetype of the spiritual journey that all Buddhists undertake to escape the cycle of suffering (16).

Because the Buddha's teaching includes both the content of his enlightened understanding and the way he arrived at said understanding, Buddhism does not just emphasize

theoretical or philosophical teachings. This fact can be seen in the meaning of the word “dharma,” which signifies both the “truth about things ... [and] the way we should act, for if we are to avoid bringing harm to both ourselves and others we should strive to act in a way that is true to the way things are” (Gethin 1998: 35). The Buddha and the dharma are two of Buddhism’s three “jewels,” in which every believer takes refuge. The third jewel is the sangha, the company of monastics, who give themselves to advanced study and practice of the dharma, following the Buddha’s pattern to become teachers and role models in Buddhist cultivation for the lay believers (34). Hence, at its core, Buddhism is a religion that places equal emphasis on both principles and practice. Because the Buddha is mainly seen as a teacher and role model, I follow Durkheim (1995) to argue that the “sacred” in Buddhism consists of the teachings and practices that enable Buddhists to escape the suffering of *samsara*, rather than consisting of divine, omnipotent beings, as in theistic religions.

Karma and the Need for Disciplined Practice

According to Buddhist texts, one aspect of the Buddha’s enlightenment about how to escape *samsara* was his deeper understanding of the principle of karma (P. Harvey 2018: 7). While the concept of karma was present in other Indian religions of Shakyamuni’s time, the Buddha further developed this notion in relation to its effect on the cycle of rebirths and to the manner by which one can cultivate oneself to escape rebirth. According to Buddhist teachings, karma is produced by intentional actions, and the quality of one’s rebirth is determined by the quality of one’s actions in past lives, so, too, is one’s ability to make progress toward enlightenment (field notes 2017). Intentional good actions produce good rebirths, intentional bad actions produce negative rebirths, and some actions even lead to the wisdom that enables one to

completely escape the suffering of the cycle of rebirth. Therefore, dealing with karma is a matter that is central to Buddhist ethics (P. Harvey 2018: 8).

Traditionally, Buddhism divided humans into four classes: monks, nuns, lay men, and lay women. It was also believed that only monks could attain enlightenment. In order to be born into a life as a monk in a time and place where one can actually attain enlightenment, a person must gradually accumulate good karma or merit over the course of many lifetimes. Merit can be shared, and the monks and nuns of early Buddhism lived by begging food from the lay people. One of the primary ways that lay people gained merit was by feeding the monks and nuns, who would go out every morning with their begging bowls. In return, the monks and nuns would share with their lay supporters the merit they accrued by being monks and nuns and by spending time in meditation. Monks and nuns would also preach the dharma, and lay people would sponsor these activities, so they could share in the merit. Buddhist sutras, like the *Lotus Sutra*, have passages that list merit producing activities, such as copying the sutra, chanting the sutra, and paying to have the sutra disseminated (*Lotus* 2009: 274).

Hence, Buddhism as a religion is much more than a belief system about the supernatural; instead, it can be considered “a system of training in conduct, meditation, and understanding that constitutes a path leading to the cessation of suffering” (Gethin 1998: 65). This combination of principle and practice in a system of training means that Buddhist ethics can be considered “virtue ethics” (Madsen 2018; c.f. Keown [1992] 2001); they focus more on one’s personal development into a good person than on merely following a certain set of rules and participating in certain rituals. The believers’ cultivation of the Buddhist virtue ethic can thus be considered an integral part of the “sacred” in Buddhism. This is significant to understanding how Buddhism is able to thoroughly influence the lifestyles of its practitioners.

Each major strand of Buddhism understands the path and training that leads to enlightenment and the cessation of suffering a little differently. The Theravada tradition has historically focused primarily on the perfection of individuals saving themselves from suffering, while the Mahayana tradition expands the believers' view to include the salvation of all sentient beings. Since East Asian or Chinese Buddhism is Mahayana Buddhism, this study will focus on the Mahayana view of Buddhist cultivation that leads to enlightenment and escape from *samsara*.

Mahayana Buddhism and the Bodhisattva Ethic

The Mahayana school of Buddhism developed in India beginning in the first century BCE. Mahayana teachings developed over a period of several hundred years, and it was a flourishing school by the second century CE (Gethin 1998: 225). There are many theories as to the precise origins of the lineage, but none have been proven definitively with respect to the Mahayana school's place of origin or even which teachers began the teachings. A seminal text from earlier forms of Buddhism, which contributed to the Mahayana, is the story about how Shakyamuni, the Gautama Buddha, had the opportunity in an earlier life to attain to nirvana as an *arhat* or student. In this story, a man named Megha met a previous Buddha named Dipamkara. Instead of following Dipamkara and attaining freedom from *samsara*—the cycle of rebirth—in that life, Megha chose to continue practicing perfection through many lifetimes and countless ages. Eventually, Megha was reborn as Shakyamuni and became the Gautama Buddha. Megha's motivation for remaining in the suffering of *samsara* is attributed to his compassion and his desire to become a great Buddha, a *samyaksam-buddha*, who could lead others out of suffering with his enlightenment. This motivation of compassion and the decision to remain in the suffering world practicing the discipline of the ten perfections (*paramitas*) are the crucial

elements of the bodhisattva¹¹ path, which is recognized in all forms of Buddhism and particularly emphasized in the Mahayana school (Gethin 1998: 227). Later Mahayana texts further develop the idea of the bodhisattva path, the practice of perfection, the different qualities of enlightenment, and the decision to pursue the awakening of a great buddha out of compassion for other suffering sentient beings.

Mahayana ethics, then, represent a development of Buddhist ethics over earlier forms. Under the Mahayana ethical framework, believers do not just pursue wisdom and enlightenment to save themselves from suffering; rather, they combine compassion for other beings with their pursuit of wisdom, and they strive to perfect themselves to a state where they can save all beings from the suffering of *samsara*. Compassion and wisdom are developed in complementarity, giving the bodhisattva ethic an affective aspect of compassion and a rational aspect of wisdom. Peter Harvey (2000: 124) describes the importance of both compassion and wisdom in Mahayana ethics: “The *Bodhisattva*’s compassion aids wisdom’s undercutting of self-centeredness, and his or her developing wisdom ... ensures that compassionate action is appropriate, effective, and not covertly self-seeking.” All Mahayana Buddhists are encouraged to develop both these virtues by following the bodhisattva path.

The bodhisattva path begins with the thought of enlightenment or “the arising of the bodhi mind” (P. Harvey 2000: 126). Once a person desires enlightenment and makes a vow to develop himself or herself into a great buddha, capable of saving all sentient beings, that person must begin practicing the ten perfections. These perfections include generosity or giving, purity,

¹¹ A bodhisattva is a person who has attained to a certain level of enlightenment, but because of his or her vow to save others, the bodhisattva chooses to remain in the suffering world until all have been saved. In early Buddhist writings, the term only applied to Shakyamuni in his past lives and to Maitreya, the bodhisattva who will become the next Buddha in our world. Later, the term was applied to other students of Shakyamuni and, eventually, to monastic and lay believers who have determined to cultivate themselves on the path to the highest Buddhahood in order to save all sentient beings.

patience, strength, meditation, wisdom (the stage of *arhat*, or individual enlightenment), skillful means, non-relapsing, perfection of power, and becoming a great buddha. The last four stages occur in the supernatural realm and are only practiced by those who renounce the lesser Buddhahood of saving oneself and who strive for a fully perfect Buddhahood, which is necessary for saving others (P. Harvey 2000: 130). The great bodhisattvas in the last four stages are able to transcend time and space, and before the time is ripe for them to become Buddhas, they are believed to be able to assist believers at earlier stages of the path (c.f. *Lotus Sutra* 2009: 276, 281, 288)

In theory, then, there are ten perfections, but in the practice of ordinary Mahayana Buddhists, the focus is on cultivating the first six perfections with a heavy emphasis on generous compassion, which is required as the first step and at all subsequent steps. Some Mahayana Buddhists go through a bodhisattva ordination where they are instructed in the meaning of the ten good actions of the bodhisattva precepts by a qualified monastic teacher (Groner 2018). This formal instruction in the bodhisattva precepts is considered an important aid for keeping believers on track as they follow the bodhisattva path. The bodhisattva ethic is quite important in the humanistic Buddhist groups that are the focus of this study. More will be said about their understandings of the bodhisattva practice in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Buddhism in China

Before discussing modern Chinese Buddhist groups, it is helpful to understand Buddhism's long history in China. Buddhism came into China over the silk roads in the middle of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). According to Yü (2001), Buddhism first became popular in China because it was different and exotic, but over time, it indigenized through a process of Sinicization. The first few hundred years of Buddhism's indigenization process in China were

marked by the translation of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese. It was only after good translations of many sutras were available to Chinese believers that Buddhist concepts, such as reincarnation and “no-self,” came to be understood and accepted by the population. Prior to the translation and understanding of the sutras, many Chinese treated the Buddha and great bodhisattvas like other folk deities, and to this day, statues of the Bodhisattva Guanyin (*Avelokitesvara*) are often worshipped in the folk temples of Taiwan.

China was divided into northern and southern kingdoms after the fall of the Han Dynasty. During this era, Buddhism was supported by the emperors in the North and the aristocracy in the South (Yü 2001: 16). This was also a period in which Buddhism and Taoism greatly influenced each other, as the two religions sought to provide an alternative to the imperial cult of Confucianism. After China reunited under the Sui Dynasty (581-618 CE) and then during the subsequent Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE), Chinese Buddhism developed its own indigenous schools. These schools fell into two categories: the philosophical schools—Tiantai and Huayen—and the practical schools—Chan and Pure Land. The Tiantai school emphasizes the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*, and the Huayen school emphasizes the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. Chan schools focus on methods of meditation, and the Pure Land sects practice chanting the name of Amitabha Buddha to obtain rebirth in the Western Pure Land of Sukhavati based on their understanding of three “Pure Land” sutras (18). Many Pure Land Buddhists see rebirth into Amitabha’s pure land as the ultimate end of their faith and akin to the Christian notion of going to heaven.

Since the Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE), however, both Chinese governments and influential intellectuals have promoted the combining of the various Buddhist schools. They have also promoted the combining of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism into the famous “Three

Teachings” of Chinese culture (Yü 2001: 19). The separate schools do still exist, but it is not uncommon for a Chinese Buddhist sect to combine elements of more than one indigenous Buddhist school and to exhibit aspects of Confucianism, as well. This tendency to use the full repertoire of Chinese cultural symbols has been important to contemporary humanistic Buddhism’s ability to influence the populace in Taiwan to adopt pro-environmental behaviors.

Chinese Buddhism’s Late Imperial “Decline” and Modern Revival

China’s tendency to harmonize all religions, which was promoted by the imperial governments, caused an interesting situation to develop in the late imperial era. During the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), most Chinese lay people did not identify themselves as believers of any one religion. Instead, their religious lives included various strands of beliefs and practices, ranging from personal rituals before their household ancestral tablets to participation in rites for worshipping local or lineage gods to visits to Buddhist and Taoist temples where they attended festivals or prayed for special needs (Yang 1967, Gooseart and Palmer 2011). The people would pick and choose which temples and deities they would pray to according to their understanding of which god or rite would best meet their need at the time. For example, Buddhist monks were frequently sought to perform funeral rituals. The imperial government attempted, with varying degrees of success, to control all religious institutions like local folk temples and Buddhist or Taoist monasteries, in order to promote a patriarchal orthodoxy that supported the state (Gooseart and Palmer 2011: 28-33). But these governmental efforts to preserve the status quo were increasingly challenged, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, as Christian missionaries began proselytizing throughout China and millenarian cults were popular among the masses.

Many Chinese Buddhist leaders of the late imperial era saw their inability to effectively compete with Christian missionaries as proof that Buddhism was in decline. Welch (1968) questions whether the situation can be considered a true decline; nevertheless, the relative weakness of China's traditional Buddhism in the face of Western imperialism and Christian missionary activity prompted the rise of Buddhist reformers in China, the most important of whom was the monk Taixu. Taixu called for better education of Buddhist monastics, many of whom were illiterate. He also promoted "human life Buddhism" or Buddhism that engaged with social problems and came out of the monasteries to meet social needs. He framed his reforms as a return to the original purity of Shakyamuni's religion before Chinese Buddhism had been "polluted" by the various influences of Chinese folk religion and culture.

Taixu's reforms were not widely adopted among Chinese Buddhists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but several younger monks did attend Taixu's Institute for Buddhist Studies or one of the other Buddhist seminaries founded in that era. It was these second and third generation monks who fully modernized Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan after the Communist Revolution effectively wiped out independent Buddhism in mainland China. Some of the monks engaged in this modernization process, first in China and later in Taiwan, were Venerable Yinshun (tonsure master to Tzu Chi founder, Master Cheng Yen), Venerable Dong Chu (second tonsure master to Dharma Drum Mountain's founder, Master Sheng Yen), Venerable Hsing Yun (founder of Buddha's Light Mountain in Taiwan), and Master Sheng Yen (founder of Dharma Drum Mountain in Taiwan). The main characteristics of this new kind of Buddhism were that the religion was "text-based, ethical, socially engaged, and 'humanist' ... as the antithesis of 'funerary Buddhism'" (Goosaert and Palmer 2011: 81). "Funerary Buddhism"

was the term the reformers used to characterize Buddhism's degraded role in the late imperial era, when Buddhism was mainly practiced during funeral rituals.

Prior to moving to Taiwan in 1949, the reformers did accomplish a few things in mainland China. To make Buddhism more text-based, the lay Buddhist reformer, Yang Wen-hui, began by collating and printing Buddhist sutras and commentaries to make them more widely available (Welch 1968: 4-5). As the sutras were published, lay and monastic organizations were established to publish popular exegeses of the texts (Yü 2013: 107), and this led to a demand for more and more Buddhist seminaries or institutes of Buddhist studies. Taixu ran four institutes of Buddhist studies in mainland China between 1922 and 1950. His schools included instruction in both Buddhist texts and secular education. Students had to take an entrance exam, and they also studied secular subjects taught by lay instructors, such as foreign languages, Chinese literature, history, geography, and psychology. The students were divided into grade levels, did homework, and received a middle school diploma when they had finished their course of study. Only about 2% of China's Buddhist monks were educated in these early Buddhist institutes, but they became the influential leaders of the next generation of Chinese Buddhism. Many became abbots of important monasteries (Yü 2013: 110). Their solid educational foundation enabled them to bring to fruition the reforms envisioned by Taixu.

Buddhism in Taiwan

During the Qing Dynasty, settlers from mainland China brought Buddhism and other Chinese religions to Taiwan. The religious situation in Taiwan was the same as it was in China with its mixture of personal practices, local rituals, and visits to temples or monastic institutions according to individual needs (Jones 1999). Towards the end of the Qing Dynasty, the imperial government did not have the resources to control folk religion in Taiwan as closely as it did in

mainland China. But, in 1895, after China ceded Taiwan to the Japanese, all religions in Taiwan came under tight control by the Japanese government. Japanese Buddhist monks and missionaries came to Taiwan and attempted to take over local temples, particularly because some temples were centers of Chinese resistance against the Japanese colonizers. At the end of World War II, however, Taiwan was returned to mainland China in 1945, and in 1949 the Nationalist government under Chiang Kai-shek retreated to Taiwan after losing the mainland to the Communists. Many of the reformist monks from the mainland came to Taiwan, following the Nationalist army and government. Once in Taiwan, the monks continued their project of modernizing Buddhism.

Yinshun's Contributions to Humanistic Buddhism in Taiwan

Taixu did not use the term “humanistic” Buddhism to define his reforms. He used the term “human life Buddhism” or “Buddhism for human life.” His main focus was to bring Buddhism out of the business of funerals and to make it relevant to modern human life. Taixu felt that Buddhism had four goals: improving human life, obtaining a better rebirth, release from *samsara*, and complete insight into reality. The method he outlined for the first goal of improving human life was to “purify society through philanthropy, education, and culture” (Yü 2013: 23). Yinshun changed the nomenclature to “humanistic Buddhism” because, after studying Buddhist texts, he came to believe that enlightenment and Buddhahood can only be attained by humans suffering in the human realm (23).¹² This particular teaching created a rift between Yinshun and members of Pure Land Buddhist sects, who saw rebirth in Amitabha's Pure Land as the ultimate goal. Nevertheless, younger followers of Yinshun, like Sheng Yen and Cheng Yen, accepted Yinshun's interpretation of the Buddhist sutras, and their Buddhist sects teach that if

¹² Fields ([1981] 1992: 75) reports similar beliefs among Chinese Buddhists in the United States in the 19th century.

one is reborn in Amitabha's Pure Land of Sukhavati, it is only a temporary reprieve from *samsara*. A person may have a long life in Amitabha's land, but eventually, he or she must return as a human to this world of suffering to attain true enlightenment and become a great Buddha who can save others. Therefore, the followers of Yinshun's teachings believe that it is better to purify this world and remain here, because one can become enlightened faster and save more suffering beings. Hence, in the Buddhist groups of this study, the believers' goal is usually to remain in this world as a human for many lives instead of going to "Western Heaven" after death (field notes 2015, 2017, 2018).

These teachings and the concomitant emphasis on the human world do not represent a secularization of Buddhism, as suggested by Jones (1999: 134); rather, they are a recalibration of what it means to cultivate oneself in the pursuit of Buddhahood.¹³ Jones does note that such an understanding is peculiar to Taiwanese Buddhism (135), and I argue that these groups' spiritual cultivation focused on the human realm and on this earth is part of the "sacred" in Taiwan's humanistic Buddhism that inspires its believers to change their lifestyles and preserve the earth. My understanding is supported by the discourse of my informants, one of whom told me that she has adopted pro-environmental lifestyle behaviors because she wants to keep the earth habitable for humans as a way of preparing for her next rebirth (field notes 2015).

Yinshun made another important contribution to modern Taiwanese Buddhism in his repudiation of the Eight Rules of Respect that historically subordinated Buddhist nuns to Buddhist monks (Yü 2013: 24). In a 1988 book, Yinshun taught that there is no difference between monks and nuns with respect to their spiritual capacity. He also taught that lay men and lay women are equal in terms of their ability to become enlightened. Taiwan's leading

¹³ See Jules-Rosette (1985) for a discussion of applying secularization theories to non-Western religions in developing countries.

humanistic Buddhist groups all welcome and promote the ordination of nuns, and in most groups, the nuns outnumber the monks, sometimes by ratios of more than two to one. Some Buddhist leaders, including leading Buddhist nuns, do not fully agree with Yinshun's teaching on this matter. Nevertheless, modern nuns in Taiwan enjoy a considerable amount of respect and freedom in the practice of their religion.

A Brief History of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

The Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation was founded in 1966 by the Buddhist nun Cheng Yen as a benevolent association in which lay people of any religious persuasion, but particularly Buddhist lay people of any sect, can practice the bodhisattva path with numerous opportunities to engage in its first step: generous, compassionate giving. The narrative of Master Cheng Yen's early life and of her struggles to become a Buddhist nun has become a hagiography detailing the hardships a filial daughter went through to become a charismatic leader and founder of a reformist Buddhist group (Huang 2009). The objective details of her early life match the stories of many other women of Cheng Yen's generation in Taiwan, including being adopted out of her birth family, receiving the minimum compulsory elementary school education, and working in the family business until she was in her early 20s. The narrative diverges from more typical stories when Cheng Yen left home against her mother's wishes and became a Buddhist nun instead of getting married and having children.

Cheng Yen, whose birth name was Wang Jinyun, was born in central Taiwan in the town of Qingshui in Taichung County on May 14, 1937 (Huang 2009). She was adopted as an infant by her father's younger brother because her aunt had been unable to conceive. Eventually, her adopted parents had six other children, making Jinyun the eldest of seven siblings (CP. Lee 2017a). Jinyun was born in the first year of the Sino-Japanese War at a time when the Japanese

colonizers tried to educate all Taiwanese children over the age of six, in an effort to produce loyal Japanese citizens. Jinyun did attend elementary school, which was the only available level of free compulsory education both under Japanese rule and under Chinese Kuomintang (KMT) rule after the retrocession until the 1960s (Rigger 2011, Schak 2018). The records do not indicate if Jinyun attended any years of Japanese school (CP. Lee 2017a), but she does speak and read some Japanese, as is evidenced by her enrollment in a Japanese Buddhist correspondence course after she was ordained a nun (CP. Lee 2017a, field notes 2018). She completed elementary school before the KMT had implemented its Mandarin Chinese education policy, and Cheng Yen did not learn to speak Mandarin until the 1990s when she needed it to communicate with a growing number of her disciples in Tzu Chi. Her native language is Taiwanese, and she speaks it most often in her daily life and in her dharma talks.

In 1946, the Wang family moved from Qingshui to the county seat of Fengyuan. Mr. Wang purchased and ran six movie and live performance theaters there, and the family became quite well-to-do. Jinyun assisted her father in his business from the time she graduated from elementary school until she was 21 and her father passed away.

After her father's death, Jinyun continued to assist her family by running the business for two years, from 1958-1960 (CP. Lee 2017a). During that time, Jinyun had difficulties recovering from her grief at losing her father; the family brought her to the Ciyuan Temple to obtain help with her sadness. There, Jinyun met Venerable Xiu Dao, a nun who had been educated under the Japanese Buddhist tradition and who had studied modern Buddhism in Japan for twelve years. With the arrival of the KMT government and the monks from mainland China, Buddhist monastics with ties to Japanese Buddhism were discriminated against (Jones 1999), and Xiu Dao experienced such discrimination. Xiu Dao expressed her views to Jinyun about the need to

reform Chinese Buddhism. She also encouraged Jinyun to leave her family and become a Buddhist nun.

In 1960, Jinyun made her first attempt to leave home and join a temple to become a nun. After three days, her mother found her and took her back home. A few months later, Jinyun again left home, but this time she left in the company of Xiu Dao, and they went to the remote, eastern side of the island. They tried various places, including Taitung, until they eventually received support from Mr. Xu in Hualien, who was one of the wealthiest men in the city and a devout lay Buddhist with connections to Xiu Dao's Japanese Buddhist teacher (CP. Lee 2017a). Xiu Dao eventually returned to the Taichung area, leaving Jinyun in Hualien with Mr. Xu. In early 1963, Jinyun shaved her own head and began living like a Buddhist nun without receiving official ordination. Such a practice is similar to that of members of the "vegetarianism religion" or *zhaijiao*, which was popular in Taiwan prior to the Japanese occupation (CP. Lee 2017a).

In February 1963, Cheng Yen took the train to Taipei to attend the annual Buddhist ordination ceremony at the famous Lingji Temple. When she got there, she learned that she needed a formal tonsure master to sponsor her. She then went to a nearby Buddhist bookstore to purchase books by Taixu. Yinshun was at the bookstore, and Cheng Yen asked a nun there to pass along her request that he become her tonsure master. Yinshun was reportedly impressed that Cheng Yen was purchasing books by Taixu, who was his own teacher, and he agreed to sponsor her. She returned to the Lingji Temple in time for the thirty-two-day ordination ceremony. When the ordination was complete, Yinshun charged her to work "for Buddhism, for all sentient beings" (*wei fojiao, wei zhong sheng*), and Cheng Yen returned to Hualien. There, Mr. Xu provided her with a small hut behind the Puming Temple where she could study sutras and pray.

Over the next few years, Cheng Yen's reputation grew, and several women sought her out, asking to become her disciples. In her reminisces during morning dharma talks, Cheng Yen stated that it was hard for nuns in those days because there were no appropriate facilities (field notes 2018). At first, Cheng Yen declined to take disciples, both lay and monastic, but after the mother of her first monastic disciple came to plead with Cheng Yen on behalf of her daughter, Cheng Yen relented and took on four monastic and two lay disciples. In the spirit of reform, Cheng Yen adopted the Japanese system of independent monastic life for her nuns. Unlike most Chinese monastic groups, the Tzu Chi nuns do not do funeral chanting for fees, they do not provide dharma gathering rituals (*fahui*) for fees, and they do not accept alms for their own use (Huang 2009: 24). Instead, they follow the rule of Chan Master Baizhang: "A day without work is a day without food" (*yi ri bu zuo, yi ri bu chi*). To support themselves in the early days, Master Cheng Yen and her nuns did contract piecework, sewing bags and baby shoes.

Tzu Chi narratives relate the history of how, in 1966, Master Cheng Yen went to a local clinic to visit the father of one of her disciples. She saw a pool of blood on the floor of the entry hall, and she was told the puddle came from an indigenous woman who had miscarried in the lobby and died because her family could not afford the hospital's registration fees. Shortly after this, two Catholic nuns visited Cheng Yen and tried to convert her to Catholicism. The nuns criticized Buddhism for focusing on individual cultivation without practically caring for society. Soon after the meeting with the Catholic nuns, Yinshun wrote to Cheng Yen, asking her to take over for him at a temple in Jiayi. Cheng Yen's lay disciples begged her to stay in Hualien, and she agreed to go against the wishes of her teacher if they would agree to help her monastic disciples make extra baby shoes and to donate 0.50 NTD (approximately US\$0.02) every day, so that she could set up a Buddhist charity organization.

Yinshun gave his blessing to Cheng Yen's charity plan, and Cheng Yen stayed in Hualien where she established the Buddhist Tzu Chi Compassionate Relief Foundation. In 1967, after its first year of operations, Tzu Chi reported having 400 regular donors; 10 commissioners, who met regularly to consider the merits of charity cases and the disposition of each month's funds; and 10 other volunteers, who collected donations (CP. Lee 2017a). Julia Huang (2009) describes the development of the organization from the aspect of Master Cheng Yen's charismatic leadership. Chengpang Lee (2017a) describes the development of Tzu Chi with a focus on network and organizational analysis. This chapter is mainly interested in Tzu Chi's teachings on Buddhist cultivation and the bodhisattva ethic. Therefore, I will end this brief discussion of the group's history with the comment that, over the past fifty-two years, the organization has grown to become the largest NGO in Taiwan with approximately 90,000 commissioners and more than 3 million donors (Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation 2015, field notes 2017). In addition to charity aid to the poor, the organization has a disaster relief mission, a medical mission that includes several hospitals and the largest bone marrow donor registry in Asia, an educational mission that includes schools at all levels plus community outreach, and a cultural mission to improve society that includes working to protect the natural environment.

Buddhist Cultivation in Tzu Chi

It would seem that the organization is a secularized, faith-based NGO without much religion beyond collecting donations from wealthy Buddhists. However, Master Cheng Yen's view of the purpose of the organization is quite different from that. Just as the Tzu Chi nuns follow the farming Chan cultivation precepts of working for their living, so also Tzu Chi lay members are taught to practice farming-Chan-style Buddhist cultivation while mindfully engaging in the good works of the Foundation. Master Cheng Yen's teachings are simple and

generally connected to practical matters; therefore, they “can be easily understood and followed by anyone” (Cheng 2007: 43). For example, in *The True Path* (*Zhen shi zhi lu* 2008: 5), Master Cheng Yen says that when volunteers at the Abode of Still Thoughts are packing up the warm winter clothing and blankets for the winter charity distribution, “it is the best opportunity to cultivate yourselves; you do not only chant the Buddha’s name with your mouths, but also you chant the Buddha’s name in your hearts, and you even chant the Buddha’s name through your actions because these charity goods carry love from the hearts of so many people.”¹⁴ To Master Cheng Yen and to many of the Tzu Chi volunteers, each time of volunteering is an opportunity for them to cultivate themselves spiritually and to progress along the bodhisattva path. One volunteer reported that she had experiences of spiritual joy (*faxi*) volunteering at Tzu Chi’s winter charity distributions that were similar to what she had felt when she attended dharma gathering rituals (*fahui*) at other Buddhist temples prior to joining Tzu Chi (TC Taiwan Interviews).

Furthermore, the bodhisattva ethic is central to the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation’s mission and underlying philosophy. Master Cheng Yen states:

When I established Tzu Chi, my intentions were to disseminate Buddhism and to save all living beings. Instead of just talking about the tenets of Buddhism, I thought we could manifest them by incorporating the spirit of the Buddha in concrete action, thus allowing action (carried out in the Tzu Chi spirit) and principle (the Buddha’s spirit) to advance side by side. (2002: 16)

While this quote does not directly refer to the bodhisattva path or ethic, it does exhibit the bodhisattva ethic’s defining characteristics, as laid out by Keown ([1992] 2001) and Peter Harvey (2000), of cultivating one’s intellect and emotions to actively work for the goal of attaining the good by saving others.

¹⁴ Translation by TZL.

Cheng Yen's quoted prayer on the cover of this same book, *Still Thoughts, Wisdom, and Love* (2002), specifically refers to the bodhisattva ethic in its aspect of long-term cultivation (Keown [1992] 2001):

May all our greed, anger and delusion be eliminated,
May we have the wisdom to understand the Truth.
May we eradicate all the bad karma we have created,
May we walk on the Path of the Bodhisattvas life after life.

Moreover, Master Cheng Yen frequently refers to the bodhisattva path in her dharma talks and in her talks with the organization's volunteers. She often connects the charitable works undertaken by the organization with the bodhisattva path and exhorts her followers to cultivate themselves spiritually as they do good works when volunteering with Tzu Chi. She states: "To enter the world of Tzu Chi is to embark on the journey on the Path of the Bodhisattvas" (2002: 212).

Master Cheng Yen expounds on the bodhisattva ethic in her book, *The True Path (Zhen shi zhi lu)*, a work which lays out the Buddhist faith, doctrines, and values that form the core of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation's philosophy of charity, compassion and help for the world. This book is Cheng Yen's definition of her own Jing Si dharma lineage that she began in 2006, the year after the death of her tonsure master, Venerable Yinshun. She states: "When we determine to become bodhisattvas in society, we must use our Buddha nature and wisely spend our time expending ourselves for others in space" (2008: 51)¹⁵. In Master Cheng Yen's teachings, the Buddha nature is the core of goodness and compassion that lies at the heart of every sentient being, especially every human being. Cultivating this good core is the affective part of practicing the bodhisattva ethic in Tzu Chi.

The cultivation begins with a vow or determination to become a bodhisattva, not in the distant future, but in society today. This vow corresponds with the notion of "the mind of

¹⁵ Translated by TZL.

enlightenment” (*bodhicitta*) in traditional Mahayana teachings on the bodhisattva ethic (P. Harvey 2000). The rational or intellectual side lies in the cultivation of wisdom, which Cheng Yen says must be cultivated in the active process of doing, of “expending ourselves for others in space.” In this respect, Cheng Yen’s cultivation is a form of farming Chan. Although her followers do not engage in Chan’s sitting meditation, they are taught to seek enlightenment or wisdom, as they mindfully “carry out routine ordinary tasks” (Gethin 1998: 262), especially in the tasks that make up their service to society.

Cheng Yen’s teaching on the bodhisattva ethic strongly emphasizes the affective side, focusing on how her followers must develop their compassion and great love for all humans, for society, and for all living things. The following chapter will analyze in greater detail how Master Cheng Yen incorporates environmentalism into this notion of compassion, which is the basis for the bodhisattva ethic. The end result of having all her followers walking with her on this bodhisattva path of compassion is that “together [they] can create a Pure Land on earth” (2002: 212).

Although the bodhisattva path figures prominently in Master Cheng Yen’s teachings, the term is used less frequently in the discourse of her followers. Tzu Chi members do, however, speak much about compassion and great love. Many Tzu Chi informants reported giving up meat and becoming vegetarians because they cannot bear to think of animals suffering. Others reported volunteering in Tzu Chi because they feel a sense of compassion for the poor, the sick, and the victims of disaster relief. Most reported being motivated to volunteer at Tzu Chi by a desire to help save the world, which is the hallmark of a bodhisattva.

With respect to general Buddhist practice, the main emphasis of Tzu Chi’s spiritual practice is doing good with compassion in society. In addition to its good works, the group

practices many of the traditional Buddhist rituals, but to a lesser degree than other groups. For example, the nuns at the Abode of Still Thoughts hold one dharma gathering ritual (*fahui*) per month, in which they chant the Medicine Buddha sutra and transfer the merit to all the donors, volunteers, and beneficiaries of Tzu Chi. Unlike dharma gatherings at other Buddhist sects, Tzu Chi's monthly dharma gathering is not specially sponsored, and the names of individual large donors are not read; the merit is transferred to categories of people as a group (field notes 2017). Tzu Chi's lay believers come together several times per month for group sutra chanting, and some local chapters have group sessions for copying the sutras in Chinese calligraphy. Master Cheng Yen also gives regular dharma talks on Buddhist sutras and other texts. The members of Tzu Chi chapters around the world watch these talks through online video technology in private webinars or on the Tzu Chi Da Ai TV YouTube channel. Brummans and Hwang (2010) tested the Tzu Chi method of Buddhist cultivation and found it to be credible and practical, although the results varied greatly from believer to believer. Thus, the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation has all the characteristics of a modern humanistic Buddhist group, in which principle and practice are emphasized, and cultivation of the bodhisattva ethic is the central focus of the group's definition of the "sacred."

A Brief History of Dharma Drum Mountain

Dharma Drum Mountain was founded in 1989 by Chan Master Sheng Yen for the purpose of "realizing the vow he made when he was a young boy to benefit others by sharing with them the compassion, methods, and teachings of the Buddha" (Dharma Drum Mountain 2013: 17). The group's mission is to uplift the character of humanity and build a pure land on earth, and its primary method is education. Dharma Drum Mountain's headquarters in the Jinshan District of New Taipei City, Taiwan, is called the Dharma Drum Mountain World Center

for Buddhist Education. This Center is home to the Dharma Drum Mountain Sangha University for training Dharma Drum Mountain's monastics, the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies to promote the academic study of Buddhism, and Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts, which combines both the Dharma Drum Buddhist Studies College and the Dharma Drum College of Humanities and Social Sciences. In addition to running these Buddhist academic institutions, Dharma Drum Mountain is an active Buddhist sect that provides teachings on Buddhist dharma and Chan meditation and that organizes Buddhist ritual events at its temples and monasteries in Taiwan and around the world. It also runs several NGOs, in which its lay members can volunteer and serve the community.

Master Sheng Yen, the founder of Dharma Drum Mountain, was born as the youngest of six children to a family of poor farmers near Shanghai, China, in 1930. His birth name was Chang Baokang. The family's home was washed away when the Yangzi River flooded during Baokang's second year of life, and they lost everything. Baokang was quite sickly and developmentally delayed. He did not speak until the age of six and did not enter school until the age of nine. His education was frequently interrupted because his parents could not afford the fees, and he often had to work as a child laborer in the fields. When he was fourteen, a family friend asked Baokang if he wanted to join a monastery on Wolf Mountain and become a monk. Although Baokang did not know what that meant, he immediately agreed to the plan (S. Y. Shi 2012a). He was ordained at the Wolf Mountain Monastery in 1943.

As a young monk, Sheng Yen learned to chant sutras, do temple chores, and carry out temple rituals. In 1947, Sheng Yen's grand master allowed him to enroll in a seminary run by the students of Taixu: the Buddhist Academy of Jingan Monastery in Shanghai. After barely two years at the academy, Sheng Yen's situation changed again because Chiang Kai-Shek's

Nationalist army lost to Mao Zedong's Communists. Sheng Yen took the only way available to him to escape from China's mainland and left the monastery to become a KMT soldier, retreating with the army to Taiwan soon after he enlisted. Sheng Yen requested and received an assignment in the army's signal corps, so that he could avoid killing people (S. Y. Shi 2012a). He also reports telling his fellow soldiers that he was a monk, so that they would not invite him to drink or carouse with them. He did his best to keep his monastic vows during his time in the army, and after ten years as a soldier, Sheng Yen was honorably discharged on January 1, 1960 (S. Y. Shi 2012a: 49).

Soon after his discharge from the army, Sheng Yen found a second tonsure master, Venerable Dong Chu, to take him in as a disciple. He spent two years working at the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Culture as editor of the Buddhist magazine *Humanity*, under the guidance of Dong Chu. Then in 1961, Sheng Yen began a six-year solitary retreat at a farming Chan monastery in the mountains of Meinung County in southern Taiwan. At the beginning of Sheng Yen's retreat several famous monks from around the island came to seal the door to Sheng Yen's room after he had gone inside. His food was delivered by the monastics at the small monastery, and he was able to communicate with the outside world by mail. But Sheng Yen did not leave his room until he had finished his time of study. All he did in the room was study Buddhist texts, repent while making prostrations, meditate, and eventually write books and articles about Buddhism (field notes 2017).

Sheng Yen returned to northern Taiwan after his six-year solitary retreat. He was active in a series of written debates defending Buddhism from attacks by Christian leaders. One criticism against the Buddhists was that none of the Chinese Buddhist leaders knew Sanskrit, and therefore, their understanding of their religion had to be skewed. To defend Buddhism against

this criticism, Sheng Yen decided to go to Japan for advanced study in 1969. He earned a Ph.D. in Buddhist Literature from Rissho University in 1975. Once Sheng Yen had earned his degree, the Taiwan government invited him back as an overseas scholar to discuss ways to improve education on the island. Venerable Dong Chu hoped that Sheng Yen would stay in Taiwan to help improve Buddhist education, but Sheng Yen was not sure where to begin and first returned to Japan. In December 1975, a wealthy lay Buddhist invited Sheng Yen to teach in New York, and he accepted that invitation.

He got a job teaching Chan meditation at the Temple of Great Enlightenment in New York City in September 1976 (Dharma Drum Mountain 2013), and he remained in that position until 1978. Although Master Sheng Yen had been ordained in the Caodong Chan lineage and had learned Zen meditation in Japan while pursuing his doctorate, the practice of meditation had been lost among Chinese lay believers. In the United States of the mid-1970s, however, Buddhist meditation was quite popular, and the demand from his U.S. students caused Sheng Yen to develop himself as a teacher of Chan meditation. Sheng Yen began spending six months of each year in Taiwan and six months in the U.S. He also began teaching Chan meditation classes to revive the practice in Taiwan (field notes 2017). In 1978, the dharma heir of the Linji Chan lineage transmitted the methods of that school to Sheng Yen, making him the dharma heir of two famous Chinese Chan lineages.

Venerable Dong Chu passed away in 1978, and he named Sheng Yen as his successor in the roles of director of the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Culture and abbot of the Nung Chan Monastery in the Beitou District of Taipei, Taiwan. Sheng Yen continued to divide his time between the United States and Taiwan. Because he quit his job at the New York Temple of Great Enlightenment when he took over new responsibilities in Taiwan, Sheng Yen wound up

homeless on the streets of New York for a short time (field notes 2017) until he established a Chan Meditation Center in New York to “spread Chan Buddhism in the West.” He also worked in Taiwan to “[revive] Chinese Buddhism” (Dharma Drum Mountain 2013: 11).

In Taiwan, Master Sheng Yen ordained his first group of four monastic disciples in 1980, and they were the beginning of the Dharma Drum Mountain sangha. During the 1980s, he attracted crowds of people to his dharma talks and dharma gathering rituals at Nung Chan Monastery. He gave classes on Chan meditation and began holding seven-day Chan retreats, which attracted many followers.

He taught that his followers had to learn both the concepts and the methods of Chan Buddhism, in order to make progress towards enlightenment. “Without cultivating practice, studying Buddhist concepts is just an intellectual exercise; on the other hand, practicing the methods without understanding can lead you astray” (Dharma Drum Mountain 2013: 22). Sheng Yen taught his monastic and lay disciples to discipline their minds by persevering in meditation practice and by regulating their conduct. He encouraged them to continue their meditation in all aspects of their lives by regulating their conduct, calming their minds, and applying Buddhist wisdom in their daily situations. Over time, he assured them that they would come to a point at which they attained to true compassion, which is different from ordinary love. “True compassion springs from selfless wisdom and is not conditioned by relationships; it is everywhere equal” (49). The culmination of such disciplined practice is enlightenment, which according to Sheng Yen has to come through the aspiration to benefit others (54).

As Sheng Yen built his organization, he and his disciples gradually systematized their education program in both the academic Buddhist Studies institutions and their classes for believers and for the community. As the first Chinese Buddhist monk to earn a Ph.D., Sheng Yen

was quite famous, and he was involved in many international meetings with global religious leaders to work for peace and to improve the environmental situation on earth. In all his speeches on the important matters affecting humans around the world, Sheng Yen emphasized that the real solution to social problems comes from changing human minds and causing people to be less greedy and selfish (Dharma Drum Mountain 2013, c.f. Cruz and Forman 2015). His work until his death in February 2009 was focused on this trajectory: improving people's minds to improve their character and thus influence society. Since Sheng Yen's death, his lay and monastic disciples have continued working to carry out their teacher's vision of improving human character to build a pure land on earth.

The Bodhisattva Ethic in the Teachings and Practices of Dharma Drum Mountain

The bodhisattva ethic figures prominently in the teachings of Master Sheng Yen and in the practices of Dharma Drum Mountain. To remind his followers of the bodhisattva path, Master Sheng Yen wrote a short piece called "Bodhisattva Practice" (*pusa xing*) which hangs on the walls of many Dharma Drum Mountain monasteries or field offices. Part of it says:

Li ta wei di yi, wei li zhong sheng gu, bu wei zhu ku nan, ru zhong sheng li ku, zi ku ji anle

Benefitting others comes first / To benefit all sentient beings / Do not fear troubles / If one delivers sentient beings from suffering / One's own suffering is resolved in peace (Author's photo, July 2017)¹⁶

This quote shows Dharma Drum Mountain's emphasis on service to others, as a way of cultivating oneself on the path to Buddhahood. This approach is less affective than that of Tzu Chi, but it entails disciplined cultivation, which is also important in developing virtue ethics (Keown [1992] 2001, Madsen 2018).

¹⁶ Translated by TZL.

As noted above, Dharma Drum Mountain is a religious organization with an emphasis on education. Therefore, it incorporates the bodhisattva precepts into its religious education and ritual. One semester of its Buddhist Studies class sequence focuses on the bodhisattva precepts (see Chapter 4). The organization also holds annual three-day “Bodhisattva Precept” retreats in its temples and monasteries that serve as leading regional centers. Respondents who had attended those retreats reported that the first two and one-half days were spent receiving instruction on the meaning of the bodhisattva precepts and practicing the ritual for “taking the precepts,” or making a solemn vow to adhere to the bodhisattva precepts for the rest of this life and for all of one’s future lives. The last half day of the retreat is the actual ceremony when the believers ritually vow to live by the bodhisattva precepts. Lay believers who had undergone the ritual at the end of the three-day retreat were given a “bodhisattva” stole to wear in addition to their black ceremonial robes during certain Dharma Drum Mountain rituals.

Each Dharma Drum Mountain monastery, temple, and field office holds weekly group chanting rituals. They rotate the content of the chanting among four major liturgies per month, which include chanting Amitabha’s name, the Great Compassion Dharani, and the Great Compassion Repentance Ritual (field notes 2017-2018). One week out of every month, all participants in these group rituals chant the “Bodhisattva Precept Recitation Ritual.” Those who have attended the retreats renew their vows during this monthly ritual. The prayer booklet (Dharma Drum Mountain n.d.) for the ritual shows that after prostrations to the buddhas and bodhisattvas, the ritual begins with repentance for having created bad karma. It then continues with an affirmation of faith in Buddhism and a recitation of the great bodhisattva vows to deliver all sentient beings, to cut off all vexations, to master all approaches to the dharma, and to attain supreme Buddhahood. The ceremony culminates with a recitation of the ten bodhisattva precepts

or the bodhisattva code of ethics and a transfer of merit to other sentient beings. The act of regularly chanting the bodhisattva vows and precepts with the entire group serves to reinforce this virtue ethic among Dharma Drum Mountain believers.

Master Sheng Yen gave a lengthy exposition on the bodhisattva precepts in December 1997, which has been made into a booklet that is given out free-of-charge to anyone interested in learning about this aspect of Buddhism. Master Sheng Yen begins by stating that the foundations of Buddhism are “love, kindness, and compassion” (2005: 8). He defines a bodhisattva as “a person who aspires to Buddhahood while seeking to enlighten all sentient beings on the path” (15). He then explains that the precepts are a kind of discipline to help practitioners develop their own virtues and cannot be considered rules by which they can judge others’ conduct (23). Sheng Yen distills the precepts into three major categories, which he says are the heart of all Mahayana Buddhist practice: “to stop evil, to do good, and to deliver all sentient beings” (30). The rest of the exegesis demonstrates how each precept is a way for the believers to actualize the practice of love, kindness, and compassion in their daily lives.

Although there is no mention of environmentalism, per se, in Master Sheng Yen’s teachings on the bodhisattva precepts, he places great emphasis on all sentient beings and on the equality of all beings because all are suffering in the cycle of death and rebirth (2005: 11). The root of a bodhisattva’s compassion is a recognition of this equality of all living things and a realization that we are all interdependent (8). These concepts contribute greatly to Dharma Drum Mountain’s teachings and practices related to environmentalism, which will be covered in subsequent chapters.

In Dharma Drum Mountain the idea of cultivating oneself spiritually in a disciplined way is greatly emphasized. Master Sheng Yen taught that all believers are “baby bodhisattvas,” who

need to cultivate themselves with Buddhist dharma and practices, so that they can mature into beings who really can save others (field notes 2017). Dharma Drum Mountain classes in all areas are designed to lead the believers step-by-step in their spiritual cultivation. This process is seen as one that will require many lifetimes, yet the lay believers whom I met were quite earnest in their practice and did not feel that cultivation was something they could put off until later.

Many Dharma Drum Mountain informants reported that the Bodhisattva Precept Retreat was a significant milestone in their spiritual cultivation, but not many were able to articulate its effect on their lives and practice. Some believers, who had taken the precepts under Master Sheng Yen in the 1990s, reported that at the beginning they had not really understood what was going on. They listened to the explanations of the precepts and followed along with everyone in practicing and preparing for the ritual. But then, later, after many years of reciting Master Sheng Yen's "Bodhisattva Practice" poem and renewing their vows at the monthly rituals, these believers reported that participating in these regular times of self-evaluation, repentance, and renewal made a difference in their daily lives. This practice of coming together regularly with a group of people committed to improving themselves and society had a definite effect on each member's life, causing them to improve in their actions, words, and intentions. But the effects appeared gradually, in a process that took years of commitment and cultivation, which they considered to be quite "sacred" and of great importance to their faith.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Buddhism equally emphasizes teachings and practices. It is a non-theistic religion that teaches people how to transcend the suffering of the world by cultivating themselves until they reach enlightenment. Since Buddhism has no omnipotent god, the "sacred" (Durkheim 1995, Jules-Rosette 1985, C. Chen 2008) aspect of the

religion is the believers' process of cultivation. This process is what motivates Buddhist believers to change their lifestyles, to the extent that those lifestyle changes produce good karma, which will eventually enable the believers to arrive at their ultimate goal of enlightenment. The humanistic emphasis of Taiwan's modern Buddhist sects should be viewed more as an updated definition of the "sacred" than a move towards secularization. The locus of the believers' practice and cultivation has shifted from merely focusing on traditional rituals and chanting in temples and monasteries to a broader focus on doing good within society as a whole. This shift of focus in humanistic Buddhism can even be seen as a sacralization of the quotidian, to the extent that humanistic Buddhism encourages its believers to cultivate compassion and wisdom in all of their daily lives in ways that benefit all sentient beings in the world. Such cultivation is the way they actualize the bodhisattva ethic.

In Taiwan's humanistic Buddhist groups, cultivating the bodhisattva ethic is an important aspect of the believers' sacred process. This ethic is a virtue ethic (Madsen 2018) that is developed through disciplined community practices. It is also an ethic that causes the believers to look outward and to find ways to benefit all sentient beings. This ethic lays the foundation for the pro-environmental lifestyle changes that Taiwan's humanistic Buddhist believers generally make. The environmental ramifications of the bodhisattva ethic will be discussed in the next chapter.

It is important to emphasize that the believers' lifestyle changes are the result of a long, disciplined process of cultivation according to Buddhist teachings and practices. While Buddhism teaches the interdependence of all things, and some advanced Chan meditators do experience their oneness with the universe, most believers' lifestyle changes come from the discipline of cultivating the bodhisattva virtue rather than from mere feelings. This corresponds

to the findings of Bellah and his associates in *Habits of the Heart* (1985: 235). It also calls into question the usefulness of the “Oneness Beliefs Scale” (Garfield, et. al. 2014) because that scale only considers attitudes, while ignoring the importance of living within a community strong enough to create behavioral norms as an important push-pull factor for causing behavioral changes among populations.

Buddhism’s emphasis on both principle and practice can be seen in Chinese culture, which is quite pragmatic. There are many folk sayings that emphasize the importance of doing things over talking about things. A favorite of these sayings among my Taiwanese friends and relatives is “do much, speak little” (*duo zuo shi, shao shuo hua*). Taiwanese people of my acquaintance tend to judge others on their accomplishments more than on their rhetoric. This social emphasis on practical application is reflected, then, in the religious forms found at Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain.

Chapter 3

Responding to the Recognized Strain of Environmental Degradation with Integrated Religious Teachings, Practices and Norms

Smelser ([1962] 1965) and Snow et. al. (1998) theorize that social strain is a vital push-pull factor contributing to collective action. This chapter argues that the Buddhist groups in this study moved pro-environmental practices into their sacred cultivation in response to the effervescence (Durkheim 1995) or *puissance* (Maffesoli 1996) in Taiwan's society as the population vehemently reacted against the "terrestrial strain" of environmental deterioration on the island in the 1980s and 1990s. This study finds that when Taiwan experienced the social strain of extreme environmental degradation in the second half of the twentieth century, the leaders of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain responded to the popular outcry by emphasizing various aspects of Buddhism's cultural tool kit to inspire their followers to adopt pro-environmental lifestyle behaviors as faith practices. This chapter begins with an overview of Taiwan's geography and its recent history, including the environmental degradation that led to a strong secular environmental movement in the late 1980s. It then shows how Master Cheng Yen and Master Sheng Yen deployed the cultural resources of Buddhism to join the environmental movement in combatting this particular social problem on the island of Taiwan.

A Brief Introduction to Taiwan

Taiwan is a small island that lies approximately 100 miles off the southeastern coast of China. It is a leaf-shaped or oval landmass that is roughly 245 miles long and 90 miles wide with an area of 13,976 square miles (Copper 2018). The estimated population of the island for 2018 is approximately 23.69 million. This gives Taiwan an average population density of roughly 1680 people per square mile, making it the 17th most densely populated country in the world.

Population density is much higher in Taiwan's four major urban centers of Taipei Metropolitan Area (including Taipei City, New Taipei City, and Keelung City—total population 7 million), Kaohsiung City (population 2.8 million), Taichung City (population 2.7 million), and Tainan City (population 1.8 million). There are no other major cities in Taiwan; as a matter of fact, all other cities have fewer than 500,000 people (Taiwan Population). At the time of the 2012 census, approximately 60% of Taiwan's population lived in urban settings and 40% lived in rural areas (Copper 2018). Population growth has slowed greatly over the past decade in Taiwan, and Taiwan's population density ranking is down from its peak position as the second most densely populated country, which is where it stood in the late 1980s, when the strain of environmental degradation reached the point of disrupting the island's quotidian (Snow et. al. 1998), causing Taiwan's secular environmental movement to erupt, sometimes violently, and the Buddhist groups in this study to adopt pro-environmental faith teachings, practices, and norms.

Taiwan's History

To understand the development of Taiwan's environmental strain, it is helpful to briefly review the island's history. Taiwan's earliest inhabitants were Austronesians. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Dutch and the Spanish established trading posts on the island, and they gave land to settlers wishing to move to Taiwan from China's Fujian Province. In 1644, the Manchus defeated China's Ming Dynasty and established the Qing Dynasty. Ming loyalists retreated to Taiwan, drove out the Dutch, and attempted to use Taiwan as a springboard for restoring the Ming emperors. The Qing imperial army conquered the island in 1683, bringing Taiwan fully under Chinese imperial rule. The Qing emperors exercised a policy of benign neglect, and Taiwan's agricultural economy flourished, as the island produced rice, sugar, and tea for export to China's mainland. In 1895, the Qing emperor ceded Taiwan to Japan under provisions of the

Unequal Treaties, and Taiwan was ruled as a “model Japanese colony” until it was returned to China in 1945 at the end of World War II. Between 1947 and 1949, the Nationalist government under Chiang Kai-shek retreated to Taiwan after losing to Mao Zedong’s Communists in China’s Civil War. Since then, Taiwan has been called the Republic of China and stands in contrast to the People’s Republic of China on the mainland (Rigger 2009).

Modern Taiwan developed out of the chaos caused by war and social upheavals in the mid-twentieth century. The island’s population in 1949 consisted of Austronesians, descendants of Chinese settlers arriving during the imperial era (the Hokkien, or Taiwanese, and the Hakka), and the newly arrived soldiers and government officials of Chiang Kai-Shek’s Kuomintang (KMT) government and army. The Japanese had begun to industrialize the island, as part of its model colony program, but between 1945 and 1949, Chiang’s government plundered Taiwan’s economy in its last-ditch efforts to retain control of the mainland. With the KMT’s retreat to Taiwan in 1949, Chiang’s regime was faced with the existential imperative of immediately stabilizing and developing Taiwan’s economy (Rigger 2009).

Chiang Kai-Shek’s Nationalist KMT was a Leninist-style authoritarian party (Goldman and Esarey 2008: 54), despite the fact that the Republic of China’s constitution was that of a republican democracy (Peerenboom and Chen 2003: 138). Chiang Kai-Shek and his successor and son, Chiang Ching-Kuo, kept Taiwan tightly controlled under martial law from 1947 to 1987 (Arrigo, Lin, and Lin 1996). The Chiangs imposed mandatory education in Mandarin Chinese with a bias toward the culture of the Chinese mainland, suppressing Taiwan’s Hokkien, Hakka, and Austronesian dialects and cultures (Rigger 2009: 135). And, Chiang Kai-Shek placed the economy under the control of technocrats who successfully implemented land reform, agricultural improvements, industrialization, and shifts from an import-dependent economy to a

self-sufficient domestic economy and eventually to an export-oriented economy (Rigger 2009: 45-51). The result of nearly four decades of these policies was that, by the 1980s, Taiwan had high rates of literacy and a growing middle class (Solinger 2008: 100). There was also a nascent civil society of non-governmental and non-family organizations to which Taiwan's people could belong (Madsen 2008b). Martial law was lifted in 1987, and the Chiang family relinquished its hold on power when Chiang Ching-Kuo (Chiang Kai-shek's son) made Lee Deng-Hui his vice-president and eventual successor. The island is now a thriving democracy and the presidency has successfully transitioned between Kuomintang (KMT) and Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) presidents three times since 2000.

Taiwan's rush to modernize and industrialize under the rule of Chiang Kai-Shek and Chiang Ching-Kuo created many environmental problems because insufficient attention was paid to environmental impact assessment, much less to environmental protection, and local populations had no say in policy during the era of martial law (Arrigo, et. al. 1996). Furthermore, during the martial law era, the KMT government's land reform measures kept individual farms small, as a means of controlling wealthy landowners. This meant that average Taiwanese households often had to engage in home manufacturing for a second source of income to make ends meet (Gates 1987, 1996). The result was a chaotic patchwork of farming, small business, and light industry that created myriad environmental problems (Arrigo 1994; Arrigo, et. al. 1996; Schak 2018).

The Strain of Environmental Degradation in Taiwan and Taiwan's Environmental Movement

Environmental Degradation

According to Professor David Chang, Director of the Environment and Development Program at the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts and Professor Emeritus of Environmental Studies at National Taiwan University, Taiwan was, for many years, the second most densely populated piece of land in the world, which intensified all its problems related to environmental degradation (Interview 11/15/2017). Since there are so many people packed into such a small land area, waste disposal has been a critical issue since Taiwan began to modernize and develop a capitalistic society. Taiwan's waste production tripled during its so-called "economic miracle" between 1979 and 1992, and the government had trouble dealing with all the trash. The local news in the early 1990s was filled with reports of garbage wars and garbage mountains (Taiwan Review 1993). Taiwan even earned the appellation "Garbage Mountain" during that time period (Middlehurst 2019).

As the economy shifted to a modern, capitalistic mode, consumption increased dramatically, and so did non-biodegradable waste. Garbage trucks could not contain all the trash set out for collection by the households on their routes, and once a truck was full, the trash collectors would set fire to piles of garbage at each intersection in the residential neighborhoods of the city of Zhongli where I lived from December 1986 to September 1990. The trash collectors had to burn the excess garbage because each truck was only allowed to dump one load per day in the county's dump. The fumes from the burning garbage were noxious, and the fires burning at each crossroads were dangerous and very disruptive to daily life. The daily burning of trash also contributed to issues of contaminated drinking water and dangerous levels of air pollution. There was a general consensus among every one of my acquaintances, at the time, that something had to be done to protect the environment by solving the trash problem. Indeed,

surveys done in Taiwan in 1983 and 1986 found that two thirds of the population considered environmental degradation a serious problem (Schak 2018).

Sociologist and Taiwan Green Party activist Linda Arrigo (1994) documents similar problems in the southern city of Tainan. She reports that at the time of her research, garbage in Tainan was an extreme problem. The soil in the farms was contaminated, as were water supplies. Air pollution from burning trash was another problem mentioned in Arrigo's report. In addition to these problems, Arrigo (1999-2000) reports problems from across the island, such as hormone pollution, toxic waste from giant corporations, carcinogens in the environment creating a "cancer corridor" near industrial zones, and excessive littering in recreation areas.

Weller (2006) describes garbage wars across the island as residents rose up to refuse the dumping of garbage near their homes. In 1990, protesters blocked the garbage dump for Taiwan's southern port city of Kaohsiung for a total of 37 days (Middlehurst 2019). Taiwan Review (1993) shows pictures of garbage mounds on a remote area of Taiwan's coast in Nantou County. The trash had been dumped by garbage trucks that had already met their quota at the county dump. Perhaps the scariest phenomenon of those times, in my memory, was the nightly news reporting on Taoyuan's "garbage mountain." It was a literal mountain of trash that had spontaneously combusted and smoldered constantly for months (Schak 2018). The trash was loosely piled and unstable, to the extent that no one could safely extinguish the fire or deal with the garbage. Footage of the flaming mountain of trash aired regularly on the nightly news; this reporting combined with what residents experienced in their local neighborhoods contributed to the general consensus that the environment was a critical problem that needed to be fixed.

Taiwan's Environmental Movement

Weller (2006) describes how Taiwan's environmental movement began with the government's establishment of national parks in the mid-twentieth century, as it emulated the Western model in its work to modernize Taiwan's society. In his study, Weller describes how the people of Taiwan had to develop a consciousness of Nature as something to be preserved. The result was a hybrid kind of environmentalism that combined concepts drawn from Chinese culture with Western notions of preserving the natural environment. Ho (2012) further describes how different classes of Taiwanese citizens hold different views on what it means to protect the environment with the highly-educated intellectual elite holding a more cosmopolitan view that accords better with scientific findings and Western ideas of preserving pristine wilderness, and the middle and working classes drawing on elements of indigenous culture to invent their own ways of protecting the environment. The elite do not necessarily hold more sway over public policy, as there are many more people involved with local volunteer efforts, and their sheer numbers affect decisions made by public officials.

Grassroots environmental activism arose in the late 1980s in response to the lack of environmental impact planning during the government's efforts to industrialize the island's economy after the Kuomintang government retreated to Taiwan from the mainland (Arrigo 1994; Arrigo, et. al. 1996; Weller 2006; Arrigo and Puleston 2006; Prof. David Chang Interview 11/15/2017). The first public protests occurred in 1987 immediately after the lifting of martial law (Arrigo, et. al. 1996). Several NGOs to protect the environment were formed soon after the lifting of martial law; these include the Taiwan Environmental Protection Union and the Taiwan Homemakers' Environmental Union (Arrigo 1999-200, Hsiao 2005). At first, the government did not take environmental issues seriously, despite the public protests (Arrigo, et. al. 1996; Arrigo 1999-2000). The KMT government did pass a comprehensive environmental plan in 1987, in

response to the protests, but it was incomplete and not well enforced (Arrigo, et. al. 1996). The negative effects of environmental degradation were so widespread, that public opinion strongly favored ameliorating the situation, and grassroots protest continued.

One plank of Chen Shui-Bian's presidential platform was a comprehensive plan to ameliorate Taiwan's environmental degradation. He was elected to the presidency in 2000. By the early 2000s, Taiwan's government had responded, somewhat, to the popular pressure for improving the environment, even coopting the agenda of secular environmental groups (Weller 2006). This caused the secular groups to stagnate into NIMBY reactivism (Arrigo and Puleston 2006; Weller 2006; field notes 2017) and opened the door for a value-oriented religious approach (Smelser 1962: 313, 325) to increase its influence in furthering the work to preserve Taiwan's natural resources. Ho (2012) reports that by 2008, most people in Taiwan could name the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation as an environmental group, but they were unable to name any of the secular environmental organizations. Nearly all of my people-in-the-street interviewees in 2017 identified the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation as a group that does important environmental work in Taiwan (field notes 2017).

The people of Taiwan with whom I spoke in 2017 all knew that climate change is a problem. There has been a marked increase in summer temperatures of approximately 5-7 degrees Celsius between the 1980s when I lived in Taiwan and the present day. Rural places that did not need air conditioning in the past, have had to install air conditioning in the last five or six years because summer temperatures are brutally hot, and humidity levels have increased (field notes 2016). The tropical storms that hit the island every summer and fall have increased in intensity and in the amount of destruction that they cause. Most people in Taiwan are quite health conscious (Ho 2012); they are very aware of the health dangers caused by air pollution,

soil contamination, and water pollution. They want the government to work on improving the environment, and they admire volunteers who work for the public good by helping to clean up the environment. This consensus on the problem of environmental degradation cuts across gender, age, and socioeconomic class (field notes 2017).

Taiwan's Humanistic Buddhist Prescription for Protecting the Natural Environment

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain began integrating pro-environmental teachings, practices, and behavioral norms into their religious teachings and faith practices in the early 1990s, at a time when Taiwan's secular environmental groups were engaged in protests and struggles with the government to advocate change in the governmental policies regarding environmental planning and protection. Both Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain eschew official engagement in partisan politics. Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation even has a rule that its members must not engage in political demonstrations or protests. Members of both groups report being encouraged to inform themselves about political issues and to vote wisely in the privacy of the voting booth, but informants stated that political protest could potentially create bad karma with people on the other side of the issue. In formulating the environmental teachings and practices for their groups, Master Cheng Yen and Master Sheng Yen sought ways of protecting the environment that individuals could take without engaging in the fierce, and sometimes violent, protests that were occurring around them. Both groups focus on individual responsibility and behaviors, and both groups define the prescribed actions to protect the environment as part of a believer's spiritual cultivation while on the path of the bodhisattva.

Pro-Environmental Teachings, Practices and Norms in Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

Pro-environmental Teachings

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Master Cheng Yen first promoted pro-environmental behavior among her followers in 1990 when she suggested that Tzu Chi volunteers should go out and clean up litter in their communities. Today Tzu Chi's message about environmentalism is rooted in Cheng Yen's further teachings. In her 2008 book *The True Path (Jun shi zhi lu)*, Master Cheng Yen outlines the beliefs and practices of Tzu Chi's Jing Si lineage of Buddhism. She places environmentalism in the section entitled "Explanation of Beliefs" under the subheading of "Tzu Chi's Spirit of Great Love." In this section, she speaks of the importance of the earth to all life and of human actions, such as war and the use of fossil fuels, that have damaged and harmed the earth. She states: "Tzu Chi members practice environmentalism because they cannot bear that the earth be damaged. There is only one earth; it is the mission of every human to treasure and care for it"¹⁷ (95). She also speaks of conserving water and reducing consumption because the believers have become so compassionate that they cannot bear to think of any waste or any action that could potentially harm the earth or any living thing on earth.

Their compassion is so great that it extends to material objects, giving them a desire to extend the life of those things by repairing them or repurposing their parts instead of wastefully discarding them. Tzu Chi's environmental practice includes vegetarianism, in part because the believers cannot bear to harm animals by killing and eating them, and in part because the process of meat production creates methane, which contributes greatly to global warming. Moreover, global warming increasingly produces disasters that cause suffering among humans and other sentient beings. Tzu Chi's practice of great love towards all living things is part of the bodhisattva path, which Master Cheng Yen teaches her followers consists of using time, space, and human relationships to bring Buddhism into their daily lives (49-51). She encourages her

¹⁷ Translated by TZL.

followers to create a group culture of practicing love for all living things, as they work together in the various service projects of the organization. Thus, Tzu Chi's current teachings on environmentalism utilize the sacred Buddhist act of cultivating oneself as a bodhisattva, and they particularly emphasize the affective, compassionate aspect of that value and symbol.

The section above is a more recent summary of Master Cheng Yen's teachings on environmentalism than her first pro-environmental exhortation in 1990, cited in Pan (2016), in which she asked her followers to use their clapping hands to pick up litter and clean up the environment in their communities. Lee and Han (2015) describe the development of the discourse of Tzu Chi's pro-environmental message starting from discussions of "environmental protection" beginning in 1990 and moving through teachings about recycling as both a life practice and a form of spiritual cultivation to its current more integrated message on mitigating climate change by reducing one's carbon footprint through vegetarianism and reduced consumption. They show how the environmental message started as a reaction to local social problems, but as the severity of global natural disasters increased, the organization's teachings became more complex and comprehensive.

Master Cheng Yen continues to update her teachings on environmentalism through her two daily talks with the believers.¹⁸ Her first talk, given at 5:30 am just after the nuns' morning

¹⁸ Master Cheng Yen suffered a long illness in 2018, after the Taiwan portion of my field work had been completed, which prevented her from speaking at 5:30 am for many months. After her recovery, she spent more than a month traveling around the island visiting the Tzu Chi chapters and meeting face-to-face with her disciples. During her time of journeying, she did not give morning dharma talks, either. When Master Cheng Yen is unable to "ascend the chair" at 5:30 am to preach the dharma, recordings of her earlier dharma talks are still shown to all the believers. During such times, she only speaks a few times a week at the 7:30 volunteer time, and on the days when she does not "ascend the chair," a lay leader moderates the volunteers' reports. Even when she is ill, Master Cheng Yen still meets daily with groups of volunteers, and videos of those talks are shown on days when she does not attend the morning volunteer meetings. Her online video ministry seems to have been successfully continued with edited tapes of earlier times of teaching, even when she was not available to speak new material. She resumed her regular ministry in February 2019 (TC San Diego email notification 2/19/2019).

prayer time, is a dharma talk in Taiwanese expounding one of the Buddhist sutras or repentance texts. During these talks, Cheng Yen selects a few sentences and then speaks in a homiletic style, relating the sutras to the believers' daily lives. When the day's selection from the sutra text ties into an environmental theme, Master Cheng Yen reinforces her teachings on the need for pro-environmental practices among her followers.

During her second speech of the day, which occurs after breakfast at 7:30 am, Master Cheng Yen speaks in Mandarin and gives instructions and exhortations to Tzu Chi's volunteers. She shows video clips of volunteers doing admirable work or clips of natural disasters that need attention and then teaches the volunteers what they should learn from each example or what areas are waiting for Tzu Chi aid. She frequently speaks of Tzu Chi's environmental mission during these exhortations, and she often praises the "recycling bodhisattvas," the elderly men and women who volunteer regularly at the Tzu Chi recycling and environmental education centers. Master Cheng Yen's second morning talks regularly feature volunteers who mobilize their communities to carry out a mission. For example, in a 2017 morning talk with the volunteers, Master Cheng Yen highlighted a town in mainland China where ten Tzu Chi volunteers got the entire town involved in cleaning up the garbage around the night market by picking up the garbage every night themselves, while teaching their neighbors about recycling and reducing waste as they worked (field notes 2017).

The videos¹⁹ of Cheng Yen's teachings go out daily to Tzu Chi volunteers around the world, and then the staff in the Tzu Chi Foundation's Religious Affairs Department organize the

¹⁹ The early morning sutra teachings are available to active volunteers worldwide via an online link for local group cultivation, and a written Chinese version of an onsite Hualien member's notes are circulated for those who do not understand the Taiwanese dialect. These talks are edited by Da Ai TV, rebroadcast later in the day, and posted on the TV's YouTube channel as *Wisdom at Dawn*. I was told that the videos with English subtitles on the YouTube channel are about one year behind the daily talks. The videos of the morning talks with volunteers are edited, rebroadcast on Da Ai TV, and then posted online with

master's teachings and combine them with scientific information to form an ever-growing compendium of the organization's comprehensive doctrines on each of its major areas of focus. This material is then used in outline form for training and community outreach events. (See Appendix A for a copy and translation of the 2017 environmental teaching flyer.) Later, Master Cheng Yen's teachings are edited and published in book form, in which they are studied and discussed by the believers in their local study groups and book clubs.

Tzu Chi's teachings are all pragmatic and tied to real life examples because Master Cheng Yen follows the line of Buddhist thought that mindful religious practice leads first to wisdom and then to enlightenment. As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, Tzu Chi's method of spiritual cultivation works from the outer practice to the inner mental and spiritual state, as it seeks to improve human society today through practicing the bodhisattva ethic of compassion for people and the planet. Tzu Chi members frequently refer to their master's exhortation to "just do it." Therefore, doctrinal teachings are not the main focus of Tzu Chi's efforts to spread environmentalism among its own members and the world; they are merely the theoretical foundation for the believers' practice in Tzu Chi's four great charitable service missions.

Integrating Environmentalism into Tzu Chi's Four Great Missions and Eight Footprints

Master Cheng Yen has developed four major charitable missions for the volunteers of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation: Charity, Medical Outreach, Education, and Culture. Each of these missions encompasses a second major sub-mission, and the four pairs make up what Master Cheng Yen calls Tzu Chi's Eight Footprints. Thus, charity includes both giving aid to the poor and undertaking disaster relief missions around the world. The medical outreach mission has

English subtitles under the title *Life Wisdom* on the same day that they are given. The web version of each talk is considerably shorter than the original, giving Da Ai TV plenty of previously unscreened material to use when Master Cheng Yen is unable to personally minister.

expanded from building and running hospitals in low-income areas to include the largest bone marrow donor registry in Asia. Education does not just include building and running schools from preschool through university, but also it now includes an element of community volunteerism, where the Tzu Chi members go out to improve society by teaching their neighbors. The final mission of culture represents Tzu Chi's efforts to improve society by promoting a culture of respect, compassion, and great love. Master Cheng Yen has placed Tzu Chi's environmental work into this mission, encouraging her followers to expand their love and compassion to include caring for the planet (field notes 2015-2018).

In Taiwan, Tzu Chi is best known for the recycling aspect of its environmental mission, most likely because, on the island, it has 316 large recycling stations, 8,626 recycling collection points, and 86,594 volunteers engaged in recycling (Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation 2105: 99). However, Tzu Chi's environmental work also includes educational projects with local schools that promote recycling, waste reduction, vegetarianism, and water conservation. Its recycling centers all have an educational component, and I observed groups from mainland China and county officials from a rural area of Taiwan learning about best recycling practices at Tzu Chi's Hualien recycling center (field notes 2017). Tzu Chi volunteers engage in many kinds of community outreach projects to promote environmentalism among their friends, relatives, and neighbors.

In addition to having a specific line of environmental projects, Tzu Chi has also integrated green practices into all its other missions. I attended a vegetarian feast for the recipients of Tzu Chi charity in a poor indigenous village in the mountains near Tzu Chi's Abode of Still Thoughts Monastery in Hualien. One focus of the dinner was to educate the regular recipients of Tzu Chi charity about the benefits of adopting a vegetarian diet, including the

benefits to the planet of reduced meat consumption by humans. Tzu Chi's disaster relief projects only serve vegetarian food, and recycling stations are set up in all relief camps. Tzu Chi's disaster relief planning includes environmental impact assessments and attempts to reduce further harm to the planet. For example, Tzu Chi tries to set up water purification stations in disaster aid camps to reduce the need for using bottled water, thereby reducing the amount of plastic waste created by their relief efforts. Tzu Chi's hospitals in Taiwan incorporate green technology in their buildings and participate in a pilot program with Taiwan's government to recycle uncontaminated medical plastic waste, such as IV bags, turning them into household items that will not touch food, such as wheels on tea carts or plastic stools (field notes 2016 and TC Taiwan Interviews). Students in Tzu Chi's schools learn about environmentalism and are required to do community service in the recycling centers to get hands-on experience of Taiwan's waste disposal problems. Because environmentalism is integrated into all aspects of Tzu Chi's charitable service, each volunteer is trained to consider environmental sustainability, even if she is not volunteering at an "official" environmental project. Hence, Tzu Chi volunteers tend to be very conscious of the environment and comparatively knowledgeable about environmentally sustainable ways to live and work.

As part of their efforts to keep the latest environmental practices integrated into all the groups' missions, the environmental leaders focus on cutting edge science and technology. The top two developers of Tzu Chi's environmental curriculum both hold science and engineering degrees, and they do their best to ensure that Tzu Chi's materials accord with latest scientific findings (TC Taiwan Interviews 2017). Furthermore, since 2008, Da Ai Technologies Company Limited has been an integral part of Tzu Chi's recycling mission (field notes 2016, 2017; CP. Lee 2017a). Da Ai Technologies creates products out of the plastic bottles from Tzu Chi's

recycling centers and sells them to produce an income stream that supports the organization's media endeavors. Da Ai Technologies Company engages in sophisticated research and development to make products of high quality that will sell well among today's discerning consumers. The stated objective of the company's product development efforts is to create a market for items made from post-consumer waste (TC Taiwan Interviews). The logic for creating this market is to create a virtuous cycle for items in the recycling bins, as these items eventually go into the trash incinerators, if no good use can be found for them. Some academics point to the ambiguity of Tzu Chi's "moral-economic complex" (CP. Lee 2017a), but this was not an issue for most respondents of my people-in-the-street interviews, some of whom felt the organization was pragmatic and clever in its creative use of recycled resources and its resourcefulness in generating extra income²⁰ for its charity work.

Pro-environmental Behavioral Norms for Tzu Chi Volunteers in their Private Lives

In addition to general teachings and group practices, Tzu Chi has a detailed set of behavioral norms for its members' private lives. These norms are considered to be the best practices for individuals cultivating themselves on the bodhisattva path. They are also the guidelines for Tzu Chi volunteers to use as they serve as role models for other people in society. Tzu Chi's norms for living an environmentally sustainable life can be found on the environmental flyer produced by the Foundation's Religious Affairs Department. (See Appendix A.) It gives ten suggestions for living a clean, simple lifestyle:

Food—eat vegetarian food and carry your own eating utensils; Clothes—only buy what you need, not what you want; Housing—conserve water and electricity; Transportation—walk, ride a bike, or take public transportation whenever possible; Education—keep learning and maturing; Entertainment—helping others gives the greatest joy; Two Top Virtues—doing good and practicing filial piety;

²⁰ The only stated complaint about Tzu Chi's money among people-in-the-street respondents was that Tzu Chi uses its money to buy up land for large Jing Si Halls around the island, removing those parcels from the pool of land available for purchase by ordinary citizens.

Four Secrets to Being Happy—Be satisfied with what you have, Be thankful, Be understanding of others, and Be inclusive; “A big heart is better than a big house”; and “Action is the best commitment.”²¹

Most of the Tzu Chi volunteers that I observed during my participant observation in Taiwan had at least partially adopted most of the group’s normative behaviors in their own lives. These practical behavioral norms give Tzu Chi members a roadmap for changing their lifestyles and living in accordance with their pro-environmental beliefs and ideals. They are an important factor in Tzu Chi’s success at impacting the lives of its members.

Pro-Environmental Teachings, Practices, and Norms in Dharma Drum Mountain

Pro-Environmental Teachings

In the early 1990s, Chan Master Sheng Yen developed an integrated set of teachings with four levels of environmentalism as the major core of Dharma Drum Mountain’s doctrine and mission to improve human society and build a pure land on earth today. This integrated system of environmentalism is entitled “Four Kinds of Environmentalism.” Its basis is “protecting the spiritual environment,” which is mainly a matter of purifying the mind by “treating others with compassion, by acting with wisdom, and by alleviating our own vexations and impurities.” Protecting the spiritual environment is then expressed through and intertwined with protecting the social environment, protecting the living environment, and protecting the natural environment. After one’s thoughts and intentions have been purified, it is easy to get along with others and to create peace in society, which are the goals of “protecting the social environment.” To “protect the living environment,” people are exhorted to only consume what they need and to not be “ruled by desire.” In this way, they will not waste energy or resources, and they will

²¹ Translated by TZL.

reduce garbage and pollution. The result is the “protection of the natural environment,” which can be considered the “twigs on the branches” of environmentalism (field notes 2017).

Master Sheng Yen explains his insistence on first purifying his followers’ minds, as a way of getting at the root of all social and environmental problems, in the following passage:

Because selfishness and self-interest are deeply rooted in the human heart, even though we know that destroying the environment and creating pollution are actions that will harm ourselves and others, as soon as [protecting the environment] comes into conflict with our profit or when we have an opportunity to satisfy our private lust, then we easily forget the common good. Instead, we do not consider the far-off consequences and only think about how we can obtain our desires. ... Human civilization’s technology harms the environment too quickly ... to the extent that it is a severe disaster threatening the space for human existence. Therefore, we promote spiritual environmentalism, calling on the entire human race to use its principles to construct a healthy and proper attitude towards human life, which values benefitting both oneself and others, so that you and others can live healthy, happy, peaceful lives (2012b: 19-20).²²

Although the date of this publication is 2012, Master Sheng Yen spoke these words much earlier than that. He developed his system of four kinds of environmentalism from 1992-1994 (Bai 2017), at a time when most of the world was celebrating the fall of Communism in Europe and the triumph of the market economy in China. One of Sheng Yen’s monastic disciples recalls that when their master first began teaching that “human needs are few, but human desires are too many,” it shocked people in Taiwan, because the statements were made at the height of Taiwan’s economic modernization, when capitalism was widely celebrated (field notes 2017). Master Sheng Yen seems to have been prescient enough to understand that capitalism’s relentless pursuit of profit and its need for endless consumption would eventually exhaust the resources of the planet and endanger the continued existence of humanity. His teachings provide an integrated philosophy and set of ethics by which humans can mitigate the evils caused by blindly pursuing profits to save themselves from destruction.

²² Translated by the author.

Between 1995 and 1999, Master Sheng Yen further developed the Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance Campaign (2013a), which provides a set of twenty principles for living life within the four kinds of environmentalism (Bai 2017). These principles include “Four Fields for Cultivating Peace,” “Four Guidelines for Dealing with Desires,” “Four Steps for Handling a Problem,” “Four Practices for Helping Oneself and Others,” and “Four Ways to Cultivate Blessings” (S. Y. Shi 2004: 6-7). The Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance Campaign was designed to take the mystery out of Buddhist dharma and make it understandable and usable in the modern world (36). Master Sheng Yen taught that the contents of the Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance Campaign consist of the “concepts and methods for practicing the Four Kinds of Environmentalism” (5).

In 2007, Sheng Yen developed a system called the Six Ethics of the Mind, which gives more in-depth advice on how to properly manage all human relationships, including our relationship with nature (Bai 2017). These ethics can be considered an update and modernization of Confucianism’s five ethics. They include family ethics, daily life ethics, school ethics, environmental ethics (nature), workplace ethics, and ethics between ethnic groups (2013b). All three sets of teachings are designed to help Dharma Drum Mountain believers practice the bodhisattva ethic, which they define as cultivating oneself to benefit others, thus ultimately benefitting oneself (DDM Taiwan Interviews). This overview shows that Master Sheng Yen was concerned with more than just preserving the natural environment; yet, he saw all society’s problems as interconnected and their solution as contingent upon spiritual cultivation. This view draws heavily from the Buddhist doctrines of karma and dependent co-arising. It also ties into Buddhism’s most sacred aspect of cultivating oneself to attain enlightenment.

Pro-Environmental Practices Integrated into Buddhist Rituals

Unlike Tzu Chi, which is primarily an NGO with a mission to serve society, Dharma Drum Mountain is primarily a religious organization focused on religious cultivation to uplift the human spirit. Traditionally, both Buddhism and folk religions in Asia have relied heavily on burning incense as an accompaniment to prayer and rituals. Folk religious rituals in Taiwan frequently include animal sacrifices and the burning of “spirit money”—paper rectangles embossed with gold-leaf and printed with esoteric symbols. Dharma Drum Mountain regularly holds the traditional rituals of Chinese Buddhism, such as the dharma gathering ritual or *fahui*. One of the earliest pro-environmental projects undertaken by Master Sheng Yen was the “greening” of the group’s practices in dharma gathering (*fahui*) rituals and in funeral rituals.

The repentance ritual dharma gathering is unique to Chinese Buddhism.²³ It was developed in the 500s CE by the Great Master Zhiyi, who was the founder of the Tiantai School of Chinese Buddhism. Zhiyi is credited with adapting the Indian religion of Buddhism to Chinese culture. He adapted and developed rituals from India to form the Chinese dharma gathering (*fahui*) where the monks and nuns lead the lay members in chanting a selected sutra or repentance ritual text. The chanting familiarizes lay believers with the Buddha’s teachings recorded in the sutra, and the act of chanting produces merit, which can be transferred through prayers at the end of the ritual to deceased family members to ensure that the departed have auspicious reincarnations. Emphasizing the dharma gathering (*fahui*) ritual and its transfer of merit to deceased parents helped bridge the gap between the Chinese cultural ethic of filial piety and Buddhist doctrine. Dharma gatherings (*fahui*) can also transfer merit to bring blessings to

²³ As noted in Chapter 2, Tzu Chi’s Master Cheng Yen does not generally like performing dharma gathering (*fahui*) rituals, but for the sake of her donors, she and the nuns at the Abode perform the Medicine Buddha dharma gathering (*fahui*) on the 24th day of each lunar month to pray for blessings on Tzu Chi donors. They have done this since the organization started in 1966 (C. Y. Shi 2016: 19-20).

living friends, family members and even businesses. The dharma gathering (*fahui*) chanting sessions are the most popular events in Dharma Drum Mountain in Taiwan.

As part of his prescription for social environmentalism, Master Sheng Yen updated the dharma gathering (*fahui*) rituals to make them more modern and friendlier to the natural environment. Historically, in the traditional dharma gathering (*fahui*), the names of the deceased to whom merit is being transferred were carved on bamboo plaques, which were burned at the end of the ritual. Later, the names were recorded on paper. At first, Dharma Drum Mountain used paper to record the names, and now in the age of the internet, DDM name plaques are in the cloud to reduce harm to the environment. Anyone who wants merit blessings transferred to a living or dead friend or relative can go onto the website of the branch monastery or field office holding the dharma gathering (*fahui*) and enter the person's name. The names are then projected onto the wall in the temple's Buddha hall beside the Buddha statues. The names of the deceased are surrounded by a digital lotus flower and are given the protection of Amitabha; the names of the living are surrounded by a digital crystal tear drop and are given the protection of the Medicine Buddha.

In traditional rituals, everyone held burning joss sticks, but in Dharma Drum Mountain's modern practice, a small amount of incense is burned in the temple's censer before the statues of the Buddha, and the congregation chants with sincere hearts to ensure that their prayers are heard. At certain points during the dharma gathering (*fahui*) rituals, the chanters must offer incense to the Buddhas. Dharma Drum Mountain has not eliminated this step; however, they have modified it. The believers hold up small twigs of sandalwood while forming their hands into respectful mudras. This counts as their offering of incense. At other points in the

ceremonies, the chanters hold up offerings of flowers instead of burning incense (field notes 2017).²⁴

Twice a year Dharma Drum Mountain holds large dharma gathering (*fahui*) events that last for a week and are attended by thousands of people. At the end of November, thousands of lay members attend a large dharma gathering (*fahui*) with concurrent chanting of different sutras in thirteen different Buddha Halls at Dharma Drum Mountain's World Center for Buddhist Education in Jinshan. Some participants stay in the dormitories on the mountain, as they chant from morning to evening; however, there is only space on the mountain to house 4500 people (field notes 2017). The various branch monasteries and field offices in northern Taiwan all rent buses to carry people to the event in the morning and bring them home at night (DDM Taiwan Interviews). This means that usually more than ten thousand people participate in the event. In July, during the traditional folk ghost month, the Emperor of Liang Repentance Ritual is held at Dharma Drum Mountain's Nung Chan Monastery in Beitou District, Taipei City. I attended the Emperor of Liang Repentance Ritual in July 2017.

The Emperor of Liang Repentance text is a Buddhist classic from China's Liang Dynasty (502-587 CE). It includes prayers for repentance that are useful to the living and prayers to transfer merit to the dead to grant them auspicious reincarnations. In Taiwanese folk tradition, the summer ghost month is the month when the people offer animal sacrifices, pray with joss sticks, and burn spirit money to ensure that their deceased relatives do not suffer in the spirit realms. Master Sheng Yen instituted the Emperor of Liang Repentance Ritual as an alternative to

²⁴ It should be noted that DDM first started the practice of holding rituals with only a minimum of incense. Today, most Buddhist, Taoist, and folk temples in Taiwan have picked up the practice and no longer allow their worshippers to burn joss sticks, in a stated effort to protect the natural environment. Tzu Chi's nuns have developed a ceramic incense steamer that wafts the fragrance of incense from scented drops placed in water that is heated and turned to steam.

the folk rituals. He taught that the people of Taiwan have a collective psychological need to see that their relatives do not suffer after death; therefore, Dharma Drum Mountain offers them a Buddhist ritual that obviates the need for killing animals and polluting the air with smoke from burning stacks of spirit money (field notes 2017). As in the regular monthly dharma gatherings (*fahui*), the participants can go online to enter names of living and deceased family members to receive merit from the ritual.

The 2017 Emperor of Liang Repentance event was extremely well-attended. The first day of the ritual was Sunday, and there were more than 8000 people in attendance, many of whom were not regular members of Dharma Drum Mountain. Approximately, 4500 people came every day during the week. On the final day of the ceremony, the monks did a special ritual to feed the hungry ghosts and teach them Buddhist dharma to help reduce their misery. This ritual was also designed as a greener, more compassionate alternative to a folk tradition, practiced during ghost month, for appeasing lost souls.

Every day during the ritual, the monks and nuns of Dharma Drum Mountain would give the congregation breaks from chanting and would preach Buddhist dharma to them. Much of the preaching was to encourage vegetarianism, to suggest that people refrain from killing animals, and to assure the people that by their sincere chanting they had protected their families and did not need to burn paper money or incense. Morning and afternoon snacks were served, all of which were vegan, and none of which was wrapped in plastic.²⁵ Lunch was vegan and was served in metal lunch boxes. Attendees were expected to bring their own spoons or metal chopsticks to obviate the need for disposable wooden chopsticks and plastic utensils. The senior

²⁵ The nun who had supervised the organization of the event logistics said that using paper wrappings was a first in 2017 and represented an attempt to make the ritual even friendlier to the natural environment (field notes 2017).

nun in charge of the event's logistical arrangements reported that Nung Chan Monastery's gift shop sold out of its souvenir spoons that week, as people new to Dharma Drum Mountain purchased alternatives to disposable chopsticks (field notes 2017). Hence, the ritual did have a positive environmental impact among the attendees.²⁶

In addition to updating the dharma gathering (*fahui*) to make it more modern and less toxic to the natural environment, Master Sheng Yen also advocated simple Buddhist rituals in lieu of the extravagant, wasteful ceremonies that are quite popular in Taiwan for weddings, funerals, and birthday parties for elderly parents. Master Sheng Yen decided to update social rituals after a conversation with the mayor of Taipei City. He and his followers spent much time in the mid-1990s promoting simple Buddhist rituals for major life events. Once other Buddhist groups also began offering these rituals, DDM ceased its heavy promotion of these events (field notes 2018).

Folk funeral rituals in Taiwan are complex and expensive; moreover, they require more land than is available with recent population increases. According to my more than twenty years of experience as the eldest daughter-in-law in a Hakka family of Taiwan, folk funeral rituals require the family to hire Taoist priests, traditional Buddhist monks, and sometimes spirit mediums to perform chanting rituals every night during the week after a family member's death. The burial ritual is not held until the days of chanting are over. All these religious professionals cost quite a bit of money. Moreover, during the week prior to the funeral, friends and relatives send gifts consisting of tall pyramids of stacked canned food or beer cans, which are often wrapped in plastic, to display in the family's memorial to the deceased. They also send funeral wreaths made of plastic flowers stuck on Styrofoam backing that are tied onto large bamboo

²⁶ I still carry in my backpack the portable spoon and chopsticks that I got at the Emperor of Liang Repentance Ritual, so that I do not need to use disposable plastic utensils when eating out.

tripods and set out on the road in front of the home of the family in mourning. In addition to costing much money, these traditional gifts produce piles of garbage.

On the day of the funeral, the family usually hires religious professionals to chant before the funeral cortege sets off for the grave site. Graves are purchased for a period of five to ten years, and at the end of the time, the family needs another religious professional to oversee the opening of the casket and the removal of the bones. The bones are then sealed in a funerary vase and interred in a burial pagoda or a family tomb, if the family is fortunate enough to have their own land. In the forty-nine days after the person's death, religious professionals must be hired to perform rituals every seven days. At these rituals incense and paper money are burned. Guests on any of the days with chanting and on the day of the funeral cortege are fed elaborate feasts that usually result in much food waste. The entire process is extremely expensive, but failure to provide the proper funerary rites for a parent means the descendants are unfilial, and they lose much social capital in their local communities.

Master Sheng Yen's modern Buddhist update for these ceremonies mainly consists of free chanting for the deceased and their family by a team of monastics and lay volunteers from a specific department in Dharma Drum Mountain.²⁷ When a family applies for a DDM funeral service, the Dharma Drum Mountain volunteers try to visit the dying person and their family in the hospital to comfort them and to help them prepare for the death. Once the person passes away, the team chants for eight hours beside the deceased's body in the hospital immediately after his or her demise. The Buddhist doctrine behind this chanting ritual states that while the person's body is still warm, the soul is extracting itself from the material shell, which is a painful

²⁷ Tzu Chi also provides a free sutra chanting service of eight hours for relatives of its members, staff, and commissioners. This chanting is usually performed by lay volunteers, as the Tzu Chi nuns all live in Hualien at the Abode of Still Thoughts.

process. The chanting is meant to soothe the soul's escape and to facilitate an auspicious reincarnation. The ritual lasts for eight hours because that is usually how long it takes for the body to completely cool after death. Later in the week, the chanting service team goes to the family home to chant the Amitabha Sutra for the family of the deceased, if they want this additional service. The team will also chant at the funeral, if requested. During the home visit, the team promotes organic burial, if it seems appropriate given the emotional state of the family members (DDM Taiwan Interviews).

Instead of a lavish funeral cortege and burial in a large tomb, Master Sheng Yen advocated cremation and organic burial. The Dharma Drum Mountain World Center for Buddhist Education surrounds the first plot of ground for organic burials on the island of Taiwan.²⁸ Master Sheng Yen himself was buried there. In an organic burial, the deceased's ashes are ground up into a fine powder and poured into three paper bags, which are tied with stalks of grass. The family carries the bags in a basket and walks solemnly and silently up the hill to the burial ground, where a volunteer has dug three small holes into the grass. Various members of the family take turns pouring a bag of ashes into each hole, placing a flower on top of the ashes, and then covering the ashes with dirt. The family then stands in quiet remembrance and prayer before walking back down the mountain. Instead of hiring people to perform pollution-creating seven-day rituals, the family is encouraged to attend the weekly chanting and dharma gathering (*fahui*) rituals at their local Dharma Drum Mountain temple or center where they can use the sincere wishes of their hearts to bless their departed relative.

Overall, these various religious rituals at Dharma Drum Mountain have several different external factors that operate on the participants. First, the monastic leaders of the rituals use

²⁸ The burial ground belongs to the government; it was given to the government by Dharma Drum Mountain, as public burial sites must be on government-owned land.

breaks in the chanting to remind the attendees to focus on the impermanence of life, a practice which helps the lay believers develop a healthier mindset by accepting things as they are; this allows the believers to focus less on their selfish desires and to care for all life. Second, the texts that are chanted generally include passages on Buddhist doctrines about not killing sentient beings, caring for all life, and choosing the bodhisattva path (*pusa hen*) (*Repentance* 2016). Finally, Master Sheng Yen's pro-environmental changes to popular religious rituals impact the believers by reminding them weekly that environmentally friendly choices can be made in almost every circumstance, even in ritual worship. Because the current monastic leaders planning these events keep working to make the rituals greener every year, lay volunteers are further reminded that they, too, can be even more environmentally sustainable in the choices they make. These green religious practices serve to regularly remind the believers of the need to consider the environment in everything they do. Moreover, Robbins (2015: 21) states that "rituals often are ... actions that fully realize a specific value or values and therefore stand out in social life as exemplary ... that ... sometimes enact an idealized picture of the world." Hence, these updated, green religious rituals help the believers actualize their pro-environmental values and serve as reminders for how they should behave in the rest of their daily lives.

Pro-Environmental Behavioral Norms for Dharma Drum Mountain Believers

Because his framework is religious and ethical, Master Sheng Yen does not explicitly mention scientific details in his teachings on environmentalism; however, many of the practices which he implemented in his modern form of humanistic Taiwanese Buddhism serve to reduce the carbon footprint of his followers and are in addition to his work to reduce the polluting effects of certain popular Taiwanese religious rituals. Mr. Xin,²⁹ a lay disciple of Master Sheng

²⁹ Per my research protocols all names are pseudonyms, except for those of the founding Dharma Masters of each group and of academic experts or other well-known leaders in society.

Yen since 1982, has been a full-time volunteer at Dharma Drum Mountain for more than ten years. He is one of the group's top lay teachers and curriculum developers and is considered a consultant by the younger monks and nuns. In an interview, he gave me a list of the specific practices that Dharma Drum Mountain seeks to inculcate into its believers under the rubric of nature environmentalism. The list is as follows: 1) reduce your carbon footprint, as much as possible (take public transportation, conserve electricity, etc.); 2) recycle resources (washed so they will be reused and not burned); 3) eat locally produced food without fertilizers and pesticides (support natural farming); 4) conserve water; 5) do not use plastic bags; 6) do not drink bottled drinks; 7) carry your own bowl, chopsticks, and cup; 8) practice vegetarianism; 9) deal with animals appropriately (including do not "release wildlife" unless it has a chance of surviving without harming local communities). Dharma Drum Mountain's curriculum developers, teachers, and mentors work hard to help all members develop these habits of an environmentally sustainable lifestyle as part of their personal Buddhist cultivation (DDM Taiwan Interviews).

Spiritual Environmentalism: A Gimmick or an Honest Attempt to Solve the Planet's Problems?

One issue raised in the literature about Dharma Drum Mountain is that Master Sheng Yen used the term "environmentalism" as a gimmick to attract more believers, but he did not really care about protecting the natural environment (Clippard 2012). It should be emphasized that Master Sheng Yen was first and foremost a Buddhist leader. His primary aim was the development of Chinese Buddhism and its modernization through the humanistic Buddhist tradition started by Venerable Taixu and continued in Taiwan by Venerable Yinshun, Venerable Hsing Yun, and Venerable Cheng Yen (Bai 2017, Pittman 2001). He was also a Chan Master, the dharma heir of two of China's great Chan Buddhist lineages. Because Master Sheng Yen's

framework for teaching environmentalism is tightly integrated into his overarching project of using Chan Buddhist cultivation to “uplift the character of humanity” (S. Y. Shi 2004) and to “bring about a Pure Land on earth” (field notes 2017), there has been some question as to whether his use of the term “environmentalism” was a gimmick to sound modern and attract more followers, instead of an honest attempt to preserve the natural environment. Clippard (2012) analyzes Sheng Yen’s rhetoric and concludes that some of his alleged vagueness is due to rhetorical techniques of his Chan tradition and that some is designed to cause his audience to ponder the topics more deeply. Clippard argues that Sheng Yen’s rhetoric “brings together theory and practice, ontology and ethics” (334). Because Clippard is mainly interested in applying his method of analyzing rhetoric to understanding religious environmentalism, he does not study Dharma Drum Mountain’s actual practices to ascertain the validity of the critique that Sheng Yen’s use of the term “environmentalism” is a publicity gimmick. Clippard does say that he does not believe the gimmick critique to be true based on his rhetorical analysis. In this study, I examined several of Dharma Drum Mountain’s practices through participant observation and interviews with monastics and lay members to understand how the group’s members learn to practically deal with the natural environment. I found that Master Sheng Yen’s Buddhist lineage does indeed successfully promote practical, green lifestyle changes among the group’s committed members. My finding was confirmed by Lee and Han’s (Unpublished) quantitative study.

Organizational Structures for Mobilizing Behavioral Changes

The preceding sections show that the two groups are quite similar in the values and norms upon which they base their promotion of environmentally sustainable lifestyles. The most important underlying value is the Mahayana Buddhist virtue of the bodhisattva ethic, which the

two charismatic leaders have expounded in their published teachings as an ethic of dealing compassionately with all living things, even if it means suffering some inconvenience oneself. Educational leaders in each group have taken these religious teachings and developed similar sets of behavioral norms for the believers of both groups to live sustainably. The groups' methods of inculcating behavioral change are also quite similar, in that they combine doctrinal teaching with practice in a monastic environment to accustom the believers to low-carbon lifestyles. Tzu Chi runs training sessions for its members and volunteers at its central headquarters, the Abode of Still Thoughts, the group's monastery in rural Hualien, Taiwan. My Tzu Chi respondents reported that spending time at the Abode and learning from the nuns there were major factors in their choosing to adopt the group's norms for sustainable lifestyles in their own homes. During the trainings at the Abode, Tzu Chi volunteers help the nuns with their chores and learn about living with a low carbon footprint.

Dharma Drum Mountain encourages its members to go on Chan meditation retreats at its various monasteries around the island. During those retreats, DDM members are also immersed in a low-carbon monastic lifestyle. My informants from Dharma Drum Mountain reported that after a week-long retreat at one of the monasteries they were better able to live sustainably when they returned home. Some reported that they did not feel the need to buy so many things or to eat as much meat after spending a week meditating at a monastery (field notes 2017).

Both groups' use of trainings in monastic settings to inculcate lifestyle changes among the believers corresponds with the findings of Bellah and his associates (1985) in the United States. They found that if a religious group wants to change behaviors, it needs to have a combination of teachings with discipline and communal practices within the group. These disciplined communal practices then develop into social norms that inspire real changes among

the believers. In addition to retreats and trainings in monastic settings, both Tzu Chi and DDM believers engage in group volunteerism. While the volunteer teams are working together to help people in Taiwan, they are required to adhere to their group's norms for protecting the environment. Volunteering is another kind of communal practice in these groups that contributes to adoption of lifestyle changes among the believers. Once a critical mass of believers has changed their lifestyles, the group is better able to influence society and cause lifestyle changes among the general population (Smelser [1962] 1965).

Conclusion

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain seem to closely fit Smelser's ([1962] 1965) theory of social action because they responded to Taiwan's social strain of environmental degradation with value-laden teachings combined with specific practices and clear behavioral norms. The groups have successfully integrated environmentalism into all aspects of their teachings and practices. Because environmentalism is a core doctrinal value, regular members are frequently reminded of it, whenever they listen to a dharma talk at either group. They read about environmentalism in the groups' literature, too. Furthermore, the regular practices of each group include caring for the environment, even in areas where one might not expect to consider one's impact on the environment, such as in a disaster relief mission or in a religious ritual. The combination of teachings with regular group practices takes environmentalism in these organizations out of the theoretical realm and brings it into the material world.

Tzu Chi and Dharma Drum Mountain believers do not just sit and listen to dharma talks about protecting the natural environment. They work together with other group members to carry out practical, pro-environmental actions as part of their faith practice. This makes the lessons of

the dharma talks more real and ensures that the believers do not forget the words easily. The teachings and group practices are further reinforced by the behavioral lifestyle norms for “good” members of each group. The normative behaviors are quite practical and can be realistically adopted by nearly everyone. Hence, the environmentalism espoused by these groups is not just something that the members do “at church”; instead, it is something they can bring home and practice daily in their private lives. The connection in these groups from authoritative teachings to group practices to behavioral norms for believers’ private lives makes their promotion of environmentalism particularly effective in creating lifestyle changes among their believers. The example of these two groups suggests that scholars should pay attention to more than ideological discourse when studying moral communities and their ability to impact groups in a society.

Moreover, the integrated, pro-environmental teachings, practices, and norms of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain are also effective in changing believers’ lifestyles because they use the cultural tool kit of Buddhist symbols and values. Both groups tie their teachings, practices, and norms related to protecting the environment into Buddhism’s most sacred goal: cultivating oneself on the bodhisattva path to become a great Buddha and save the world. They also utilize the Buddhist value of compassion for all sentient beings to engender appropriate feelings among the believers. These feelings spur the laity to adopt the groups’ normative behaviors. Moreover, Buddhism’s third jewel, the sangha or the company of monastics, is deployed in both groups as a role model for sustainable lifestyles through the groups’ use of their monasteries as training centers for the laity. In this case, the cultural tool kit is useful for more than just symbolic discourse; it also provides practical resources to match Buddhism’s quality as a religion that gives equal weight to both principles and practice.

Chapter 4

Canonizing Environmental Teachings and Practices for All Taiwan's Buddhists Using Authoritative Confucian Moral Identities

The preceding chapter detailed how Master Cheng Yen of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Master Sheng Yen of Dharma Drum Mountain developed pro-environmental teachings, practices, and behavioral norms for their followers in response to the social strain of Taiwan's environmental degradation in the early 1990s. Their updates to Buddhist teachings and practices were quite effective in changing believers' lifestyles within the strong moral communities of their own sects. These leaders' updating Buddhism does not, however, explain the finding by Lee and Han (Unpublished) that Taiwanese humanistic Buddhists from all sects are most likely to have adopted the pro-environmental behavioral norms propagated in Tzu Chi and DDM.

In this chapter, I argue that Cheng Yen and Sheng Yen's pro-environmental updates to Buddhism spread among the majority of Taiwan's lay Buddhists because of the unique organization of the field of Buddhist sects in Taiwan and because Cheng Yen and Sheng Yen used the Chinese cultural tool kit (Swidler 1986) by adopting public identities, which resonated with the underlying elements of Taiwan's Confucian Discourse System (Scollon, et. al. 2012) in a way that gave these dharma masters the maximum amount of moral authority for their genders. Their skillful deployment of symbolic moral identities in the Chinese cultural tool kit gave them the status to elevate their updated teachings into the humanistic Buddhist canon for all of Taiwan. I base my argument on Bourdieu's (1993) theory of fields of cultural production and on Foucault's ([1972] 2010) theory that cultural knowledge is passed down across generations in the discourse of texts, which are related to social elites and to the educational canon. This cultural, textual discourse also defines gender identities in each society (Foucault [1978] 1990). By

assuming and properly maintaining the excellent public identities of a male Confucian scholar and a female loving mother, Master Sheng Yen and Master Cheng Yen maximized their influence over the entire field of humanistic Buddhist groups in Taiwan, to the extent that all the groups followed them to adopt some form of pro-environmental teachings and practices.

I should also note that this updating of Taiwan's humanistic Buddhism was accomplished in the context of Taiwan's society in the early 1990s, less than five years after the lifting of martial law and before its first multi-party presidential election. Humanistic Buddhist groups had only been freed of governmental restrictions with the lifting of martial law, and they had not yet attained to their present level of prestige in Taiwan's society. Moreover, all of Taiwan's civil society was finding its way under the new political paradigm. One strategy used by one of Taiwan's earliest environmental NGOs, the Taiwan Homemakers Environmental Union, was to assume the Confucian moral identity of mothers caring for their children's futures to maximize the impact of their activism (Lu 2004). The founding dharma masters of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain employed a similar strategy of tapping into Confucian symbolic identities as they worked to elevate their pro-environmental updates to Taiwan's Buddhism into the authoritative canon. Because the island was experiencing the ill effects of modernity, these moral identities helped to bridge the gap between traditional norms and modern society, an important function of "moral communities" (Madsen 1993a: 193-194).

The Field of Humanistic Buddhism in Taiwan

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Chinese religions in the late imperial era were a mix of scattered institutions, such as Buddhist or Taoist temples, and diffuse practices in people's daily lives (Yang 1967, Gooseart and Palmer 2011). People worshipped their ancestors at the family altar with ancestral tablets in their homes. They made sacrifices to local deities, such as the *tudi*

gong (neighborhood god), at roadside shrines near their fields. And, on special occasions or when they had pressing needs, people would go to the institutional temple that they felt best met their needs in that moment. Religion in Taiwan before the Japanese occupation was similarly organized (Jones 1999). Modern worshippers of folk deities continue these patterns of religious practice, even today, and vestiges of this traditional manner of organizing religious life can be found among Taiwan's humanistic Buddhists, despite the groups' stronger organizational structures than those of premodern Buddhist institutions (field notes 2017).

To match the expectations of the laity, who were accustomed to frequenting different religious institutions according to perceived needs, the founders of Taiwan's humanistic Buddhist groups did not directly compete with one another in sectarian divisions (Pacey 2005). Instead, they scattered themselves across the field of humanistic Buddhism, developing a unique specialty for their group. For example, Tzu Chi is best known for its volunteering and community service. Dharma Drum Mountain is best known for its excellent classes on Buddhism and Chan meditation. Buddha's Light Mountain is best known for its temple complex and elaborate rituals. Zhongtai Chan Monastery is renowned for its beautiful temple. Another smaller group, Fuzhi, is best known for its organic, vegan food. The specialty of each group, then, attracts the laity to attend that group's functions and to make donations.

Many of the laity behave according to general custom and have joined or attended functions at more than one humanistic Buddhist group. Lee and Han (Unpublished) found that approximately 66% of the members of Zhongtai Chan Monastery are also members of other groups. Approximately 50% of the members of Dharma Drum Mountain and Buddha's Light

Mountain hold multiple memberships in other Buddhist groups, and approximately 20% of Tzu Chi members³⁰ belong to other groups.

In addition to laity with overlapping memberships, Schak (2009) found that members of the various groups attended functions at other humanistic Buddhist groups. I, too, encountered this phenomenon during my 2017 field work in Taiwan. For example, several of my classmates at Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist studies classes were regular members of Tzu Chi, who wanted a more structured understanding of Buddhism. Many of my friends at Dharma Drum Mountain were also regular volunteers (but not usually commissioners) at Tzu Chi because they liked the organized volunteer opportunities there. Many of my wealthy Buddhist informants reported donating regularly to all the major humanistic Buddhist groups, as their way of supporting the religion in Taiwan. My lay informants told me that the dharma is one, but methods of cultivation vary (*fo fa shi yi, fang fa you yi*). Hence, they reported going to each group for its strong points to enhance their Buddhist practice and cultivation.

One lay informant also told me that because the laity attend many groups, they exercise a certain amount of control over the decisions of the monastic leaders. Thus, one effect of the phenomenon of overlapping lay membership is that teachings and practices, which are popular with the grassroots members, spread quickly among the groups. When one group has a good teaching or practice, the other groups tend to quickly adopt it. For example, my informants told me that in the 1990s, Master Sheng Yen sent his disciples to Tzu Chi to learn how to process recyclables. Similarly, Tzu Chi rapidly picked up the promotion of Buddhist chanting death rituals as a substitute for Taiwan's folk rituals to help reduce the need for animal sacrifice and the burning of incense and paper money. The effect of this intergroup emulation gives Buddhism

³⁰ Based on Laliberté (2004), this most likely refers to trainee volunteers and certified commissioners, as regular donors are frequently active members of other Buddhist groups (Schak 2009, field notes 2017).

in Taiwan a unified consensus about major beliefs and practices. Their general consensus strengthens Buddhism's influence across the island. According to Bourdieu's theory (1993), the principal monastic leaders must develop and maintain separate, authoritative identities to enhance their influence in the Buddhist field and to attract the laity to come often to their events, because most grassroots believers and donors consider all Taiwan's humanistic Buddhist groups to be essentially equal.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the field of humanistic Buddhist groups in Taiwan is reminiscent of the field of literary production in 19th century France that was described by Bourdieu (1993). In Bourdieu's schema, canonical literature was produced by elite authors who were connected to the academy and to other elite institutions in society. Their connections to the elite gave them cultural power that was expressed in their creations (44). The religious field of humanistic Buddhism in 20th century Taiwan was governed by different characteristics than the literary field in 19th century France. Since the Buddhist field is religious, the main criterion for being an elite leader depends on the moral authority of the founding teacher. Moreover, Taiwan society's definition of what constitutes a moral authority rests on the Confucian canon of texts (Foucault [1972] 2010), which have been a major component of Chinese educational discourse since the first century BCE and which are the basis for the Confucian Discourse System (Scollon et. al. 2012).

Additionally, Confucian society was traditionally gendered, and Taiwan's society continues to be gendered even today (Weller 1999). Moreover, Confucian society emphasizes the proper management of relationships, especially family relationships, over formal institutionalization (Madsen 2007a). These characteristics are reflected in the way Master Sheng Yen and Master Cheng Yen represented themselves as moral authorities in Taiwan's society of

the early 1990s and in the symbolic identities they chose to help elevate their teachings on environmentalism into the canonical principles and practices of Taiwan's humanistic Buddhist cultivation. The rest of the chapter analyzes the moral Confucian symbolic identities of Master Sheng Yen and Master Cheng Yen and shows how those identities affect the attitudes and actions of their disciples and of the other humanistic Buddhists in Taiwan.

Authoritative Moral Identities with Confucian Overtones

Master Cheng Yen and Master Sheng Yen seem to be the two humanistic Buddhist leaders of their generation who were the most successful in cultivating and maintaining symbolic public identities that gave them the greatest moral authority in Taiwan's society, especially in the 1990s and early 2000s, when they were adopting and canonizing pro-environmental teachings and practices. Each of these dharma masters selected the gendered identity with the greatest moral authority in Confucian societies. Each of these dharma masters also maintained that identity unblemished over time, which contributed to their moral authority in the field of Taiwan's humanistic Buddhism. To understand these identities, it is helpful to first review the pertinent aspects of the Confucian canon of texts that inform those identities because they are an important part of the educational curriculum in Taiwan, which covers the Confucian classics even today.

Confucian Influence on Taiwan's Society

Confucius (551-479 BCE) was the founder of what is now called the *ru* lineage of Chinese philosophy. His lineage is the only one from his era to survive as a major influence on society, even in modern times, due to its exclusive canonization for education. Confucius's teachings are preserved in the *Analects*, which were compiled by his students over a long period

of time. Throughout that text, Confucius promotes *ren* (humaneness), *li* (ritual), and *xiao* (filial piety) as the critical virtues for all human interaction.

Master You said: “Among those who are filial toward their parents and fraternal toward their brothers, those who are inclined to offend against their superiors are few indeed. Among those who are disinclined to offend against their superiors, there have never been any who are yet inclined to create disorder. The noble person concerns himself with the root: when the root is established, the Way is born. Being filial and fraternal—is this not the root of humaneness?” (*Analects* 1:2. Translation by de Bary and Bloom 1999: 45)

Confucianism was redefined and readapted to match changes in Chinese society over the millennia, most notably by Mencius (371-289 BCE); by Dong Zhongshu, who made Confucianism the official state doctrine in 136 BCE; by the Song Dynasty Neo-Confucian Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi, 1130-1200 CE); and most recently, in Taiwan’s Confucian revival, sponsored by the Kuomintang under Chiang Kai Shek, in the 1960s (Jochim 2003, Madsen 2007b, Schak 2018). Despite all the changes, the core Confucian values of humaneness (*ren*) and filial piety (*xiao*) have remained constant, as has the emphasis on relationships actualized by rituals (*li*).

Confucianism has been a core element of the public-school curriculum in Taiwan since the retrocession in 1945, especially under KMT rule during the martial law era and just after martial law was lifted, at the time when Tzu Chi and Dharma Drum Mountain were promoting environmentalism as an aspect of Buddhist teachings and practice. Even today, after Taiwan’s move to a two-party democratic system and its embrace of the various ethnic cultures on the island, the core Confucian values of humaneness, filial piety, and well-managed interpersonal relationships continue to be important in Taiwan’s society.³¹ For example, the bookstores near the Hualien train station now sell children’s books on Taiwan’s indigenous cultures. I read one

³¹ Liao (1999:89) notes that by 1997, the KMT and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which advocates Taiwanese independence from China, had adopted “politics of integration and inclusion.”

about the Paiwan tribe, which has lands on the eastern coast of the island. The book described Paiwan children in their families and highlighted the similarities between Paiwan and Han cultures, instead of stressing difference.

Family and maintaining proper family relationships are still highly valued in Taiwan, to the extent that several mothers who enrolled their children in Tzu Chi or DDM programs reported doing so because they wanted their children to learn the Confucian value of filial piety with the Buddhist value of compassion (field notes 2017).³² Thus, the groups' Confucian overtones enhance their standing in Taiwan society. It seems then, that Master Cheng Yen and Master Sheng Yen unerringly chose from the Chinese cultural tool kit (Swidler 1986, Scollon et. al. 2012) the best public identities to resonate with Taiwan's Confucian society when they presented themselves to the public as a loving mother and an erudite scholar.

Master Sheng Yen: Confucian *Literatus* with a Buddhist School

Master Sheng Yen first used a Confucian paradigm (Madsen 2007a) as the basis for his moral authority in Taiwan society when he founded Dharma Drum Mountain, before humanistic Buddhism was the widely respected religion that it is today. According to Wendy Larson (2002), in the late imperial era, *yang* (male essence) was considered to be embodied in literary prowess or *cai*; therefore, ideal males were educated *literati* (Zimmerman-Liu 2012). Master Sheng Yen, himself, as the first Chinese monk with a Ph.D. in Buddhist Literature, was the epitome of a Confucian *literatus*. Master Sheng Yen's model of an educational organization for his Buddhist group and his integrated, well-organized set of teachings also seem to fit this scholarly male

³² One mother abashedly told me that she had been anti-Confucian before her children were born, but when faced with rearing a child, she wanted to promote the morality that a Confucian education would instill. Another stated that she had carefully researched where her children would best learn ethics. Prior to elementary school, she took her children to Dharma Drum Mountain's parent/child classes. Once the children advanced to elementary school, this mother stated that Tzu Chi's programs were most effective for instilling proper ethical behavior (field notes 2017-2018).

archetype. Using this model, Master Sheng Yen became one of Taiwan's 50 most influential people over the past 400 years, according to Taiwan's *Commonwealth* magazine (Sheng Yen Education Foundation n.d.).

Confucian *Literati* as Moral Educators

During the late imperial period, beginning with the reforms of Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi 1130-1200) during the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the role of a Confucian *literatus* increasingly included an obligation to educate the community, especially in matters of morality (Bol 2008). The *literati* were expected to cultivate themselves morally, to serve as exemplars to the local community, and to educate the populace in their area, even the non-literate. This tradition created an expectation among the population that teachers must be moral and exhibit exemplary behavior. Master Sheng Yen achieved this, according to my "people-in-the-street" informants. The informants who knew of Master Sheng Yen always referred to him as a gentleman and a scholar. His monastic disciples were generally described as having *qi zhi*, which means to be cultivated and refined. Sheng Yen's disciples were also praised for their excellent etiquette (*hen you li mao*). Because Master Sheng Yen and his monastic disciples meet the public's expectations for Confucian *literati*, Sheng Yen's teachings are respected and widely received.

Integrating Pro-Environmental Teachings into Every DDM Class

As mentioned above, rank-and-file lay Buddhists in Taiwan like to attend Dharma Drum Mountain's excellent classes on Buddhist studies and Chan meditation, even if they are regular members of other Buddhist groups. I attended basic level Buddhist studies and Chan meditation classes during the course of my 2017 field work, as well as DDM sutra lectures and dharma talks. I found that every class included something about protecting the natural environment, often in surprising places.

Chan Meditation Classes

It might seem that Chan meditation has nothing to do with environmentalism, yet in the first session of Dharma Drum Mountain's Basic Chan Meditation class at the Anhe Branch Monastery in Taipei, the nun teaching the class urged her class of 100 city dwellers to learn to appreciate Nature. In response to the nun's informal poll at the beginning of the class, most of the participants had raised their hands to say that it was their first time attending a Dharma Drum Mountain class, and that they had been referred to the class to learn how to reduce stress or to improve their mental/physical health. The nun then took time to tell the class participants, many of whom were workers in Taipei's busy financial district, that the best thing they could do right after leaving the class was to turn off their cell phones and take a walk in the park. She exhorted them to learn to appreciate the green spaces in the city and to feel their connection to the natural world. She informed them that Chan meditation would help them improve their health, but meditation requires a long learning curve, and communing with Nature would give them similarly relaxing results immediately (field notes 2017). Most people that I observed in Taipei were always buried in their cell phones. It seems that Dharma Drum Mountain is taking a good first step in helping people develop a consciousness of and desire to protect the natural environment within its Chan meditation students by getting them to notice the existence of the natural world.

The rural Dharma Drum Mountain monastery in Taitung and the field office in Hualien offer outdoor Chan meditation classes. In these classes, a monk or nun leads the lay members out walking single file through a beautiful natural setting. They walk mindfully as they hike to a place where they can do sitting meditation, either in the mountains or on the beach. These events last the entire day from early morning until dinner time. One monk, who led outdoor Chan

meditation classes at the beach in Taitung, reported that after the lunch break, he would lead his outdoor Chan classes in cleaning up garbage on the beach before having them return to sitting meditation near the ocean (field notes 2017; DDM Taiwan Interviews). Informant-friends in the Hualien DDM group reported feeling closer to Nature (*da zi ran*) through outdoor meditation.

Buddhist Studies Classes

The second type of class offered by Dharma Drum Mountain is its series of Buddhist Studies classes. The first level of classes is called Happy Buddhist Studies, and I attended this series at the Dharma Drum Mountain Field Office in Hualien. These classes were held on three consecutive Sundays, and each session lasted the entire day. The participants were served vegan snacks and lunch by the Hualien volunteers. There were no individual wrappings or disposable containers for the food. Students were told to bring their own metal chopsticks from home to avoid the need for single-use bamboo chopsticks. Everyone was also expected to use their cloth handkerchiefs, as no paper napkins were provided.

Again, teachings about best pro-environmental practices arose in surprising parts of the curriculum. For example, when expounding on the Buddhist precept, “Do not kill,” the monk teaching the course said that practicing vegetarianism is the best way to keep this precept. That was not surprising because this is the typical Chinese Buddhist interpretation of that precept, but the monk then went on to explain that the best way to obviate the need for bug spray and killing pests is to sort one’s garbage, wash items to be recycled, and keep one’s house clean and free of clutter by reducing consumption. These practical suggestions related to dealing with garbage are very close to what Tzu Chi teaches at their recycling centers about the best practices for successful recycling³³.

³³ Informants from both Buddhist groups and people-on-the-street respondents reported that government recycling workers incinerate dirty recyclables instead of cleaning them and keeping them in the stream of

Dharma Talks and Lectures

The monks and nuns hold weekly sutra lectures for all members of the group, especially those who have finished the entire three-and-a-half-year basic curriculum, which includes courses on Master Sheng Yen's Four Environmentalisms, the Bodhisattva Precepts, and important Buddhist sutras. These weekly lectures are held at one of DDM's larger facilities and are live streamed for members all over Taiwan. The following morning the videos are uploaded to the Dharma Drum Mountain YouTube channel, where they are available to the general public.

In a 2017 sutra lecture on the Ksitigarbha Sutra, Master Generous spoke much about the importance of the earth to human life. This is because the name of the sutra in Chinese can be translated "Earth Treasure Sutra." Master Generous assigned practical homework to all the onsite students, asking them to reduce their meat consumption, reduce their use of plastic bags, and take their own coffee mugs to get drinks to avoid using plastic straws (field notes 2017). The following week she explained that the reason she had assigned such mundane homework was because the practice of spiritual environmentalism is abstract and invisible, and the way anyone can tell a person's level of spiritual cultivation is by observing how he or she treats the natural environment and the social environment, in other words, by observing the choices people make in their daily lives regarding other living beings. When Master Generous asked the class how many of them had eaten vegetarian every day during the preceding week, nearly the entire class responded in the affirmative (field notes 2017). Informant-friends have reported that even though the DDM monastics are kind and gentle in their attempts to persuade people to adopt vegetarianism, because it is a major tenet of Chinese Buddhism, the believers generally become

recycled resources. Hence, the behavioral norm of washing one's recyclables among these Buddhist groups.

vegetarians (or greatly reduce meat consumption) after a period of time in the group (field notes 2017).

Because Master Sheng Yen was the most highly educated Buddhist monk of his generation and because his monastic disciples are rigorously trained in DDM's Sangha University, Dharma Drum Mountain's classes on Buddhism are highly respected by all lay Buddhists on the island. The fact that pro-environmental teachings and practices have been integrated into all the various kinds of classes offered at Dharma Drum Mountain at all levels of study means that environmentalism has been elevated to a canonical status in humanistic Buddhist doctrine. The popularity of DDM classes among Taiwan's lay Buddhists has served to spread these teachings as canonical throughout all the Buddhist groups across the island.

Master Cheng Yen: Loving Matriarch of an Extended Family

Much has been written about Master Cheng Yen and her status as the top Buddhist nun of her generation in Taiwan. Pacey (2005) argues that Master Cheng Yen used femininity to match Tzu Chi's Buddhism to Confucianism. He bases this claim on Lu (1998a) where she states that Confucian ideals for women become religious ideals in Tzu Chi. He further cites Huang and Weller (1998) who discuss the role of mothers in promoting morality in Confucian China and then go on to show that femininity in Tzu Chi is that of a mother who cares for society. Such femininity carries a strong moral authority in Confucian societies. Lu (1998b) also states that, in Tzu Chi, women found another way to leave their mark on society without joining the feminist movement, which conflicted with their family values. These studies suggest that in the early days of Tzu Chi, Master Cheng Yen tied into Confucian gender archetypes of loving mothers as a source of moral authority in society. This was particularly useful at that time because Buddhism was not well-respected in society due to perceptions that it was filled with unscientific

superstitions. As noted previously, Cheng Yen and Tzu Chi are part of the humanistic Buddhist movement to update Chinese Buddhism, making it relevant and influential in the modern world (Pittman 2001). Using Confucian symbols of motherly moral authority helped Master Cheng Yen establish her group's moral voice in Taiwan's society at a time when Buddhism was not yet widely viewed as a moral and ethical religion.

Women as Moral Exemplars in Confucian Society

Understanding a woman's role in historical Confucian society is more complicated than understanding the role of a man. This is because, in the ancient Chinese language of Confucianism, the word for person literally meant a man, and women were only understood in their social roles of daughter, wife, and mother (Zimmerman-Liu 2012). To be moral, a woman had to negotiate each of those ethical roles, or *lun*, according to the rituals (*li*) set out in the *Book of Rites* (Barlow 1989, Mann 2002). In general, the main duty of a woman in traditional Confucian society was to obey men (Jiang 2009), first as a daughter obeying her father, then as a wife obeying her husband, and finally as mother obeying her grown sons. Nevertheless, imperial era didactic texts for women, such as Ban Zhao's (Pan Chao, [45-114 CE]) *Lessons for Women* (*Nüjie*) and Liu Xiang's (79-8 BCE) *Biographies of Exemplary Women* (*Lienüzhuan*) include another important function of mothers: educating their children, especially their sons.

In China's earliest antiquity, men engaged in agriculture and women engaged in sericulture. The two genders were seen as different and complementary, and imperial era texts taught that harmony in the home between husband and wife was considered important to producing filial sons and "preserving civilized society" (Mann 2002, Zimmerman-Liu 2012). Thus, Larsen (2002) notes that as a complement to the male virtue of *cai*, females were to exhibit

the moral virtue of *de*, which was physical and of the body³⁴, in contrast to the spiritual, intellectual male virtue. Thus, Confucian society considered exemplary, moral females to be those who exhausted themselves physically in service to their families and who worked tirelessly to educate their children (Zimmerman-Liu 2012). Such a spirit can be seen today in the ethos of Tzu Chi volunteers and their tireless work to serve society.

In addition to working tirelessly to serve the human race, which is her family in the broadest sense of the word, Master Cheng Yen combines the didactic function of a Confucian mother teaching her children with the didactic function of China's female Chan masters. Beata Grant (2009) describes seventeenth-century female Chinese Chan masters who lectured both lay men and women and taught brilliantly. By setting herself within these two feminine traditions of Chinese culture, Cheng Yen has established herself as a moral authority in Chinese society, especially in the area of proper moral praxis, which resonates strongly with the Confucian female virtue of *de*.

Tzu Chi Family—The Abode of Still Thoughts as the “Ancestral Home” of All Tzu Chi Volunteers and a Model for Living Sustainably

Most specifically, Master Cheng Yen considers Tzu Chi members to be her extended family, and she is the matriarch. When I was at the Abode of Still Thoughts on my preliminary field work trip in August 2016, Master Cheng Yen left with her entourage for the Tzu Chi Hualien Hospital to celebrate its anniversary. All the people who had been seated in the Abode's hospitality room walked to the entrance and lined up to see her off. As she left, Master Cheng Yen instructed the line of nuns and Tzu Chi volunteers to “watch our home.” Then, she got into

³⁴ The traditional Chinese practice of footbinding was seen as a discipline of the body and related to female virtue because women with small feet were forced to be separate from men. For an interesting discussion of the regional and class differences in footbinding practices of the late imperial era see C. Turner (1997).

the van, waved good-bye, and the line of people waved back. Everyone remained standing on the porch until the master's van was out of sight (field notes 2016).³⁵

The Abode of Still Thoughts, the spiritual home for all Tzu Chi people, plays a major role in transmitting the organization's teachings and practices to the group's members and to any visitors who come to tour the facility. Brummans, Cheong, and Hwang (2016) describe how Singaporean college students were inspired by a training at the Abode to begin their VEROES (Vegetarian Heroes) campaign to promote vegetarianism for mitigating climate change. My formal interviews with some of the top leaders in Tzu Chi San Diego showed that visiting the Abode for training to learn directly from the nuns there was a strong push-pull factor in determining which interviewees most fully adopted the group's environmental teachings and practices in their own daily lives. Interviews and focus groups with environmental volunteers in Taiwan also showed that the most active Taiwanese environmental volunteers, who both model behaviors and teach similarly to Master Cheng Yen, are tightly connected to the nuns at the Abode and that they seize every opportunity to visit the Abode to help the nuns promote environmentalism to visiting groups and to receive the latest environmental teachings and practices from the source (field notes 2017 and TC Taiwan interviews).

Overview of the Abode of Still Thoughts

The Abode of Still Thoughts lies nestled in rural Hualien County at the foot of Taiwan's central mountain range on the narrow coastal plain on the east side of the island of Taiwan. It has fresh air and farmland. There are more than 200 nuns living in the Abode, and they pass all donations on to the Tzu Chi Foundation for use in the group's charitable endeavors. This means

³⁵ This type of formal good-bye ritual was very common in the 1980s when I was living in Taiwan. It is standard procedure among the nuns at the Abode for any departing Tzu Chi volunteer or guest.

that the nuns must support themselves by other means. In the early days, the nuns grew their own rice, but now there are too many people and too many new buildings, so they buy their rice, but they grow most of their own fruits and vegetables. They earn the money to buy their rice and whatever else they need with the proceeds from the copyright fees on Master Cheng Yen's books and from the earnings of the nuns' craft shops and factories. The nuns have a pottery shop with wares designed by Master Cheng Yen's first monastic disciple. They have a candle-making shop, a multi-grain protein powder factory, an instant rice factory, and a vegan soap factory. Tzu Chi members can come to stay at the Abode any time, after making arrangements with its main office, and while there, they generally spend time helping the nuns with their many chores.

The nuns live by the Chinese farming Chan precept: "A day without work is a day without food," or as it is simply translated in Tzu Chi: "No work, no food." Every nun in the organization has some job that contributes to the welfare of the entire group. The nuns also support the main offices of the Tzu Chi Foundation, which are located within the Abode compound, and they feed any guests, Foundation staff, and Tzu Chi members, who are in the Abode at mealtimes. Large and small groups of Tzu Chi volunteers continuously make short stays at the Abode for various trainings or when they serve in Tzu Chi's Hualien hospital. While staying at the Abode, the volunteers are encouraged to help the nuns with their chores, if they have some free time.

Working at the Abode's Jing Si Soap Factory

To understand the Abode's process of transmitting environmental teachings and practices, I went regularly for six weeks to its Jing Si soap factory to work with the nuns and volunteers there. Jing Si vegan soap was invented by a nun with a background in industrial chemistry, at the suggestion of Master Cheng Yen. It is made with labor-intensive, low-carbon

production methods and uses plant trimmings from the Abode's landscaping or herbs grown on land too dry for vegetables. The soap contains no animal products, and it is designed to biodegrade quickly to minimize its harm to the environment. Three nuns work regularly in the soap factory, and other nuns without specific work units rotate through every ten days. There are several lay staff members and a few regular volunteers from the local area. Casual volunteers, especially from Hualien, Yilan, and other areas in eastern Taiwan, come frequently to help the nuns process the herbs or package the newly finished bars of soap.

Much of the time, the work is done mindfully and silently. But, while the volunteers are there working, they have the opportunity to ask questions of the nuns, who counsel and encourage them with whatever hardships they are facing. The nuns also counsel the volunteers on how they can reduce their carbon footprints at home. This counseling is all done in a friendly fashion and often occurs at the snack breaks. There is a vegan morning snack around 10 am, and everyone breaks for lunch in the Abode dining room at 11:50 am. People either walk along the country lane to the main buildings of the Abode, or they ride bicycles. The nuns generally ride three-wheeled bicycles with baskets in the back. Work resumes after lunch at 1:30 pm. At 3:30 pm, the volunteers and workers stop work again for 15-20 minutes to eat a vegan snack. Then, work continues until 5:30 pm.

The factory uses myriad recycling methods and environmentally friendly techniques. Paper is reused several times, until all blank spots are written on. The plastic gloves worn when handling the soap are washed and reused until they disintegrate. The plastic wrap on the bottom of the soap molds is also washed and reused until it is in shreds. When washing the plastic items, everything is put into a basin to soak and then rinsed with a trickle of water. There is no air conditioning in the factory, except in the room with special machines for processing the soap.

Only the regular nuns and staff members are allowed in that room. On the hottest days, the workers cool off with ceiling and floor fans. Rinsing and reusing plastic until it disintegrated at the soap factory made me more aware of how much plastic still gets discarded in my own life, despite my efforts to reduce plastic waste, which I had thought were successful.

The Abode as Exemplar of a Sustainable Lifestyle

Soap production is quite specialized and requires special equipment, some of which was designed by the nuns themselves. There is another production site at the Abode where cleanser is made out of fermented fruit peels (field notes 2016). The nuns then use this cleanser to wash the floors and dishes. Making the cleanser is much easier than making soap, and one of the Tzu Chi San Diego leaders reported adopting that method in her backyard to make biodegradable, environmentally friendly cleanser for her home. There is also a pair of recycling huts at the Abode, and another of the top adopters of environmental techniques in San Diego reported spending a day working with the recycling nun in her huts during his visit to the Abode.

The Tzu Chi Foundation headquarters are within the Abode, and the curriculum developers work there. When groups of Tzu Chi volunteers come to the Abode for training, the various curriculum developers give them lessons on their particular topic. Every group of “tour guide volunteers,”³⁶ gets a thirty-minute lesson from the curriculum developer of the environmental flyer. In that class the “tour guides” are trained how to use the flyer, how to insert discussions of the environmental mission into their usual introduction of the group, and how to promote vegetarianism. They practice a little with one another, and then they move on to their

³⁶ These are the volunteers who meet with the public and explain the group and its mission at the various Tzu Chi service centers and environmental education centers around the island of Taiwan.

next class. The trainees are encouraged to spend time at the recycling huts during their stay at the Abode, which usually lasts for three to four days (field notes 2017).

Volunteers who attend trainings in the Abode then take the teachings back to their home groups where they share what they learned with the others. There is a group culture of trying to adopt as much as possible from the Abode's way of doing things. Because most active members always watch the daily broadcasts of Master Cheng Yen speaking at the Abode, the monastery holds a special place in their hearts, as the center and guidepost for the group's practice. Every fully trained commissioner in Taiwan must visit the Abode at least once before their final certification. Even Americans and other foreign members are encouraged to visit the Abode before getting certified as full-fledged commissioners. This insistence on "coming home" to see how things work strengthens the group's concept that the Abode's way of practicing is the correct Tzu Chi way.

Although the main recipients of training at the Abode are Tzu Chi volunteers, the nuns welcome anyone and treat them as family. During my time at the soap factory, I observed the nuns caring for families of patients at the Hualien Tzu Chi hospital by inviting them to work in the factory to take their minds off worrying about their sick relatives. Over the work, the nuns comforted the family members and encouraged them to think positive thoughts and trust the doctors. I also observed the nuns caring for elderly and handicapped members of the Hualien community by giving them meaningful work and a good way to spend their days. Several of my non-Tzu Chi Buddhist informants reported visiting the Abode and being welcomed by the nuns as brothers and sisters. One young friend from Dharma Drum Mountain, who had lived in Hualien for several months convalescing after a major illness, reported that the nun responsible

for hosting guests at the Abode had spent an entire afternoon counseling him when he visited the premises.

Huang (2009) reports that the Tzu Chi organization takes great care to maintain Master Cheng Yen's public identity. I found this to be true, as well. Within the Abode, among the family, there are pictures of Master Cheng Yen working with the nuns and volunteers in the fields. I was not allowed to take pictures of these pictures, even though they are hung in public areas of the Abode. Pictures of Master Cheng Yen for general public consumption all seem to be curated to further Cheng Yen's identity as a caring mother. The public image does not seem to be too far from what I experienced and observed at the Abode; nevertheless, great care is taken among Cheng Yen's monastic and lay disciples to ensure that only the particular image of caring mother reaches the general public.

I personally experienced Cheng Yen's heightened sense of motherly care during my first visit to the Abode in 2016. On that trip, I was unprepared for the increased heat and humidity of Taiwan's summers. Although I wore a short-sleeved shirt, the fabric was too heavy for the weather there, and after touring the premises I was drenched in sweat. I was standing with my guide near the entrance to the Abode's building complex when Master Cheng Yen passed by. She saw me covered in sweat and immediately had me rushed into the hospitality room where the nuns and volunteers encouraged me to drink copious amounts of fluids. My previously planned time of participant observation in the Abode's recycling hut was swiftly changed to an interview beside an electric fan with a nun who had first joined the organization as a recycling volunteer in the early 1990s. Other people at the Abode had seen me dripping with sweat that day; however, no one had had the same concerned reaction as Master Cheng Yen (field notes 2016). This story of my experience of Cheng Yen's care was avidly listened to by Tzu Chi

members and other Buddhists in Taiwan. It was taken as further evidence of Cheng Yen's heart of compassion for all living things and of her status as an exemplary female moral authority (field notes 2017).

Changing Roles for Women and New Types of Moral Females

Gender roles for women in Taiwan have changed dramatically since Master Cheng Yen first founded Tzu Chi in 1966 and even since she exhorted her followers to begin caring for the natural environment in 1990. By 2004, 45% of Taiwan's women were in the work force, and most of them continued working after the birth of their children. While Confucian norms require that they also care for their children and elderly parents-in-law, women in Taiwan are moving out of the home and into businesses, and even into politics. Taiwan has instituted a system, which guarantees that 10% of all legislative seats at all levels of government go to women (Farris 2004). Therefore, Taiwan as a society is embracing new roles for women, and there is much room for negotiation concerning the roles that women will play and the power that they will deploy in each of their various relationships (Lu 2004). Confucian-style patriarchy is still alive in Taiwan, but women are able to free themselves from its strictures, at least partially, as they embrace aspects of the old ideology that serve them well, while discarding other aspects that are no longer relevant. These changes to Chinese patriarchy are due, in part, to the fact that women and men have always been seen as complementary in Chinese society (Lu 2004) and to the fact that women are increasingly able to provide necessary income to their families (A. Lee 2004). But it is up to each woman to negotiate her position among the many relationships that circumscribe her life (Lu 2004).

Lu (2004) notes that, in addition to Tzu Chi, other women's NGO's, such as the Taiwan Homemakers' Environmental Union, took the position of mothers speaking on behalf of their

children when they began their activism in the late 1980s. With the changing roles of women in society, however, this identity of caring mother seems to be less popular with younger women. Lee and Han (2016) document a new paradigm for female activists in Taiwan with their comparison of Master Cheng Yen and a younger activist nun, Master Chao-hwei (b. 1957), founder of the Hongshi Buddhist Theological School. Chao-hwei does not present herself as a caring mother, but as moral activist, who directly speaks out against matters in society that need to be changed.

Many of the younger Tzu Chi commissioners, especially those in Taipei, seem to be moving toward the moral activist ideal type in their efforts to promote vegetarianism and save the planet. This model most likely fits better with Tzu Chi's recent professionalization, as the group has grown from a small charity organization to Taiwan's largest NGO with an international scope. Tzu Chi has experienced rapid global expansion since the late 1990s; it now engages in relief efforts around the world, and as Madsen (2007a) notes, many lay leaders now are male, especially the international ones. O'Neill (2010) describes how Tzu Chi's male leadership includes top CEOs from Taiwan, such as the CEO of the Acer computer company. These men and many of the younger, highly educated female leaders in Tzu Chi, some of whom are also CEOs and business leaders, have streamlined and professionalized Tzu Chi's management of lay volunteers and of executing its missions. The organization is increasingly efficient, especially in its international disaster relief efforts. O'Neill (2010: 52) states: "Tzu Chi is outstanding in terms of organizational culture, training manpower, implementation and efficient use of resources." It is now a truly professional organization in the business sense of the word.

The virtues now seen among many Tzu Chi lay volunteers are much closer to capitalistic virtues of being good businesspeople and entrepreneurs in their work to expand the charitable organization. Tzu Chi attracts wealthy businesspeople and professionals (Madsen 2007a, Pacey 2005), and under their leadership, the organization does not merely provide charitable aid, but does so in a way that contributes to the “satisfaction of customers, return to shareholders, and the achievements of its staff” (O’Neill 2010:52). Tzu Chi’s lay volunteers are increasingly fluent in the Utilitarian Discourse System (Scollon et. al. 2012), and they effectively apply its values of efficiency, science, and rationality in their work to help society. This is part of the reason they have garnered success internationally.

Like Buddhism’s bodhisattva ethic, Confucian feminine morality consists of caring and giving without thought of return, and this giving without asking anything in return is the source of a Confucian female’s moral authority. But now, under Tzu Chi’s professionalized business leadership, there needs to be some kind of return to the group, which can create pressure on those receiving Tzu Chi’s aid and on the volunteers providing the aid. This sense of a demand for return seems to be Tzu Chi’s biggest PR problem with Taiwan’s populace. Approximately 10% of my people-in-the-street interviewees complained about individual Tzu Chi “sisters” making unreasonable requests of them. It seems that if Tzu Chi volunteers, especially the lay females, move too far into the Utilitarian Discourse System in their dealings with others in Taiwan, it creates friction and reduces the impact of their message to society.

This means that the female lay members probably need to further refine their feminine identity within the group, now that they seem to be leaving the identity of loving mothers, which Master Cheng Yen and the nuns continue to maintain. Lu (2004: 225) uses the term “positionality” to describe how “the biological fact of gender does not determine a person’s

social positions in Chinese society. It is person's position in the web of social relationships that defines how she/he acts towards others." As noted above, Lu describes how, in the past, Taiwanese women's groups strategically used the Confucian rhetoric of motherly authority to gain power and achieve goals in society (227-228). Master Cheng Yen and the early female volunteers of Tzu Chi used such strategies in the beginning of the group's history. These strategies worked well for the group when it was smaller and less busy, so that the volunteers had time to handle each charity case with a high level of motherly care. But now it seems that younger women in the group are using the same principle of positionality to carve out a new moral identity that is closer to that of Chao-hwei's moral activist because they do not have the time to meet the social standards of caring mothers with their careers and busy volunteer schedules (field notes 2017).

With the professionalization of Tzu Chi, many of the female members, whom I observed over the course of my 2017 field work in Taiwan, presented themselves as successful, and even heroic, charitable entrepreneurs and moral activists. Both male and female Tzu Chi volunteers came to my focus group and interviews equipped with laptops, power points, and multimedia presentations about their environmental volunteer work in Tzu Chi. Some women's presentations showed them with their teams of volunteers precariously hanging onto steep mountainsides, as they picked up bales of trash in a popular recreation area or organizing a squad of trucks draped with banners to promote vegetarianism. Their speech was crisp, forceful, and to the point. At the end of their presentations, they were equipped with an ask: clipboards and forms that would allow me to sign up for January 11th, Ethical Eating Day, if I had not yet availed myself of the many opportunities presented to me during my time with their organization. In short, there was nothing in the female volunteers' actions towards me that differentiated them from the males or

that said they were loving mothers caring for all living things. Instead, I saw vibrant, forceful women on a heroic mission to save the planet (field notes 2017).

While the image of a caring mother still works well for Master Cheng Yen as matriarch of the large Tzu Chi family, and the Abode of Still Thoughts is an excellent exemplar of living sustainably for the family of Tzu Chi members, it may be that Tzu Chi needs to consciously shift the basis for the moral authority of its lay volunteers in Taiwan from one of mothers caring for society to one based on humanistic Buddhist moral guidelines, such as the bodhisattva ethic, because the “moral activist and hero” identity does not seem to resonate very well with people outside the group. Master Cheng Yen might be moving in this direction, as she has strongly emphasized Tzu Chi’s core Buddhist values over the past two years since several recent media controversies concerning Tzu Chi lay volunteers arose in 2014 and 2015. During training encampments at the Abode, Cheng Yen and her nuns encourage all the Tzu Chi volunteers to participate in the Buddhist religious activities of the organization, in addition to their volunteer service in the organization’s major service missions (field notes 2017).

Strong Moral Communities Based on the Masters’ Identities

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

Despite the shifting identities among younger female volunteers in Tzu Chi, Master Cheng Yen’s identity as a caring mother is strong, as is the Abode’s position as the ancestral home of Tzu Chi believers and of any living person crossing the threshold. My “people-in-the-street” informants all expressed admiration for Master Cheng Yen and her accomplishments. They also expressed high esteem for the nuns at the Abode because they all “work hard for their living” and are “not greedy or self-indulgent” (field notes 2017). This respect for the master and

monastic disciples creates high levels of trust and respect for the organization among ordinary citizens in Taiwan, even when people have issues with individual lay volunteers.

Being part of the Tzu Chi family and disciples of such a distinguished dharma master give Tzu Chi members a strong sense of community and a strong group identity (Melucci 1996). The Tzu Chi way of practice is so strong among active members that Professor Rey Her of Tzu Chi University's Institute of Religion and Humanity, calls the entire organization a "Tzu Chi world" (2008). The designation "Tzu Chi world" ties in with Master Cheng Yen's characterization of the group as "a harmonious crystal sphere" (field notes 2017). The sense of belonging to a Tzu Chi world is constructed by the group's many trainings, which create a strong group discipline. Tzu Chi volunteers wear uniforms. They form up into squads and march in formation whenever they are going places, even after alighting from the shuttle between the hospital and the Abode to go in for dinner. This discipline is necessary to the group's safety and effectiveness in their disaster relief efforts, but it becomes an ingrained habit that is hard for more experienced volunteers to shake (field notes 2017). The strong discipline and group sense of accomplishment after successful disaster relief missions cause active group members to do their best to adopt the group's best practices. As all the members dress alike and act alike, a strong sense of identity is established among the "Tzu Chi people."

This identity is further reinforced by the programming of Da Ai Television. Benedict Anderson (2006) describes how national identities are formed by consuming a common source of news and the same cultural objects, including books, films, and museums. The narratives in these cultural objects give their readers and viewers a sense of common identity with people whom they have never met. Many of my Tzu Chi informants reported that Da Ai Television is the only TV they watch. Da Ai TV has news shows that include some national and international

news in addition to reports of the activities of Tzu Chi teams around the world. It also broadcasts all of Master Cheng Yen's speaking every day, and it has cultural and general interest science programs. Many of these programs reinforce Tzu Chi's environmental mission, either by highlighting volunteers (both in and out of Tzu Chi), who are working to save the planet, or by informing the viewers about scientific facts related to global warming, pollution, and vegetarianism. There are no commercials on Da Ai Television, in that no company is allowed to sell its products on the channel. Companies can, however, donate money, and Da Ai thanks them for the donation over a public service announcement that generally promotes one of Tzu Chi's prescribed environmental practices. All the programming, including these non-commercials, are of high quality, and even people outside of Tzu Chi enjoy watching the shows.

Some of the most popular shows are the dramas based on the real-life stories of Tzu Chi commissioners. These dramas all follow the general template for Tzu Chi conversion narratives as described by Jones (2009), in which the person of interest feels unsatisfied with their life or experiences difficulties until they encounter Tzu Chi commissioners. Once they begin volunteering at Tzu Chi, the act of volunteering helps them gain satisfaction and turn their lives around. Many of the dramas on Da Ai TV that I viewed in the evenings during my six-month research trip to Taiwan were about commissioners who started with Tzu Chi by volunteering in the recycling work. The repetitious dramatization of so many similar narratives over the course of years tells Tzu Chi members who they are. It also tells them that the recycling centers are places of happiness and healing for all. Hence, it reinforces the importance of the environmental mission to all members of the group.

This strong Tzu Chi identity, produced by training, discipline, group actions, and a common source of news and culture, also gives Tzu Chi an aspect that is "inward looking and

bonding” (Putnam and Goss 2002). This inward-looking, bonding aspect indubitably helps the group successfully carry out its charitable missions, especially in remote areas and disaster zones. It may also be the reason that only 20% of Tzu Chi members also belong to other Buddhist groups (Lee and Han Unpublished). Although Tzu Chi does exhibit some elements of a sect (Pacey 2005), it is not one in the Western sense of the word (c.f. Jules-Rosette 1985). Tzu Chi volunteers do not withdraw from society; on the contrary, they are quite active in working to improve their communities. Other Buddhists highly respect Tzu Chi and emulate its teachings and practices. Moreover, Tzu Chi leadership welcomes believers from other Buddhist groups without prejudice (field notes 2017). The strong intragroup bonding only seems to enhance the organization’s efficiency in service, which strengthens its position in Taiwan society (see Ch. 5).

Dharma Drum Mountain

Although Dharma Drum Mountain does not have the same level of group bonding that Tzu Chi has, its committed members do have a quiet collective identity (Melucci 1996). Several of DDM’s lay members told me that “our master created a Buddhist group for intellectuals with the best Buddhist dharma” (field notes and DDM Taiwan interviews). Most of the people that I met at Dharma Drum Mountain were highly educated; many were schoolteachers or professors. They tend to prefer contemplation, which makes them partial to Chan meditation. Master Sheng Yen’s reputation as the most highly educated Buddhist monk of his generation in Taiwan attracted them to the group. They enjoy being his students, even posthumously, and they appreciate the level of research and scholarship undertaken by Master Sheng Yen and his monastic disciples to prepare the various classes offered by the organization. As befits Confucian scholars with high levels of cultivation, this sense of group identity is understated; nevertheless, it is quite strong. The lay members’ commitment to and pride in their master’s scholarship and

his vision for uplifting modern Buddhism are most likely the greatest factors in Dharma Drum Mountain's continued existence as a successful Buddhist organization today, more than ten years after Master Sheng Yen's death in February 2009.

The Resulting Pro-Environmental Consensus Among Taiwan's Humanistic Buddhist Groups

The gendered identities adopted by Master Sheng Yen and Master Cheng Yen are complementary in a society based on the Confucian Discourse System, just as males and females are complementary in the Confucian tradition (Mann 2002, Larsen 2002, Lu 2004). Master Sheng Yen's identity as a Confucian scholar and the Dharma Drum Mountain classes that fold pro-environmental teachings into all aspects of Buddhism helped canonize environmental teachings as an integral part of Taiwan's humanistic Buddhism. This is the male side of the equation, the doctrinal, philosophical side of *cai*. On the female side, Master Cheng Yen's identity as a caring mother with the practical model of the Abode and the green practices of Tzu Chi volunteers as they go out to serve their communities canonized the specific green practices for which Taiwan is so famous—recycling and vegetarianism (see Chapter 1). These represent the female virtue of *de*, which is physically performed in the body. Confucian society requires both sides for its gender balance, and Buddhism requires both aspects as a religion of principle and practice. Hence, the combined efforts of these two top dharma masters—one male and one female—effectively updated the religious canon of Tzu Chi and DDM, as the dharma masters promoted environmentalism at a time when environmental degradation in Taiwan created unrest among the populace due to extreme “terrestrial” (Latour 2018) disruption of the quotidian. The way religion operates in Taiwan with overlapping memberships and participation among grassroots believers then spread these teachings and practices among the humanistic Buddhist

population of the island. This has created a general consensus about environmentalism among all of Taiwan's humanistic Buddhist groups and believers.

Of course, the most important consensus of all the humanistic Buddhist groups in Taiwan is that Buddhists must exhibit concern for society and the world around them (Pittman 2001). Tzu Chi was the first to advocate volunteerism by its lay believers, and its volunteer activities are large and well-organized. But, the other humanistic Buddhist groups on the island also promote volunteerism. When Tzu Chi and DDM began incorporating environmentalism into their teachings and practice, other groups took notice and eventually followed suit. Tzu Chi's environmental volunteerism includes running recycling programs, collaborating with schools to train Taiwan's youth about reducing waste, and engaging in various activities to promote vegetarianism and low-carbon lifestyles. Other groups do not always engage in environmental volunteerism on a regular basis, but there are reports of Buddha's Light Mountain volunteers planting 3000 trees to save a watershed and of their running recycling programs in southern Taiwan. DDM volunteers helped clean the classrooms and a school library, sorting the waste and processing the recycling, in various schools in Hualien after the February 6, 2018 earthquake (DDM Hualien Field Office LINE Group notices 2018). My DDM informants, who were interested in doing regular environmental volunteerism, reported collaborating with government or community groups that engaged in environmental projects, such as recycling, natural farming community gardens, or making biodegradable organic cleansers (field notes 2017 and DDM Taiwan interviews).

Beyond doing community service to help protect the environment, I found that the Taiwan humanistic Buddhist consensus related to environmentalism includes the following general themes. All the groups promote the sacred cultivation of simple lifestyles without greed

or desire that result in reduced consumption and smaller carbon footprints. All the groups promote vegetarianism as a tenet of Buddhism, and also, as a way to fulfill the bodhisattva ethic of compassion and care for all sentient beings. All groups build temples and monasteries with award-winning green technology, as part of their religious mission to care for all life. All the groups advocate “green” rituals in the practice of their religion. Most of the groups advocate the consumption of organic or natural farm products from local farmers as a way of reducing one’s carbon footprint, protecting the earth, and protecting one’s physical health.

Although only 20% of Taiwan’s population are committed Buddhists and qualify under the more stringent definition used by *Academica Sinica* scholars (Laliberté 2004), 35% of Taiwanese self-identify as Buddhists (Taiwan Population 2018). The discrepancy generally consists of people who practice folk religion and Buddhism at the same time. These hybrid Buddhist/folk religionists are less apt to adopt all aspects of the green lifestyle prescribed by the humanistic Buddhist consensus. They are, however, influenced by the general consensus because they attend events at humanistic Buddhist institutions, hear the teachings, and experience the practices at large gatherings.

Several of my “people-in-the-street” interviewees reported attending events at both Tzu Chi and DDM. They liked the teachings of both groups, even if they did not personally identify as Buddhists or were not official members of the groups. A number of respondents reported sending their children to Tzu Chi and DDM schools or youth classes, so that their children could learn how to be moral, ethical, contributing members of society. The widespread acceptance of Taiwan’s humanistic Buddhist groups allows them to wield strong influence among the grassroots of Taiwan’s society. The way Tzu Chi and Dharma Drum Mountain leaders applied the Confucian cultural tool kit in the selection of their symbolic moral identities allows the

groups to wield significant social influence despite the fact that they generally eschew overt political activity, preferring instead to leave open paths to officials of all political parties. These open paths give them access when it becomes necessary to “speak truth to power on behalf of the suffering populace” (DDM Taiwan Interviews). The pro-environmental influence on all of Taiwan’s society by the humanistic Buddhist groups in this study will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Spreading the Message to Taiwan's Society in the Context of "Alternate Civilities"— Confucianized Social Structures

Chapter four's analysis of the authoritative moral identities adopted by Master Cheng Yen and Master Sheng Yen showed how the two Buddhist leaders assumed symbolic identities that embodied gendered Confucian cultural ideal types. That analysis used Swidler's (1986) "tool kit" approach to analyzing how cultural symbols are strategically deployed in the furtherance of social action at times of social strain. This chapter will apply Geertz's (1973) approach of analyzing the underlying cultural foundation in Taiwan's society, as it continues this study's analysis of how Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain operate in the cultural milieu of Taiwan's society. It more closely examines the Confucian Discourse Systemic (Scollon et. al. 2012) roots of what Weller (1999) calls Taiwan's "alternate civilities." As mentioned in several preceding chapters, the cultural roots of Taiwan's society cause the institutions of civil society to work differently from those in the West. The major factor causing the institutions to work differently is the Confucian emphasis on family and the "arational social habits" of the *guanxi* tradition that create the society's ethical foundation (Fukuyama 1995: 41). Successfully negotiating Taiwan's social and cultural milieu is critical to the groups' ability to build trust in order to positively influence society.

Chapter 1 of this study mentioned that Tzu Chi and DDM tap into two elements of the Confucian tradition: the valorization of education and a modernized form of the social logic of *guanxi* with its discourse and rituals. This chapter briefly describes how both groups in the study use education to reach out beyond their believers and the realm of Taiwanese Buddhism to impact the greater society. It then describes and defines the Confucian social system of *guanxi*,

explains how traditional *guanxi* has been scaled up to fit a national identity that maintains connections to its traditional relationship-oriented roots, and shows how both groups operate in this social context, including how they adapt some *guanxi* rituals to accommodate their Buddhist perspective and how they work to maintain trust in a society based on the *guanxi* logic of the Confucian Discourse System.

Educating the Community

Education structures are highly valued in societies that operate within the Confucian Discourse System. Community education has been an important theme in Chinese canonical textual discourse (Foucault [1972] 2010) since it was first proposed by the Confucian sage Mencius (371-289 BCE). Mencius advocated the establishment of schools and public education because he believed that the sage kings of Chinese antiquity had instituted schools to teach support of the old, morality and arts, as well as archery, etiquette, and deportment (Mencius 3A: 3 in Chan 1963: 67). The emphasis of these early Confucian community schools was to make “human relations clear and prominent. If human relations are made clear and prominent above, then the common people below will have affection for one another” (Mencius 3A: 3 in Chan 1963 :68). Mencius even went so far as to say that without education, the people “will become almost like animals” (3A: 4 in Chan 1963: 69). Therefore, the emphasis of education for Mencius was on interpersonal ethics, a theme that resonates with humanistic Buddhism’s goal to improve human society through education and that dovetails with the Buddhist concept of karma.

As noted in Chapter 4, the Song Dynasty (976-1279) Neo-Confucians also promoted community education, and during the late imperial era, the *literati* who did not pass the civil service exam worked as teachers in their local communities (Bol 2008). The civil service exam system, which was fully implemented during the Song Dynasty and lasted until 1911, was the

best means for social mobility in the imperial era. Hence, education has been greatly emphasized in Chinese and other Confucian societies for centuries, and this tradition resonates in Taiwan's society even today.

Education has also been a priority of Taiwan's government in the modern era. After Chiang Kai-Shek's retreat to Taiwan in 1949, the Nationalist government began implementing a public education system, beginning with compulsory elementary school education and ultimately expanding compulsory education to include junior high school in the 1960s (Rigger 2011, Schak 2018). By the 1990s, the public education system added high school education with the result that there is now a literacy rate of 98.5% among Taiwanese people who are 15 years of age or older (Index Mundi 2018).

Entrance to university is highly competitive, and there is a national examination system. The result is that public education has been criticized for "teaching to the test." This gave rise to the community university movement in 1998, which hoped to liberate education from the rigid structures found in the public schools (CP. Lee 2017b). By 2014, there were 81 community universities in Taiwan, many of which had deviated from the movement's earlier ideals and operated more like adult extension schools (637). Dharma Drum Mountain operates several community universities in Taipei that teach foreign languages and other courses of interest to the general public. Tzu Chi added community educational outreach to its education mission.

Dharma Drum Mountain's Community Education Classes on Environmentalism

To reach the general public through Taiwan's popular social structure of educational organizations, Dharma Drum Mountain offers classes specifically related to environmentalism. In its formal academic program, the Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts offers a Master of Arts degree in Environmental Studies. The program is new, and it does not yet have any

graduates. To reach the broader community, Dharma Drum Mountain has an NGO—the Dharma Drum Humanities and Social Improvement Foundation—that was founded in 2006 and in 2007 began promoting Master Sheng Yen’s Six Ethics of the Mind, which include the ethic of properly dealing with the natural environment. The HSIF offers a variety of community education classes, in which it promotes each ethic in rotation as the central theme for all educational activities during one calendar year. These community classes include classes for parents and children, classes for immigrants on Chinese culture, vegan cooking classes, and educational programming for prisoners. The HSIF has also developed formal classes on business ethics, which have recently been approved by the Taiwan Stock Exchange Corporation and the Taipei Exchange as meeting its requirements for advanced courses on ethics (Dharma Drum Mountain 2003-2007b). The business ethics course includes a component on not destroying the natural environment for the sake of profit. Taiwan now has a regulation that top-level managers of larger companies traded on the TSE must take ethics classes every year, and the Foundation’s business ethics class completion certificate fulfills this legal requirement (DDM Taiwan Interviews). The degree program, community classes, and the business ethics classes tie into the underlying cultural valorization of education to expand Dharma Drum Mountain’s influence by teaching members of Taiwan’s society about Buddhist ethics, including environmentalism.

DDM Classes to Promote Natural Farming

In addition to community outreach through HSIF classes, Dharma Drum Mountain has another unique set of classes that promote environmentalism to members of the general public in Taiwan. These are its classes on natural farming. These classes were developed by Master Auspicious, one of Master Sheng Yen’s first four monastic disciples, who was tonsured in 1980. She is a former farm girl from central Taiwan. She stated that, in his last years, Master Sheng

Yen was quite concerned about the natural environment, but he was too ill to fully develop this aspect of the four environmentalisms. Inspired by Master Sheng Yen's concerns, Master Auspicious began reading books by Masanobu Fukuoka on natural farming about ten years ago. In her spare time, she developed classes to promote this method in Taiwan because she felt that it was quite compatible with the Buddhist teaching of dependent co-arising, as naturally farmed fields tend to increase biodiversity and restore the natural balance to the soil. Moreover, it is a low-water farming technique that can be used in years when the typhoon season does not bring the usual amounts of necessary moisture to farms on the island (DDM Taiwan Interviews).

Four or five years ago, Master Auspicious' natural farming classes and programs were first offered to the public under the auspices of the Dharma Drum Mountain sangha through its community university. Master Auspicious travels around the island teaching her classes, especially at DDM facilities in farming areas. She farms a small plot of land in the hills of the Beitou District of Taipei City, above DDM's Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Culture and Yun Lai Monastery. She grows vegetables using natural farming methods and teaches regular classes to community university students and nearby farmers. In addition to her regular classes, Master Auspicious has a Facebook page where she promotes natural farming in Chinese and English (<https://www.facebook.com/taiwannaturalfarming/>). She was recently invited to attend an international symposium on biodiversity in India (DDM Hualien Service Center LINE news announcement 10/2018).

In natural farming, the farmer does not pull the weeds unless they block the sun from shining on the vegetables. No pesticides are used, and neither is fertilizer, not even organic fertilizer. In our interview, Master Auspicious showed me pictures of organic fruit that had been fertilized with organic fertilizer but not sprayed with pesticides and natural fruit that had not had

fertilizer or pesticides applied to it. The organic fruit was worm-eaten because the fruit had developed too much sugar from the fertilizer. The natural fruit was shiny and not eaten by bugs because it had all the nutrients it needed from the balanced, rich natural soil, and it was just the right sweetness to protect itself. One of the nuns at the Yun Lai Monastery told me that when she ate vegetables from Master Auspicious' garden, she could tell that they gave her more energy than the vegetables purchased at the market (DDM Taiwan Interviews, field notes 2017).

After returning to Hualien, I discussed natural farming with my informant-friends in the DDM Hualien English book club. One of them told me that she had attended Master Auspicious' classes on natural farming when the Master came to Hualien. On the day before the class, they visited a natural farm in Hualien where they saw how moist and rich the vegetable garden was when the grass and weeds were allowed to grow alongside the vegetables. They also saw field mice, worms, and many other organisms that helped to make the soil rich and balanced. Apparently, leaving the grass with the vegetables balances the nutrients in the soil; it also helps retain water, so the crops do not need much irrigation, even in the driest weather.

Over time, I discovered that the members of the DDM Hualien English book club were quite conscious of the nutritional value of food and that they tried to support local farmers who used natural and organic methods of farming. One woman brought snacks to a book club meeting that were made from rice grown in local rice paddies patrolled by ducks in lieu of pesticides. Another woman told me about a member of the DDM Hualien field office, who had started a natural farming community garden. My book club friends had planned to take me to visit that garden, but its owner was diagnosed with late-stage cancer, and eventually our field trip was cancelled (field notes 2017). The member with cancer did help the group to contact the natural

farmer they had visited with Master Auspicious, and a few of us took a field trip to learn what he was doing.

The owner of this natural farm, Mr. Wing, has nearly an acre of land in a rural area near the mountains of Hualien County. He is a surveyor and carpenter to earn money, and then he spends about a third of his time experimenting with and promoting natural farming. Mr. Wing also works with Tzu Chi to help the indigenous tribes in Hualien County to preserve their traditional methods of farming and to return to traditional crops. He gives talks to other farmers at his local township community center, and he gives free seeds from his crops to anyone who wants to begin using natural farming methods. He said that it takes several generations before the plants have given up their dependence on fertilizer and pesticide. The farmer must also determine which crops grow best in the soil and microclimate of their farm. Many natural farmers in eastern Taiwan find that different strains of millet do best. (Mr. Wing is experimenting with Job's Tears, or adlay millet, after finding that corn is not a good crop for natural farming methods.) This means that it generally takes two or three years before natural farming becomes profitable, but then it is very good because there is almost no cost beyond labor, and the produce can be certified as organic and sold for better prices (field notes 2017).

Natural farming seems to be following a trajectory that may lead to more widespread adoption throughout Taiwan. Like Tzu Chi's recycling work and DDM's updated Buddhist rituals, natural farming is now being promoted by more than one major Buddhist group on the island and by other civil organizations. For example, Fuzhi Buddhist Group (see Schak 2009) and the Taitung County Sustainable Development Education Foundation have joined in the trend (field notes 2017). The government is also beginning to involve itself in this work, as the Taitung County Sustainable Development Education Foundation has received a government grant to

develop natural farming techniques and products among the indigenous peoples in Taitung County (field notes 2017). This trajectory of one Buddhist group's good practices being picked up by the other groups and then later by secular civil society and finally by the government has been repeatedly narrated by my informants when describing their groups' successful environmental projects. Some of my Taiwanese informant-friends, who are not Buddhists, have also expressed concern about pesticides and contaminated foods and interest in natural farming techniques, which shows that this matter is spreading into the collective consciousness (Durkheim 1995) of the general population.

Because societies influenced by the Confucian Discourse System (Scollon et. al. 2012) place a high value on education, Dharma Drum Mountain's classes, including its classes on natural farming, are popular in society. As noted in Chapter 4, teachers are also highly respected in societies influenced by Confucianism. Therefore, DDM's formal classes are well-received in Taiwan's society, and they make an impact on the general public.

Tzu Chi's Community Outreach Classes on Environmentalism

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation also taps into Taiwan's cultural valorization of education with its educational mission, which includes both regular schools and community educational outreach. The regular schools run by Tzu Chi all teach classes and implement hands-on training about environmentalism for students at all grade levels. In contrast to Dharma Drum Mountain's formal style of community outreach classes, Tzu Chi uses its large number of volunteers to hold various activities throughout the year to educate the community. As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, the Religious Affairs Department of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, the NGO side of Tzu Chi, takes Master Cheng Yen's teachings and cutting-edge scientific information to develop outlines

for local Tzu Chi community groups to use when they are planning outreach efforts to spread Tzu Chi's environmental message.

The Religious Affairs Department works with Master Cheng Yen to determine a theme for community outreach throughout each year. For the two years after the 2015 Paris Climate Change Accord, the theme was the promotion of vegetarianism to save the planet from global warming. The Religious Affairs Department also determines the months for outreach efforts and gives the local groups event templates for their use. In Taiwan, the seventh month of the lunar calendar is a month for community outreach that is generally related to environmentalism. I attended several activities at various places around Taiwan to observe the different ways that local groups can implement the outlines from the Foundation.

The seventh month of the lunar calendar is important for two reasons. First, according to Master Cheng Yen, in Chinese Buddhism it is an auspicious month that is related to filial piety. Second, according to Taiwanese folk customs, it is "ghost month" when spirits of deceased family members and hungry ghosts without relatives to worship them roam around looking for food. Local folk rituals include regular animal sacrifices accompanied by burning incense and paper money to feed the spirits of departed family members and to appease the hungry ghosts. Many Taiwanese people consider these rituals to be necessary for their peace and prosperity in the next year. All the local Tzu Chi chapters around the island of Taiwan have outreach events during this month to share the news that it is an auspicious month in Buddhism and to work to prevent the unnecessary slaughter of animals. This makes the seventh month particularly compatible with Tzu Chi's recent efforts to promote vegetarianism to save the planet.

I observed three kinds of community events to promote vegetarianism during the seventh lunar month in 2017. The first event was a large-scale dramatization of the Ksitigarba Sutra,

which is sometimes popularly referred to as the “Filial Piety Sutra.” This event took place in Taitung, a small city on the remote eastern coast of Taiwan. There had been several disasters there the previous year, during which Tzu Chi volunteers had done much relief work. The local Tzu Chi team wanted to put on a good show as a vehicle for drawing the community together to celebrate their new beginning and to give thanks for the blessing of being alive. Tzu Chi had gone in after the disaster to retrofit nine schools to help the buildings withstand future typhoons and earthquakes. Therefore, the students, teachers, principals of the nine schools and government officials of the city and county all participated in the event, which was staged in a large performing arts center not far from the Taitung train station.

Prior to the performance, the audience watched short clips from films about global warming causing disasters, pollution of the oceans with plastic harming sea life, and how reducing meat consumption can help mitigate global warming. There was also a short clip from one of Master Cheng Yen’s dharma talks related to environmentalism. The emcee then connected the sutra, which teaches about the Buddha’s filial piety, to the clips about environmental issues by referring to the earth as the Mother of us all. The message was that we should not just care for our families and ancestors, but we should also care for the earth that nourishes humanity and allows us to live (field notes 2017). I attended the morning performance, when the center was about two-thirds full. The afternoon performance was packed, and it was broadcast live on Tzu Chi’s Da Ai TV station. The entire Taitung Tzu Chi group worked hard to organize and perform the show.

Another kind of seventh month activity that many local groups choose to organize is a community tea. This type of event is usually put on by a community-level group, as opposed to a district or city-level group. I attended a community tea in the Beitou District of Taipei. It was

held in the activity room of a large high-rise apartment complex. Approximately fifteen Tzu Chi volunteers organized and led the event for about thirty of their relatives, friends, and neighbors. This event also began with film clips about global warming and a short clip of Master Cheng Yen's dharma talk, although the clips were different from the ones shown in Taitung. Then the volunteers gave some presentations on global warming and meat production, after which they played games to see who remembered the information. Everyone who answered correctly got a prize. Next, the Tzu Chi members had everyone get up to dance to a song about how the earth is burning, so we say no, no, no to meat. The dance moves were reminiscent of moves made by Taiwanese ladies who dance in the parks early in the mornings, and all the local women kept up quite well with the beat. There was an arts and craft project of making a paper fish, which is an auspicious symbol, and the program ended with a vegan cooking demonstration followed by a fruit feast.

During the snack time around a large round table in another activity room of the building, everyone was encouraged to share what they had learned. Most of the guests were women; they reported coming because they wanted to learn to cook vegetarian food. Many said that they hoped to reduce meat consumption for their family's health. They were surprised at the content about global warming and generally felt pleasantly surprised to have learned so much more than just vegetarian recipes. At the very end, the Tzu Chi volunteers promoted January 11, Global Ethical Eating Day, and many of the attendees signed up to participate on the Ethical Eating Day app (field notes 2017).

A third form of community outreach during the seventh lunar month was a vegetarian feast for the neighbors with a skit afterwards. I attended one of these in Hualien, not far from the Abode. This event was held in a local community center beside a folk temple. The district

covered a wider area than the Taipei community event, but part of that was due to its rural setting in a farming community. The event began with prayers and offerings to the Buddha. The clip of the dharma talk by Master Cheng Yen was about how true religion does not kill life and how the seventh lunar month is auspicious in Buddhism, so after a person has prayed to the Buddha, there is no need to sacrifice animals. One of the Tzu Chi male volunteers gave a presentation on the health benefits of vegetarianism, and the day ended with a skit called “Snow White and the Seven Veggie Sprites.” The presentation on vegetarianism and the skit promoting vegetarianism both talked about it in terms of health benefits only. No mention was made of global warming or climate change. At the end, each guest received a packet of the multi-grain protein powder produced by the nuns at the Abode.

After visiting these events, I talked to some of the Tzu Chi volunteers to understand the wide range of content. They said that because rural farmers are less sophisticated than people in Taipei, the Hualien volunteers felt it was better to promote vegetarianism from the angle of health benefits. Folk religion is widely practiced among the populace in Hualien, so they wanted to promote worship without killing animals. The urban people in Taipei had already accepted the health benefits of vegetarianism and were interested in learning more about it, so the volunteers in Taipei could teach their friends and neighbors about how reducing meat consumption can help mitigate climate change. I was told that these variations were among the suggestions on the outline from the Religious Affairs Department, and the Tzu Chi volunteers in each place had chosen the modules based on their knowledge of the community where they live (field notes 2017).

Tzu Chi’s Ongoing Local Environmental Education Projects

Recycling Centers

Many of the local Tzu Chi chapters have ongoing environmental service projects, in addition to the themed events mandated by the Religious Affairs Department. The best-known of these projects are the Tzu Chi recycling centers. In 2015, the group reported having 316 recycling centers across the island of Taiwan. I visited three such centers and did participant observation, sorting unwashed plastic recyclables with the recycling volunteers for a few mornings at the Hualien Recycling and Environmental Protection Education Center. Lee and Han (2015) describe the typical layout of recycling centers. Dung (2016) describes her field work at a Taipei recycling center where she learned about the methods of recycling, the motivations impelling the “recycling bodhisattvas” to help, and the Buddhist discourse underpinning the recycling practice. The focus of my research was on the use of recycling centers as environmental protection education centers.

All the recycling centers have an educational component, and Master Cheng Yen has instructed the organization to name its recycling centers: “Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation Recycling and Environmental Protection Education Centers.” Some of the larger centers, such as the one in Neihu District, Taipei, have elaborate displays on global warming, vegetarianism, how plastic is harming the ocean, and the Buddhist teachings related to environmentalism (field notes 2016). Smaller centers have an education wall with information on the need to work to preserve the planet (field notes 2017). While I was working at the Hualien Center, two tour groups came through on one day to learn about Tzu Chi’s recycling mission. One group was from mainland China, and the members of that group attended a class in the Buddha Hall at the recycling center and then worked with the recycling volunteers for 45 minutes, sorting unwashed plastic, before leaving the facility. The other group of officials from southern Taiwan listened to a talk beside the education wall and then walked past the recycling volunteers to observe what they were

doing. Each talk was tailored to the needs of the visitors; therefore, the talk to the officials from southern Taiwan included ideas for ways that they could start a countywide recycling center in their area. The visitors from mainland China got more information on the basic need for environmental protection and more in-depth descriptions of how recycling works. One of my interviewees reported giving environmental protection talks to officials in mainland China, where a big problem is the lack of factories to make new products from post-consumer waste.

Other interviewees and focus group informants reported that Taiwan's Ministry of Education requires all school children and college students to engage in community service. Schools across the island take their students to Tzu Chi recycling centers where the students first listen to a lecture on the need for preserving the environment before they work with the recycling volunteers for a specified length of time. Depending on the age of the students and the requirements of each school, these work visits can last anywhere from 30 minutes to the entire morning. One interviewee reported that in the closing debriefings with the students, their most frequently reported takeaway from the experience of working with recycling was that people buy too many things and discard them carelessly. From their service at Tzu Chi centers, the students begin to understand how overconsumption is harmful to human society.

Work of Individual Environmental Volunteers

There are three levels of environmental volunteers: the "recycling bodhisattvas," who do most of the actual work of processing the recyclables daily at the recycling centers; the local commissioners on each community and district environmental team; and the environmental lecturers, who have taken one or two special courses offered by the Religious Affairs Department's environmental coordinator and who are able to give full-length presentations on all the different aspects of Tzu Chi's environmental mission. These volunteers engage in recycling,

conduct classes on environmentalism, give lectures to business and government groups, and engage in regular community outreach as part of their volunteering commitment every month.

Generally, the “recycling bodhisattvas” are retired working-class people, who want to get out of the house and feel useful (Dung 2016). They are not certified commissioners, and indeed, one of my informants reported that approximately 20% of the recycling bodhisattvas are illiterate. The environmental commissioners are certified Tzu Chi volunteers. When each Tzu Chi volunteer is certified, he or she must sign up for regular service in one or two of Tzu Chi’s main missions. The environmental commissioners run the recycling centers, arrange the schedules for the cooking teams to make lunch for the recycling bodhisattvas, organize the trucks to pick up recycling from the various collection points in their districts, and do the community-level planning and implementation of environmental events assigned by the Religious Affairs Department. The environmental commissioners also do the basic educational work at each district’s recycling and environmental education center. The environmental lecturers get invited to give longer presentations at many district events, where the local environmental volunteers do not feel comfortable speaking to large numbers of people. The lecturers may also be called upon to give presentations to companies, other civic groups, or even governmental agencies.

When they are not giving presentations, the environmental commissioners and lecturers work with the recycling bodhisattvas to process the recyclables at their local centers. Among my respondents, the extent to which the commissioners and lecturers actually do this hands-on, dirty work of recycling also correlated strongly with how connected they are to the nuns at the Abode. The ones who reported being closely connected to the Abode stated that it was important for them to do hands-on recycling because they need to act as role models and teach by example. This discrepancy in praxis is similar to the findings of Brummans and Hwang (2010), who noted

that some Tzu Chi members were quite adept at translating Buddhist teachings into practice, while others were much less so. The fact that contact with the nuns and Abode is strongly correlated with adoption of Tzu Chi's prescribed Buddhist practices shows the importance of the monastic pattern at the Abode in transmitting the prescribed group practices.

In addition to serving at the recycling centers and organizing environmental events, individual environmental volunteers also pair up on weekends and go out to parks and other areas where people congregate to spread the word about living sustainably. They generally use homemade educational materials, such as booklets made of recycled products, about the dangers of plastic bags in the ocean or about the different classes of plastic for recycling. If the teams are larger than two or three, some volunteers walk around carrying flags with slogans promoting environmentalism. Most recently, these local teams and individuals have been trying to get one million people to sign up to participate in the January 11th Ethical Eating Day, so that the United Nations will make it an annual international event to promote saving the planet from global warming by reducing meat consumption.

There are many variations in the individual and community efforts to promote environmentalism. In addition to the activities described above, some volunteers make large banners with environmental slogans that they ask shop owners in their neighborhood to hang at their entrances. Sometimes all the volunteers in a district come together to clean up the trash that has accumulated at popular recreation sites nearby. Other small groups of volunteers hold regular vegetarian cooking classes in their neighborhoods and help their friends strategize how to reduce their families' meat consumption. Each volunteer has to log a certain number of service hours per month to remain in good standing as a Tzu Chi commissioner. The volunteers are given much freedom to develop their service projects individually and with the other environmental

volunteers in their neighborhoods. Most of them are quite excited about their work and find great fulfillment in developing projects to help save the planet (field notes 2017).

Just as the authoritative moral identities of Master Cheng Yen and Master Sheng Yen are complementary, so also the community education efforts of both groups complement each other. Dharma Drum Mountain provides formal classes, especially to Taiwan's businesspeople and farmers, who need the specialized information taught in those classes. Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation works at the grassroots level with its large number of volunteers to pique the interest of their neighbors and raise awareness of the need for and ways to live sustainably.

All the classes that I attended at both groups were full. I argue that this is because Taiwan's population is in consensus about the danger of environmental degradation and climate change, and their cultural love of education makes them eager to attend classes on this important issue. Furthermore, both groups in my study enjoy high levels of trust in Taiwan's society. This trust is rooted in the excellent reputations of the founding dharma masters of each group, and it is also fostered by the way each group's volunteers manage their relationships with their relatives, colleagues, and neighbors, and by the way they work to build strong relationships with newcomers to the group. The way in which Taiwan's people manage their interpersonal relationships is called *guanxi*, which literally means "relationships" in Chinese. It is based on Confucian tradition and consists of discourse and rituals that underlie the Taiwanese ethos that emphasizes family and human relationships (Fukuyama 1995, Rigger 2011, Zimmerman-Liu 2017). *Guanxi* logic is part of the Confucian Discourse System, which is the underlying mindset of Taiwan's society, and it is the reason that civil organizations work differently in Taiwan than in the West (Weller 1999). One of the biggest differences affecting organizations in societies founded on the Confucian Discourse System versus societies founded on the Utilitarian

Discourse System is the basis for garnering trust (Fukuyama 1995) among the populace. The rest of this chapter will explain *guanxi* and describe how Tzu Chi and DDM operate to gain and maintain trust under Taiwan's discourse system with *guanxi* logic.

Garnering Trust in a Society Governed by *Guanxi* Logic

In Chapter 4, I described how Confucius promoted three main ideas: *ren* (humaneness), *xiao* (filial piety), and *li* (the rituals that symbolize and constitute human relationships). *Guanxi* is the social system that developed based on those teachings. It combines an ideological component that defines basic human relationships as well as the rights and responsibilities each party in a relationship owes the other with a practical component that defines the social rituals each party should use to harmonize the relationship and produce *ganqing* or affection. A society or group that strongly emphasizes *guanxi* practices and builds up much affection among its members is said to be full of *renqing* or human feeling. Taiwan society is famous for its *renqing*, which Rigger (2011: 96) avers includes “compassion [extending] to strangers.”

In antiquity, Mencius expanded on Confucius' writings to fully define human relationships in five dyads with concomitant rights and responsibilities. Moreover, Mencius seems to have been the originator of the basic logic of *guanxi*: expanding the family outwards to include others (D. Bell 2000), to the extent that the family is the model for the state (de Bary 1998: 17). According to Mencius, the *wu-lun* or the basic five relationships of human society and their corresponding responsibilities are as follows:

Between parent and child there is to be affection
Between ruler and minister, rightness
Between husband and wife, [gender] distinctions
Between older and younger [siblings] an order of precedence
Between friends, trustworthiness
(Mencius 3A: 4 in de Bary 1998: 17).

These relationships are defined by one's birth, and the main emphasis of Confucian ethics is to humanely and righteously fulfill one's responsibilities in each of one's various life roles.

Schak (2018) describes how China began to consciously change its *guanxi* paradigm after losing the Opium Wars in the 19th century. He describes how late Imperial Era and early Republican Era Chinese intellectuals of the late 19th century and early 20th century criticized the Confucian family as preventing China from modernizing and competing with Western powers. As noted in previous chapters, Jochim (2003) and Madsen (2007b) describe efforts by Chiang Kai-shek's government to update Confucianism to better fit modern capitalism. Schak (2018) argues that the KMT efforts to update Confucianism were unsuccessful. He attributes modernization of Taiwan's society to its contact with the West, whence Taiwan's citizenry learned about Western civility, to Tzu Chi's 1980s promotion of treating everyone as family during its campaign to raise money for a charity hospital in Hualien, and to public education modules that teach "public morality," which includes a vision of the nation as community and behavioral norms appropriate to modern, urban life, such as not urinating in the street. The Taiwan education textbooks on public morality used by Schak (2018) to support his argument frame public morality in terms of the Confucian notion that the family must be expanded outward to encompass all of society. Schak (2018) states that Taiwan's textbooks use archaic examples from Confucian literature of people sacrificing their selfish interests for the public good. Therefore, I argue that most of Schak's (2018) data describe a reconfiguration of the Confucian Discourse System to better fit *guanxi* logic to the global capitalistic marketplace. Taiwan's modern civility, which appeared among the grassroots over the course of the 1990s, does not mean that Taiwan's society has completely destroyed its *guanxi* roots; rather, it retains certain relationship ethics and expands them to include strangers.

In addition to school curricula, Taiwan executed its campaign to update Confucian *guanxi* ethics through popular television shows. A top-rated show in the 1990s dramatized the cases of Justice Pao, who Schak (2018) notes is a famous archaic example of a person that sublimated his family and private concerns to the law and public good. Another show—*Star Knows My Heart*—which was quite popular in the 1980s, focused on the theme of expanding the Confucian family to encompass the entire nation. The main message of both shows was that the law should prevail in the marketplace and in the public sphere, if Taiwan was to take its place in the global capitalistic world order. All episodes of *Justice Pao* criticized bribery of officials and cheating people outside one’s family or village, which were negative aspects of traditional *guanxi*. *Star Knows My Heart* taught people to care for other citizens of Taiwan with the same kindness, compassion, and respect that were required for family members and “one’s own people” under the old system. As these television shows and educational curricula adapted traditional mores to modern situations, they criticized the *guanxi* behaviors that were incompatible with modernity and demanded change. Then, the shows reaffirmed and expanded the scale of traditional relationship ethics, encouraging society to maintain the Confucian standards for interpersonal relationships. Good traditions were portrayed as important aspects of Taiwan’s new cultural identity, which combines global market norms with Confucian ethics.

The modern *guanxi* paradigm is quite different from premodern practices, but the logic of being enmeshed in a web of relationships of varying degrees of proximity that are managed by *guanxi* rituals gives rise to the concept of “positionality,” which has been applied by Lu (2004) to explain changing gender roles in Taiwan’s society, as was discussed in Chapter 4. Today, one’s position is not just an intrafamilial or village matter, and Duran Bell (2000: 134) explains that “*guanxi* is the term for the mechanisms in Chinese culture by which the *wu-lun* are exported

beyond the family setting.” Taiwan’s update to civility was framed as an expansion of the *wu-lun* beyond the family setting. Bell (2000) also notes that expansion of family is a strategy for obtaining resources in times of need, which may have made people receptive to adopting it.

Under traditional *guanxi* there were seven typological bases for relationships in Taiwan in the 1970s, not all of which were kin: locality, kinship, coworker, classmate, sworn brothers, same surname, and teachers with students (J. B. Jacobs 1979: 251). People with these bases for relationship built up *ganqing*, or affection, by repeating social rituals, and the amount of accrued affection then determined the closeness of their *guanxi*. Kipnis (1997) identifies the common *guanxi* social rituals as: using kinship names (such as Brother, Sister, Auntie or Uncle) between the people in the relationship; visiting each other at home, especially at times of illness or on special occasions; giving gifts on special occasions; etiquette rituals, including seating arrangements, sharing alcoholic drinks, and lighting cigarettes; inviting one another to meals; kowtowing; and *bai* (veneration), which Kipnis translates as “showing respect” for elders, ancestors, and spirits. Yan (1996) and Zimmerman-Liu (2017) find that *guanxi* tends to result in relationships at three different levels of closeness with one’s own household forming the inner core, a middle layer of “one’s own people” who are almost as close as one’s household, and an outer layer of people with whom one has gift-exchanging relationships. Jacobs (1979) and Zimmerman-Liu (2017) note that when *guanxi* is damaged, the result is shunning. (See Figure 1.) These layers are more porous and nebulous in the 21st century, but vestiges of the layers still operate in Taiwan society today and form the *guanxi* logic of the Confucian Discourse System, which has interpersonal ethics as its basic source of morality. Rituals, too, remain important.

Bourdieu (1977) describes how social rituals, such as gift-giving rituals like those in the Chinese system of *guanxi*, are repeated practices that develop a person’s *habitus*, which

influences their attitudes and unconscious behavior. According to Bourdieu, a person's facility with the social rituals of the upper classes enables that person to transform economic capital into symbolic and social capital. Kipnis (1997) finds that Chinese *guanxi* rituals correlate well with Bourdieu's theory of practice to the extent that they constitute a person's sense of self and social identity. Victor Turner (1969) describes how social rituals can produce a sense of *communitas* among the participants, which I argue corresponds to Taiwan's famous *renqing* or compassion.

As noted above, *guanxi* rituals and ideologies have changed over time; nevertheless, Fukuyama (1995) finds that the underlying logic of the importance of family and personal relationships is a fundamental characteristic of societies with a history of Confucian culture. He finds that these cultures react differently to modernization. Fukuyama (1995) characterizes Confucian societies as "low-trust" because he finds that the emphasis on family seems to preclude trust in others.

Although family is important, I find that *guanxi* rituals do indeed give people in Taiwan ways to build trust and develop relationships with people outside their families. However, the virtues sought when deciding to trust people in Taiwan's social context deal mainly with how the other party handles their important social relationships. For example, over the course of my fieldwork, I met many people. Early in each relationship, usually at the end of the first meeting or the beginning of the second, these people would ask me about my family. They wanted to know if my parents were living and the character of my interactions with them. The fact that I had practiced filial piety by helping my elderly mother through a serious illness a few years previously worked in my favor. Then, they turned the question to the state of my marriage. Upon learning that I am divorced, the conversation stalled and became awkward. My interlocutors wanted to know about my divorce before deciding whether to trust me. After several such

conversations, I found that the critical matters for establishing trust, despite my divorced state, were that I had separated from my husband for health reasons with the emotional and financial support of both my parents, my eldest aunt, and my brother; that I had communicated with my parents-in-law and siblings-in-law, in addition to my husband, to give the extended family a chance to broker a reconciliation; and that I did not file for divorce until my father-in-law agreed that the marriage relationship was irreconcilably broken. The fact that my parents-in-law and siblings-in-law had all signed onto a letter wishing me well in my new life was added proof that I had appropriately managed the end of my marriage relationship. At this point in my narrative, my Buddhist informants would tell me that sometimes our karmic affinities end before the end of our lives, and we just have to let them go. I would agree, and trust between me and my informants was established.

Karma-Creating Guanxi Gifts

Gift exchanges are important *guanxi* rituals that signify the beginning of a new relationship or the deepening of an existing one, and gift-giving remains an important aspect of contemporary Taiwan culture. As I mentioned above, *guanxi* rituals have changed over time, and they can be adapted to fit group cultures. For example, indigenous Chinese Christians have adapted certain *guanxi* rituals to fit the tenets of their religion (Zimmerman-Liu 2017). Taiwan's Buddhists have also adapted the greeting gift *guanxi* ritual to match the Buddhist concept of karma. Because the goal of Buddhist cultivation is to eliminate all karmic ties that bind people to the cycle of birth, death, and reincarnation, the Buddhists in my study would not automatically give a greeting gift (*jian mian li*). Instead, they would ask: "Can I create karma with you?" (*wo ke yi gen ni jie yuan ma*). I always answered in the affirmative, and then they would give me

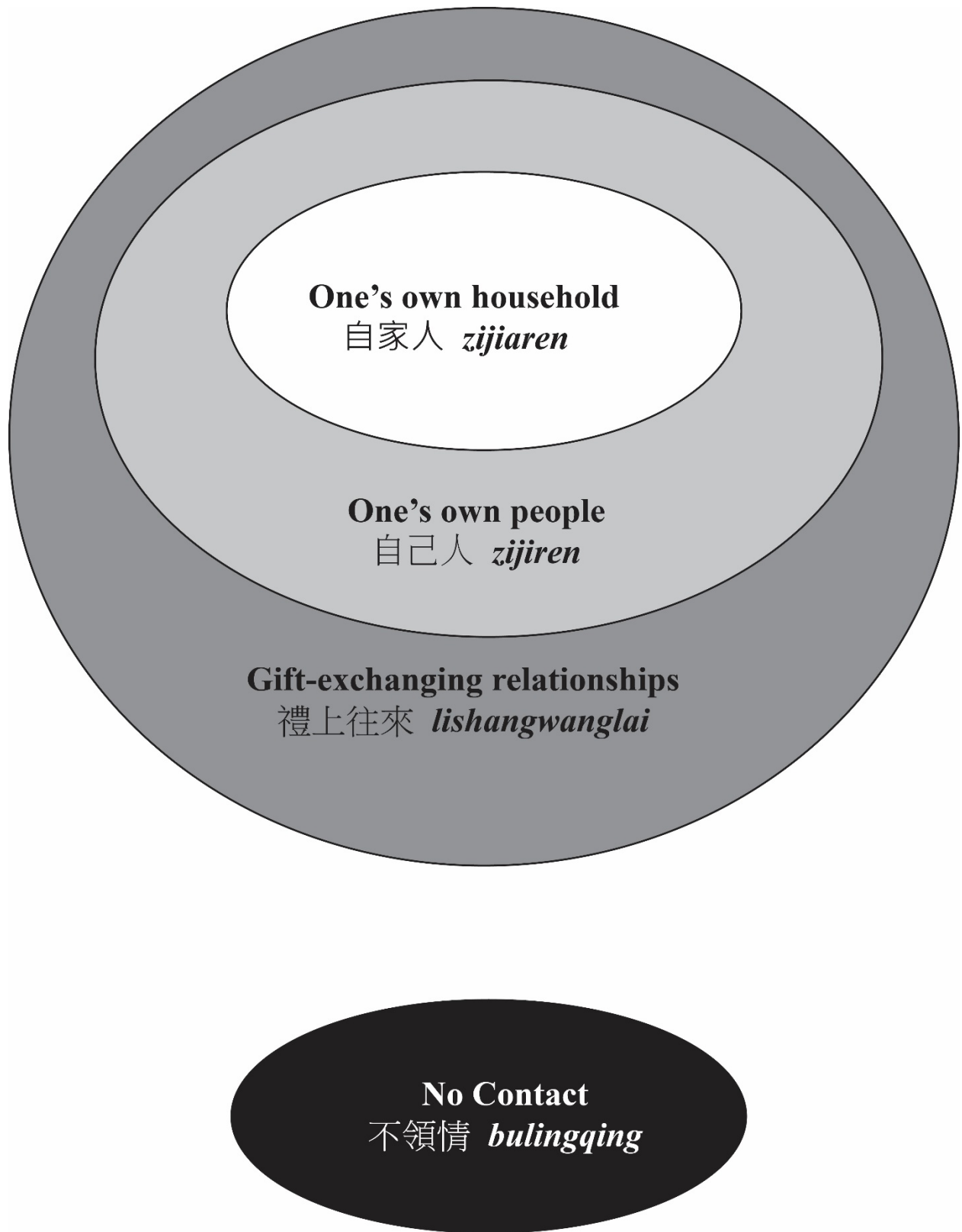


Figure 1: Layers of *Guanxi* (Zimmerman-Liu 2017: 66)

some kind of gift. Group members who met me at events generally gave me something small, such as a devotional card, a booklet, or a decorative trinket. Interviewees and focus group members sometimes gave me copies of books or booklets with the official versions of their stories to supplement the information I obtained from interviewing them. Sometimes gifts were given in the hope that I would do more with a certain service group, such as the funeral chanting volunteer who gave me an electronic chant machine, so I could learn the Buddhist chants (*dharanis*). At other times, the gifts were given to meet my need in the moment, such as the set of metal chopsticks and spoon that my neighbor at the Emperor of Liang Repentance Ritual gave me. Once, I was given the pdf file of a book in lieu of an interview. Unlike the situation in non-Buddhist *guanxi* gift-giving, each person at Dharma Drum Mountain and Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation in Taiwan asked if they could create karma with me before giving me their gift. Moreover, the gift shops at each organization had sections where they sold “karma-creating products” (*jie yuan pin*). (See Appendix B for pictures of some of the karma-creating gifts that I received in Taiwan.)

The organizations also gave “karma-creating gifts” to the attendees of seminars and classes. For example, I received small booklets at the end of every session of the Chan meditation class at Dharma Drum Mountain. Each booklet was a collection of Master Sheng Yen’s teachings on different aspects of meditation. I also received a booklet of Master Sheng Yen’s 108 aphorisms when I completed the Happy Buddhist Studies class and a bookmark when I attended a lecture on the history of Dharma Drum Mountain. When I attended the environmentalism community class sponsored by Tzu Chi in Beitou District, I walked away with my art project and a prize. Everyone who attended the vegetarian feast in Hualien received a small packet of protein powder made by the nuns in the Abode. For months prior to Chinese

New Year, Master Cheng Yen and the nuns in the Abode work diligently with volunteers to hand-assemble the Chinese paper-cutting artwork on lunar new year cards for every Tzu Chi commissioner and donor. The nuns' gifts are distributed in ceremonies at the Abode and at the lunar new year celebrations in all the local service centers. Whenever anyone has a small group meeting with Master Cheng Yen, she gives them a token gift as they leave the room. I received a pocket copy of the *Sutra of Infinite Meanings* from her at one such meeting.

These gifts are not SWAG or promotional products. In Taiwan's social context, they express the respect and good feelings that the Buddhist givers have for the recipients. While the gifts do not directly engender a social obligation for the recipient to donate money or volunteer at the giving organization, the "karma-creating gifts" do create warm feelings, or *ganqing*, between the givers and the recipients. The act of giving gifts serves to enhance the organizations' social position in Taiwan and contributes to a feeling of *communitas* (V. Turner 1969) between the group members and members of society.

Using *Guanxi* Logic to Create Intragroup Solidarity

As I mentioned in Chapter 4, both Tzu Chi and Dharma Drum Mountain create strong identities in their moral communities. Tzu Chi people adopt the identity of an extended family, which resonates strongly with *guanxi* logic and creates strong social ties. Chapter 4 already discussed the various ways that Tzu Chi strengthens the ties among its members to create a strongly bonded social group with its identity of a large extended family.

Dharma Drum Mountain encourages its members to treat each other as classmates, which is one of the bases for *guanxi* connections in Jacobs' (1979) model of *guanxi*. Schak (2018) notes that relationships among classmates are strong and long-lasting in contemporary Taiwan society. In Taiwan today, this basis for *guanxi* is more prevalent than some of the others used in the

1970s. Most Taiwanese of my acquaintance maintain connections to their old classmates, even going back to classmates from elementary school. Schools hold regular alumni events, and students from the same homeroom classes sometimes organize their own reunions. One of my middle-aged friends from Taiwan, who currently lives in the United States, even went on an Alaska cruise with friends from her Taiwanese high school. It seems that connections made among Taiwanese students tend to be strong bonds for life.

Some monastics at Dharma Drum Mountain told me that by fostering connections among classmates, they are able to serve many levels of people. In Chapter 4, I stated that DDM lay believers told me Master Sheng Yen had founded the organization as a Buddhist group for intellectuals. Two of the nuns whom I interviewed corrected that misconception by reporting that Dharma Drum Mountain has believers at all levels of literacy and cultivation. By fostering connections among classmates, the believers can develop relationships with people who are closest to their level and can progress at their own rates. The monasteries offer Buddha chanting classes and temple service classes that attract many older, working class women, some of whom are illiterate. The monastics lead those groups as diligently as they lead the sutra study classes. Their efforts with the different levels of classes work to ensure that all the believers, at every level, feel welcome and connected to the organization (field notes 2017). The organization's efforts to create intragroup solidarity among believers with an identity of classmates can be considered a strategic deployment of *guanxi* logic.

Emphasizing *Guanxi* Etiquette Rituals Appropriate to Each Group's Identity

The various etiquette rituals (*li*) required in a system of *guanxi* are closely related to the Confucian ethic of *ren* or humaneness. And while times have changed, both groups do strongly emphasize proper etiquette among the group members and towards outsiders as part of their

practice of cultivating the bodhisattva ethic. In speaking of ancient Chinese attitudes towards etiquette rituals, Bellah (2011: 415) states: “Without reanimation, tradition is indeed dead, but the *li* transmitted by Confucius was alive, at work, as Fingarette (1972) puts it, in ‘reuniting’ human beings.” Such an attitude towards the power of proper etiquette rituals was still very evident in the modern-day classes I attended as part of my 2017 field work in Taiwan. Most questions asked by newcomers to both groups were related to the appropriate veneration (*bai*) rituals towards statues and icons of the Buddha, towards the monastics, and towards other lay members. Indeed, the basic-level classes in both groups spent much time teaching the proper forms of address and the appropriate rituals for all aspects of activity within the groups, as will be described below.

Dharma Drum Mountain

My first encounter with Dharma Drum Mountain’s emphasis on appropriate *guanxi* rituals occurred during my 2016 preliminary research visit when I toured the Dharma Drum Mountain World Center for Buddhist Education. When we arrived at each hall, the tour guide instructed me on the appropriate way to make prostrations and bows to show respect to (*bai*) the various statues of the Buddha and of the Bodhisattva Guanyin. The group uses a particular mudra of palms together with the forefingers steeped at the forehead when a member makes the ritual bow to show respect to statues of the Buddha, to pictures of Master Sheng Yen, to monastics, and to one another at the end of a formal class, meditation, or chanting activity (field notes 2016, 2017). The tour guide was also quite particular about which door we used to enter the shrines, and the pathways we took as we were walking in them. When we walked within the shrines, we held our hands at the level of our waists with palms up, and the right hand was on top of the left hand. When we met anyone as we walked, we did not do the bow with the full mudra; we just

put our palms together at chest height, bowed at the waist, and said, “*O mi to fo*” (Amitabha Buddha).

In both the Basic Chan class and the Happy Buddhist Studies class, we learned more about the etiquette rituals practiced in the group. We were told that since we were classmates, we should refer to (*jiao*) each other as “Co-cultivator” (*tong xiu*) or as “Bodhisattva X” (*mo mo pu sa*). In class, we practiced doing the prostrations, bowing with the mudras, bowing without the mudras, and walking properly. We were taught to accustom ourselves to relaxing our faces into a smile and to greeting each person we passed with a heartfelt, “Hello” or “Good Morning.” We also learned how to eat mindfully and silently, focusing on the sensation of the food in our mouths. We were told to only serve ourselves as much food as “we needed to maintain our health.” All movements were to be done in a relaxed and peaceful manner with a calm mind.

Much emphasis is placed on maintaining happy, peaceful relationships among members of Dharma Drum Mountain. The responsibility for this lies with the Chief Coordinator of volunteers at each service center or facility. When people at a particular local group are tired or stressed, the coordinator organizes fun events to build community and to allow them to relax and enjoy each other’s company. Coordinators are also tasked with keeping the peace among the volunteers when conflicts arise. In mentoring the other volunteers, the coordinators practice their spiritual cultivation and help all the members improve the way they live out their spiritual beliefs (DDM Taiwan Interviews).

Dharma Drum Mountain also emphasizes humility and self-effacement in its service to society. In his public will, Sheng Yen told his followers that he was “an ordinary man” (*fanfu*). He forbade them from building memorials to him and from looking for crystallized bone relics in his ashes after cremation. He insisted on having an organic burial with the minimalist ceremony

described in Chapter 3 (*Ping guo ri bao* 2009). Throughout his time of leadership, Master Sheng Yen forbade his disciples from competing with any of the other Buddhist groups on the island. His teachings continue to restrict the believers in Dharma Drum Mountain. For example, when the group was encouraging the community to stop burning incense at temples, the volunteers would bow and apologize to visitors that their monasteries did not allow incense burning any more. Then, they would offer to provide flowers, so that the visitors could feel they had made appropriate offerings to the Buddha (DDM Taiwan Interviews). Although they were in the position to demand that the visitors not burn incense, their group's etiquette rituals required them to bow and apologize for inconveniencing their guests.

The emphasis placed on harmony, peacefulness, and happiness in relationships at Dharma Drum Mountain contributes to the public's perception that it is a group of refined scholars. Scholars in the Confucian tradition are supposed to cultivate themselves in refinement and humility. They are not to show extreme emotions or anger. The etiquette rituals at Dharma Drum Mountain, thus, serve to reinforce the identity of scholars among the believers and with respect to the general public. This identity contributes to the group's social standing in Taiwan's society and helps the organization garner and maintain public trust.

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

The first class for volunteers at Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation also begins by teaching everyone how to bow to "show respect to the Buddha, the bodhisattvas, and Master Cheng Yen." The mudra used to show respect in Tzu Chi is different from the one used in DDM. In Tzu Chi, the hands are rounded together with the forefingers making a window. The thumbs are placed at the bridge of the nose, and the person looks out through the window. The forefingers are to be

rounded like the hands because the Master does not want anyone to be sharp in their dealings with others.

In the Level One (*jian xi*) training classes for volunteers, each class has a lesson on the group's etiquette rituals. Volunteers are taught to call each other "Sister" and "Brother" because they are now members of the Tzu Chi family. They are then taught how to sit properly when wearing the Tzu Chi uniform. They are taught how to walk with their palms at the waist and how to walk in two lines carrying their bags. They are taught how to make ritual prostrations, and the Tzu Chi placement of the feet during a prostration is different from the way it is done at Dharma Drum Mountain. There are also lessons on the appropriate way to sleep in a group setting, and how to fold one's bedding when staying at the Abode or at a Jing Si Hall for a training.

Tzu Chi table etiquette is quite complex. Trainees are taught how to sit properly at table. Then, they are taught how to arrange their bowl, plate, and chopsticks at their place. Next, they are taught how to hold the bowl and chopsticks while eating, and how to leave the table when they are finished. All movements are to be graceful, smooth, and elegant.

The most important etiquette ritual towards outsiders is the bow that Tzu Chi volunteers make when they provide charity to others. When giving anything to a charity recipient, Tzu Chi volunteers bow ninety degrees at the waist, extend the items given with two hands, and express their gratitude to the recipient for the opportunity to serve them. They are taught to cultivate a heart of respect and gratitude for the charity recipients and to avoid looking down on people because they have a need.

Greeting rituals among Tzu Chi members are family-style and are much less formal than those at Dharma Drum Mountain. When Tzu Chi members see each other, they warmly say, "Hello, Sister" or "Hello, Brother." When they arrive at a place with other members, they walk

around and greet everyone they know, especially the older or more senior members. Before they leave the event, they make sure to say good-bye to all the people they know. This is the proper etiquette within a Confucian-style family that is taught to all children in their homes. They have to greet their elders and family members as soon as they walk in the door, and they have to say good-bye to elders and other family members before they leave. Failure to properly greet and take leave of family members is considered the height of disrespect. Tzu Chi's use of common family greeting rituals reinforces its group identity as one big family.

Utilizing Lay Believer *Guanxi* Networks

In a society based on *guanxi* logic, each person is enmeshed in a web of relationships, each of which has its own level of *ganqing* and its own closeness to that person's household (Zimmerman-Liu 2017). Although modern Taiwan society includes a national identity that did not exist in premodern times, personal relationships of varying degrees of closeness are still emphasized among the populace. People work to form and maintain networks of personal relationships. Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation makes particular use of its lay believer networks in Taiwan as sources of donations. Prior to being certified as a commissioner, each volunteer must develop a personal donor network of at least forty people. Each month, every commissioner visits their donors to collect the monthly donation and to personally report on the group's service projects (field notes 2017, TC Taiwan Interviews). Most of the donors are the commissioner's relatives, neighbors, classmates, and colleagues. In short, the donor networks come from each commissioner's personal *guanxi* networks. The existing relationship of reciprocal rights and responsibilities means that the donors are most likely more receptive to Tzu Chi's teachings; at least, this is the hope of Tzu Chi's leading environmental trainers.

According to the environmental trainers, their goal is that eventually each commissioner will be able to teach environmentalism to his or her donor team. All commissioners have been taught that when they see the donors to collect the monthly donations, they should visit with their donors to ask after their families and their well-being and to share about Tzu Chi's latest campaigns. One environmental lecturer informed me that he has been sharing about vegetarianism with his donors for several years, and 10-20% of them have now adopted vegetarianism. Others have reduced meat consumption (TC Taiwan Interviews).

Commissioners are encouraged to attend Jing Si book clubs where they can study the writings of Master Cheng Yen. The goal of the book club leaders is to train all the commissioners to speak coherently about the need to protect the planet, so that each one will be multiplied by a factor of 40 or more, as the commissioners lead their donors into Tzu Chi's consensus and practices to save the planet. In addition to training the commissioners to speak these things, the book clubs also regularly encourage them to fully adopt Tzu Chi's prescribed environmental practices themselves, so they can all serve as role models in their local communities.

Utilizing the donor networks to spread pro-environmental teachings and practices is a good strategy. In my people-in-the-street interviews, I found that respondents with friends or relatives in Tzu Chi generally had the most positive views of the organization and were most receptive to its teachings.³⁷ Furthermore, changing behaviors requires repeated contacts over an

³⁷ This positive relationship with donors may break down when the donors are family members living abroad, who do not receive regular reports of what the volunteer does in Tzu Chi Taiwan. I heard a report of a young Chinese-American woman whose aunt is a Tzu Chi commissioner in Taiwan. The young woman had a negative impression of the organization because she felt that her parents regularly gave money, but no one knew how it was spent or what the aunt was doing. None of my informants in Taiwan, who were relatives of Tzu Chi commissioners, expressed a negative opinion of the group; on the contrary, they often told me how happy they were to support their relative in their volunteer work for Tzu Chi. An informant in the Tzu Chi Foundation reported that, in Taiwan, approximately 3000 volunteers sign up for

extended period of time. The regular monthly collection visits give Tzu Chi volunteers in Taiwan multiple opportunities to help their donors change their lifestyles.

A Qualitative View of Buddhist Kinship Networks in Taiwan

Chengpang Lee (2017a) describes how Tzu Chi experienced explosive growth in the mid-1980s after Master Cheng Yen was able to tap into three different networks in Taiwan: kinship networks of commissioners, Buddhist networks, and elite business networks. Lee does a standard network analysis to show how those networks expanded Tzu Chi's donor base and influence. His diagram of the networks shows considerable disparity among the networks at the time Tzu Chi tapped into them in the mid-1980s.

During the course of my 2017 participant observation at both Tzu Chi and Dharma Drum Mountain, I found considerable overlap among the Buddhist networks and kinship networks of members of both groups. Unlike the United States where most religious families attend the same church or the same denomination, Buddhists of the same family in Taiwan often join different Buddhist groups. I met families where the husband was a member of Tzu Chi and the wife of DDM. I met other families where the mother and sister were Tzu Chi commissioners while the brother was a leader in Dharma Drum Mountain. There were also families where the wives were in Tzu Chi and the husbands were members of other Buddhist groups.

The believers' rationale for such behavior tied into the concepts that caused some lay believers to join more than one Buddhist sect. My informants explained to me that the Buddha dharma is one, but each dharma master has his or her particular method of cultivation. Each believer has a karmic affinity for a certain method of practice; therefore, family members join the groups in which they feel most comfortable. These Buddhist families donate to all the Buddhist

Level One training annually because being a Tzu Chi commissioner is a sign of high status (field notes 2017).

groups in which they have a member. The families also support one another in volunteering and usually all attend major events at all their family's Buddhist groups. Because these families believe that they are balancing the karmic affinities that tie them together as kin with their individual karmic affinities to different Buddhist teachers, it is quite important to them that Taiwan's humanistic Buddhist groups continue with their commitment to non-sectarianism. These believers find ways to communicate their need for non-sectarianism to the monastic leaders, if they feel a certain group is veering away from the general Buddhist consensus (field notes 2017). Because close family ties are the strongest *guanxi* relationships, the Buddhist groups seem willing to continue in this vein, lest they lose committed volunteers and donors. This example clearly shows how *guanxi* logic affects religious organizations in civil society in Taiwan, forcing them to operate differently from religious organizations in American culture.

Engendering Trust in the Context of *Guanxi*

As noted above, Duran Bell (2000) states that one important reason Chinese society developed *guanxi* rituals and ideologies was to increase the opportunities for families to obtain necessary resources during times of scarcity. This particular aspect of *guanxi* logic continues to be crucial in modern times (Zimmerman-Liu 2017), even as many rituals lose some of their traditional meanings. An example of a ritual that has lost some of its traditional meaning while maintaining the aspect of obtaining resources needed by a family is the thirty-day post-partum confinement ritual for women who have just given birth. Catherine Bell (1997: 96-97) describes the birth rituals that were at one time practiced in China and Taiwan, including the thirty-day seclusion of the mother and child. Bell's description of this ritual is framed in terms of ritual purity and includes a discussion of actions made to placate the *Taishen* or god of the placenta.

Her description is very different from my experiences with the thirty-day post-partum ritual in 1988 and 1989 in Taiwan.

When I gave birth to my children in a first-generation-off-the-farm peasant/working class household in Taiwan in the late 1980s, I maintained the thirty days of seclusion and ate many of the prescribed foods. Since I only gave birth to daughters, the feasts at the end of my seclusions were small and for close family members only. The entire month's seclusion was framed in the family's discourse (Snow, et. al. 1986) as a time of rest for me after the ordeals of pregnancy and childbirth. The special foods were framed as necessary to my health as a mother. I was told that if I failed to rest and eat according to tradition, I would develop rheumatism when I reached menopause because Taiwan has such high humidity that the dampness would creep into my joints, which had loosened as part of the birthing process.

The visits from friends, colleagues, and family members were considered a matter of *guanxi* etiquette. Each visitor brought gifts for the babies and gifts of high-protein foods for me, so that I could replenish whatever nutrients I had lost during pregnancy. My mother-in-law told me that this was the easiest way for a new mother to obtain food resources to restore her body to working order in a society with much scarcity. She recounted her story of giving birth to a stillborn child in the mid-1960s. She had been allowed to take the thirty-day rest, but the family had been too poor to buy protein-rich foods and meat without the usual gifts for a new baby. She said that it had been particularly difficult for her to recover her strength after that pregnancy because she did not get the right diet during her post-partum month. Scarce food was not an issue when I had my month's rest, but the gifts of diapers were most welcome when I had twins. My father-in-law scrupulously added to his tallies of *guanxi* debts the gifts given to me during my

post-partum months while we lived in his household in Taiwan. *Taishen* was never mentioned, but the *guanxi* rituals related to shared resources were carefully performed.

Bourdieu (1977) explains that social rituals turn economic capital into symbolic and social capital. This function is clearly evident in *guanxi* rituals. Moreover, since Chinese relationships were always seen as scalable from the family outward until they encompassed the empire (Confucius and Zengzi 1985), this concept can scale up to cover organizations, such as Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain. Chinese *guanxi* is related to households, and these Buddhist organizations are seen as extended households or families with the founding dharma masters as the heads of household, the monastics as the clan elders, and lay members as the younger generations. I argue that this is the reason it is critical for the founding dharma masters to maintain their excellent reputations. This is also why the propriety of the monastics is an important factor for the Buddhist groups to establish trust in Taiwan society. The transgressions of lay believers are less critical, just as the transgressions of children are less damaging to the social standing of an individual household, especially if the parents deal with those transgressions in an appropriate manner. Moreover, the groups' contributions to society and to individual households in society are an important factor in their ability to garner trust. This most likely relates to Mencius' teaching that the legitimacy of a king, who is seen as the father of the country, stems from his ability to provide economic prosperity to his subjects (Mencius 2A: 5 in Chan 1963: 64-65). In Taiwan, trust in the government, civil institutions, and individuals is largely based on their ability to materially help households.

At present, times are hard economically in Taiwan; the average worker in 2017 earned about NTD 30,000 (approximately US\$1000) per month, which is the same as the average salary in 1990. The cost of living has increased dramatically over the intervening decades, however.

Citizens do not have much faith in the government's ability to solve the economic stagnation, and there were many protests related to economic issues outside the Presidential Palace in Taipei during my 2017 research trip. Because Taiwan's populace does not place much trust in the ability of the government to give them needed economic resources, the impetus is strong to maintain *guanxi* traditions, especially in their crucial aspect of resource sharing among households. Any group or household that materially helps others garners social capital, which Fukuyama (1995) equates with trust.

The Consequences of Damaged *Guanxi*

Under the model of *guanxi* in Figure 1 above, the worst consequence in a relation-based society with a system like *guanxi* is to have a broken relationship and to be shunned. Shunning is not done lightly. It is usually a matter related to heads of household, but when it is imposed, all members of the household must follow the head and engage in the shunning. Generally, there is a period prior to the shunning when the elders of the family and the close neighbors and all the close relatives (those in the category of "one's own people") scold and nag the transgressing party, exhorting them to change their ways. This public nagging is called *yu lun*. If the person changes their behavior, all is forgiven, completely forgotten, and never mentioned by anyone involved again. But, if the person does not cease the censured behavior after repeated scolding, the group may decide to shun him or her. At such a time, the shunned person is not looked at or even talked about. If a new friend of the family unknowingly asks about the shunned one, the response is a grunt followed by a terse, "Don't talk about it," which is accompanied by a sweeping motion of the hand across the torso and down with palm open, as if something is being discarded. The questioner knows to immediately change the subject. Organizations can also be

treated like shunned individuals. In such cases, the offended household boycotts the organization in word and action.

Avoiding broken relationships and maintaining *guanxi* takes an incredible amount of self-discipline and a commitment to community and relationship, as this example from my ex-mother-in-law's family illustrates. My mother-in-law is one of 12 children. There is an approximate 30-year age difference between the eldest and youngest of the siblings. Most of the family members still reside in the same rural town in the middle of Taiwan where they were born and raised. This meant that the grandson of the eldest sister and the son of one of the two youngest brothers were in the same class at school. The boys were quite close and generally played together at recess. One day, when the boys raced back to their classroom after recess, the grandson tagged the window on the classroom door to show that he had won the race. Unfortunately, the school had not installed safety glass in its windows, and the boy's hand broke through the glass, gashing the blood vessels on his wrist. He bled out there in the doorway of the classroom before the teacher could be found to call the medics.

My mother-in-law and her siblings met to address this tragedy, which if handled wrong could destroy the relationships among the extended family. They decided that they would not allow their relationships as siblings to be destroyed by "children playing." The younger brother, whose son had survived, offered to pay reparations, which the eldest sister refused, saying it was not the boys' fault that the school cut corners and installed faulty glass. The entire clan demanded and received reparations from the school, and afterwards, the slightest mention of the subject became taboo in the family. We were living in the U.S. at the time of the tragedy, and on our first visit to Taiwan after the event, we were told the details of the story in the privacy of my parents-in-law's home with strong exhortations to never speak of the matter again, lest family

members be damaged by constant reminders of their terrible loss. This example shows the levels of self-discipline and forbearance that must be cultivated to successfully maintain relationships in a society ruled by *guanxi* logic.

With this background in mind, it is instructive to revisit the 2014 and 2015 media scandals involving Tzu Chi. I was surprised to discover that, of my 50 people-in-the-street interviews, 49 respondents failed to mention those scandals at all. Most people were generally positive about Tzu Chi, and there was a high level of trust in society with respect to the organization. In fact, Tzu Chi was seen as more trustworthy than the government in its processing of recyclables and in its disaster relief efforts. Dharma Drum Mountain enjoyed similar levels of trust among people who had heard of it. (Because DDM is small and its founding dharma master is deceased, some people did not know of it.) Only one person-in-the-street respondent told me that I should not research DDM or Tzu Chi, but he believed that all religions are scams and that religion is not worthy of study. He was the only respondent who mentioned Tzu Chi's old media scandals.

Other humanistic Buddhist groups on the island are not as well-regarded. Even though I never asked questions about Buddhist groups outside my study, non-Buddhist people-in-the-street informants gave me gratuitous warnings to stay away from some of Taiwan's other humanistic Buddhist groups. These warnings were couched in similar phrases with similar body language to those which I had observed when my former in-laws were shunning someone. If I pressed further as to why I should avoid the groups, the answer was usually quite cryptic and contained criticism of the founding dharma masters. More than one person said that those groups were chaotic because the ridgepole was skewed to the extent that everything below was crooked (*shang liang wai, xia liang bu zheng*). This is a common idiom that means a leader has led his or

her followers astray. It should be noted, however, that several of my people-in-the-street informants did complain about Tzu Chi's lay members, as noted in Chapter 4, but those complaints were about specific, low-ranking individuals and did not affect general trust in the entire organization, just as people operating under *guanxi* logic might complain about the neighbors' children without resorting to shunning the family over matters related to "children playing."

As the 2014 and 2015 media scandals involving Tzu Chi did not seem to be a high priority among the general population, I only explored the 2015 media frenzy about Tzu Chi's Neihu Recycling Center in Taipei because it was related to my research topic. I read online news articles and watched online videos of news shows from 2015. (See Appendix C for the URLs to those websites.) I learned that two Tzu Chi commissioners had purchased land abutting the Neihu Recycling Center and gifted it to the Tzu Chi Foundation. The news media reported that this land was in an environmental protection reserve and accused Tzu Chi of polluting protected land with one of their largest recycling centers. Master Cheng Yen did not answer any of the media reports, and representatives of the Tzu Chi Foundation said nothing for many days. In the vacuum, the activist nun, Venerable Chao-Hwei, began appearing on news panels and scolding people who dared to criticize a Buddhist monastic. Much of the reporting seemed contradictory, especially the maps depicting the boundaries of the environmental reserve that was allegedly being polluted. The entire matter seemed to be a media circus designed to drive up ratings.

Eventually, I was able to interview a Neihu resident, whose property abuts Tzu Chi's Neihu Recycling Center. This informant's family has lived in the area for more than twenty years. While the media framed the area as an environmental "protected zone," the neighbor reported that it was actually a residential "protected zone" or "reserve" for the government residences of

members of the Republic of China National Assembly, who had followed Chiang Kai-Shek from the mainland to Taiwan in 1949. When it was a residential preserve, the area was platted, and streets were put in, but zoning laws stated that no building in the district could be taller than three stories. After Taiwan eliminated the National Assembly, when it adopted direct elections of the president in the 1990s, the former residential preserve was opened up, and the zoning changed. A Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) line was built through the district, and many landowners and developers wanted to build high-rise apartment buildings for workers in Taiwan's Silicon Alley, which is just a few MRT stops away from the site in question.

Tzu Chi had obtained the land for its Neihu Recycling Center prior to the change in zoning and the opening of the MRT in the area. The land was donated by a friend and former neighbor of my interviewee because Master Cheng Yen wanted to build a children's hospital there, as Taiwan has a general lack of good quality children's hospitals with facilities to help handicapped children. The land was about to be rezoned, and the neighbors and developers, who hoped to profit by building high rises, strenuously opposed Tzu Chi's application to build a hospital, complaining that the traffic to the hospital would lower property values.

My interviewee reported being approached by developers, who would knock on the family's door nearly daily, asking them to supply the land for a high-rise mixed-use building in return for a portion of the profits. My informant refused those offers because the family liked their single-family home. According to my interviewee, these contentious discussions about land use continued for approximately ten years. In the end, Tzu Chi was not allowed to build its hospital, and none of the other parcels in that section were approved for anything other than three-story or low-density, single-family dwellings. My interviewee sent me copies of the

notification from the government related to its decision on the zoning questions. The final zoning paperwork was dated in late 2014, and the media campaign against Tzu Chi began in early 2015.

According to the zoning paperwork, Tzu Chi's property is comprised of three separate parcels, two of which have been zoned for "community service special use." The third is zoned for "special use." When a non-profit organization acquires property in Taiwan, the land is generally rezoned for "community service special use." This means that when the NGO wants to sell the property, it can only sell to another non-profit entity, a school, or the government. The law is designed to prevent NGOs from speculating in real estate, but the effect is to take the land out of the hands of ordinary people. One strategy to change the zoning on such land would be to prove that the NGO is not really a non-profit, and this seems to have been the focus of much of the bad press against Tzu Chi. Most of the media coverage included discussions of whether Tzu Chi was a proper Buddhist entity, or if it was solely focused on making money.

While informants at Tzu Chi never responded directly³⁸ to my questions about the 2015 media scandal, they did state that the organization complies with all legal financial requirements for NGOs in whatever country it operates. Receipts are given for all donations. I even received a receipt from Tzu Chi USA headquarters for the \$15 in loose change that I donated from my "bamboo bank" coin collector. Donors of more substantial sums additionally receive a report at the end of the fiscal year giving detailed breakdowns of how much money was spent on the

³⁸ The leaders of Tzu Chi San Diego invited me to attend an event in 2015 with nuns from the Abode at Tzu Chi USA headquarters in San Dimas, CA to hear how Master Cheng Yen wanted to deal with the negative press. At that time, my IRB permission only covered research in San Diego County unless I was attending events open to the general public; therefore, I did not go, assuming I could interview people about the matter later. To my surprise, once the organization had decided on its plan to deal with the situation, the volunteers were told to move forward and never mention the scandal again (the most common way of recovering from being the target of *yu lun*). Therefore, I missed my chance to hear the organization's official word. I did give the results of my research, which are reported here, to one of the nuns on the Abode's governing council for her review and comment. After several days, she responded by thanking me for my diligence in ferreting out the truth of the entire matter.

organization's various charitable missions. The organization has a strong culture of clearly accounting for how all monies are spent and for using those funds on its benevolent missions. All of my "people-on-the-street" informants in Taiwan, who had donated at any time to Tzu Chi, confirmed this aspect of its operations.

One of my informant friends, who had a close personal relationship with a Tzu Chi commissioner, showed me a screen shot of a private-group Facebook post by another Tzu Chi commissioner, who had been part of Master Cheng Yen's retinue when a reporter came to apologize to the Master for the "cut down Tzu Chi" media campaign. This TV news reporter allegedly told Master Cheng Yen that their station had not done due diligence in researching the allegations against Tzu Chi, but had just immediately gone onto the air with the latest rumors. The reporter further stated that the experts on their station's panels had received copy from the producers and had not really known what they were talking about until memorizing talking points 2 or 3 minutes before they went on the air. Everything that the experts said on air came from the scripts provided by the producers. The "cut down Tzu Chi" segments were designed to drive up ratings. The reporter in question had developed a serious disease and believed the illness was karmic retribution for unfairly criticizing a religious group. Master Cheng Yen reportedly forgave that reporter.

The full back story of this matter is not generally known by the public, as the news media chased after ratings with sensational reporting. Tzu Chi's response to the negative reporting was generally characterized as having been weak by non-Tzu Chi friends, who responded to my questions with their memories of the situation. The media frenzy precipitated a backlash against Tzu Chi, at the time, but the members of public, with whom I spoke in my random people-in-the-street interviews, seemed to have completely forgotten the supposed scandal after a short two-

year interval. None of my friends referred to the situation unless I asked them about it, and only a very few remembered what had happened, even with my prompting.

Therefore, I argue that the media campaign against Tzu Chi in 2015 was comparable to a period of public scolding (*yu lun*) in an extended family or in a neighborhood. Ultimately, Tzu Chi was able to maintain public trust in Taiwan for two reasons: the offenders were lay volunteers (considered to be “children” in the family) and not the main monastic leaders (seen as the “adults” and “elders”), and the organization responded to the criticism by making immediate changes in its practices without escalating the controversy by fighting back against the public outcry. Tzu Chi informants reported that, after 2015 (the year of Neihu Recycling Center’s media scandal), many of the smaller recycling collection points closed in response to allegations that they were unsanitary. Volunteers on Taipei’s Nangang Night Recycling team told me that they now ask recycling donors to wash their recyclables and keep them in their apartments until the time for night recycling, instead of stacking them in a public area of their apartment complex, as they had for over a decade prior to the media controversy. Such actions by Tzu Chi as an organization helped to repair its relationship with Taiwan society because they proved that Tzu Chi members truly cultivated themselves with strict discipline and forbearance as they silently received the criticism; moreover, these actions practically demonstrated the organization’s respect for and responsiveness to the public (c. f. Cruz and Forman 2015) and its commitment to maintaining good relations with its “neighbors”—the populace of Taiwan.

Furthermore, many people in Taiwan have been materially helped by Tzu Chi, especially in its disaster relief missions. One informant, a taxi driver whom I call Lenny, is a good example of how Tzu Chi’s material aid completely erases any negative feelings the public might have towards the organization. Lenny frequented the area near Taipei Main Station where I usually

stayed on my trips to Taipei. I rode in his cab during my first week of field work in July 2017, and he told me that he had been a monthly donor to Tzu Chi but had stopped because the “Tzu Chi sister” who collected his payments was unreasonable. He did, however, donate to Tzu Chi whenever there was a major disaster because Master Cheng Yen and her nuns were trustworthy and worked for their living instead of begging. Therefore, all donations for disaster relief given to Tzu Chi got into the hands of the victims.

The second time I rode in Lenny’s cab was at the end of September 2017. I was going to an appointment at Dharma Drum Mountain’s Nung Chan Monastery, and we talked about the beauty of the monastery. Nothing was said about Tzu Chi.

I had to spend a few days in Taipei before I left Taiwan in January 2018 to handle business matters related to the MOFA Taiwan Fellowship. One day, as I stepped out of the door of my hotel, Lenny’s cab swooped over to pick me up. He told me that he was glad to see me and that he remembered I would be leaving for America soon. He retracted everything negative that he had ever said to me about Tzu Chi because his home had been flooded during heavy rains in October 2017, and the Tzu Chi volunteers had arrived 30 minutes before the government rescue teams. He told me that the Tzu Chi volunteers had saved his life and his family, and he did not want me to leave Taiwan with a negative impression of the organization from him. The material benefit he received from Tzu Chi during his household’s greatest time of need fully restored his trust in the organization.

Dharma Drum Mountain enjoys a similar reputation for being extremely helpful, especially in the matters of personal health and family funerals. Most of my classmates in the beginning Chan meditation class in Taipei reported attending the class to improve their health. Some had been referred by health care professionals in the area; others had friends who had

improved their health by meditating and adopting the group's practices. Most of the other members of the class had learned of the group at the funeral of a loved one. They were having trouble getting over their sorrow and had signed up for the meditation class after receiving numerous care visits from DDM monastics and lay volunteers. Members of my Happy Buddhist Studies class generally fell into two categories: Buddhists who wanted to learn more about Buddhism and people who had recently lost a loved one and wanted help recovering from their sorrow. These people trusted DDM for its ability to help with health issues and its reliability in helping bereaved families.

While DDM is not as famous as Tzu Chi for giving material disaster relief, it is highly respected for giving effective psychological aid to people in crisis. During times of emergency—such as the 921 Chi Chi earthquake in 1999, the February 2018 Hualien earthquake, and the October 2018 train derailment near Yilan—DDM monastics and volunteers do counseling work among the survivors in shelters and with the family members waiting for news of missing loved ones, while the Tzu Chi disaster relief teams work at or near the front lines, supporting official first responders and helping survivors to safety. Both groups regularly coordinate with government officials, who request their services and seem to view them as important partners in the relief efforts. As noted above, providing practical aid to others is the best way to build trust and garner social capital under the logic of Chinese *guanxi* in the Confucian Discourse System.

Conclusion

The examples in the first half of this chapter show that Taiwan's cultural valorization of education causes the general population to attend and enjoy DDM classes and Tzu Chi community educational outreach events. The second half of the chapter demonstrates that there are several necessary factors for an organization to engender trust in a society influenced by

guanxi logic in the Confucian Discourse System. The first factor is to have leaders who manage their public image well. This can be considered an important aspect of managing social relationships. Additionally, the organization needs to contribute tangibly and practically to the good of society. Such contributions can be considered a way of converting economic capital to symbolic and social capital (Bourdieu 1977). These factors are quite similar to what individuals must do to be respected in their personal social circles. Indeed, the social requirements on NGOs, such as Tzu Chi and Dharma Drum Mountain, seem to be scaled up versions of *guanxi* requirements on individual households. This may be the result of the campaigns to modernize Confucianism by scaling up the view from the family to society as a whole. In many ways, these requirements produce behavior that is similar to trust-building behavior in the West, but the underlying motivations are different. Madsen (2007a, 2007b) found that Buddhism and Confucianism have moral and ethical elements that can support both democracy and capitalism. However, the flavor of Taiwan's social institutions reflects the cultural underpinnings of the Chinese Confucian Discourse System, and civil society works differently in Taiwan than in the United States (Weller 1999).

Acknowledgment

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Chapter 6

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain in California, USA

What happens when religious organizations from one society migrate transnationally to an entirely different cultural context? Needleman ([1970] 2009) describes the confusion and animosity many Americans felt towards the Asian religions that became popular in California during the counter-culture revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. As mentioned in Chapter 1, non-Western acculturations of Christianity have even been considered cults in the US after newly arrived immigrants brought their indigenous forms of Christianity to the United States (Zimmerman-Liu and Wright 2015). How have Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain been received in the United States? Have they been able to spread their message of compassion for people and the planet in the American cultural context? This chapter seeks to answer these questions.

The American Cultural Context

As shown in Chapter 1, the cultural context in America is quite different from that of Taiwan. For one thing, American society is much more institutionally oriented, as opposed to focusing on relationships, mainly because its dominant discourse system is the Utilitarian Discourse System (Scollon et. al. 2012). This means that ethics are related to the professions (Durkheim 1947, Bellah 1973) instead of to managing personal relationships. The non-governmental organizations of civil society are more rigidly structured and less amenable to the hybridity found in Taiwan's "alternate civilities" (Wuthnow 2004, Weller 1999). Most mainstream religious organizations in America developed from the monolithic state churches of Europe and fit more neatly into Troeltsch's categories of church, sect, and cult, which were further developed by Bryan Wilson to include an aspect of political protest among sects (1970).

Religious and non-religious institutions of American civil society are more rigidly defined in our laws; moreover, with the rationalization of modern society—described and theorized by Weber ([1903-4] 2001, [1913] 1948)—institutionalized religion has become increasingly unpopular in the U.S.

The growing unpopularity of institutional religion in the United States was first seen as evidence proving Weber's theories of secularization. According to Berger (1999: 2), "secularization theory" was a popular sociological agenda in the 1950s and 1960s. It can be traced to the Enlightenment, and its main point was as follows: "Modernization necessarily leads to a decline of religion both in society and in the minds of individuals." Secularization means there is a decrease in the sacred and an increase in the profane. But, by 1999, scholarly opinion had shifted, as scholars noted a trend of counter-secularization. Cox and Swyngedouw (2000) state that religion is changing as people are leaving traditional religious groups and moving into new religious movements, such as those described by Needleman ([1970] 2009). Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2007: 776) also argues that religion remains important throughout society, but it is fragmented and nuanced, requiring multiple lines of analysis. Taylor further describes several religious "cross-pressures" working to stem the instrumental rationality of high modernity, including civil religion, New Age spirituality, mystic forms of Christianity, and the Romantic revival of passion, and pagan religions. David Martin (2011) concurs with Taylor concerning the importance of religion in society today. Martin (2011: 5) further argues that secularization is not monolithic but is complicated and has many dimensions. He states that with the exception of Europe, religiosity prevails in some form or another around the world (6). If secularization were the reason for the decline of institutionalized religion in the U.S., the power of the "sacred" would not work in the United States as it does in Taiwan. If, however,

secularization is not the real reason for the decline in institutionalized religions in America, what, then, is happening?

McGuire (2002) describes how religion in American society is changing. She finds that while religion is not really declining, as the debunking of the secularization narrative has shown, it is definitely changing. Putnam and Campbell (2012) concur with this analysis. Their quantitative study based on data from the 2011 General Social Survey (GSS) shows that religious institutions, which were popular in earlier times, are losing members as people move to groups, which demand more commitment and provide more support. McGuire (2002) finds that these congregations are often not affiliated with the large denominations but are local. They may be small or large mega-churches, but they tend to be independent congregations.

Bellah and his associates (1985) found that middle-class white Americans are increasingly individualistic. They are heavily influenced by psychotherapy, and this affects the way they relate to communities, including churches. More and more people are choosing churches based on personal taste, rather than on a sense of loyalty or commitment to the common good. In a 1991 follow-up study on American institutions, Bellah and his co-authors found that churches are now entering into the political fray and lobbying on issues that used to be private, such as abortion and contraception. The large mainstream denominations are losing members, and people are flocking to congregations that reflect their individual views and tastes. Many of these churches are active politically and can be considered sects according to Bryan Wilson's (1970) definition. In their political activity, however, these new sects often fail to take account of the common good, representing just the narrow views of their members. Bellah and his associates (1985) concluded that this movement to individualized religion means that religious

institutions are losing their ability to provide American society with a common ethos or system of values.

In a 2009 study of four San Diego churches, Madsen found that Bellah's group's findings in 1985 and 1991 remain true in the 2000s. People choose churches based on personal taste, and they are very individualistic in their worship and religion. They do not have much concern for the broader, common good. The trend among American religions towards individualism and narrow, fragmented views of the public good is reflective of American society as a whole (Calhoun 1998; R. Jacobs 1996; Madsen 1993 a, 1993b; Mansbridge 1998, Williams 1999), a situation which was described in Chapter 1.

Foundations for Trust in America

Despite the current scattered situation among American religious organizations, Fukuyama (1995) finds that trust in America is still built on the secularized Protestant virtues described in Weber's *Protestant Ethic* ([1903-4] 2001). These are the virtues described in Weber's chapter entitled "The Spirit of Capitalism." They include admonitions like those written by Benjamin Franklin: "Time is money"; "Credit is money"; "The most trifling actions that affect a man's credit are to be regarded" (14-15). These are the professional ethics of modern, organic societies described by Durkheim (1947) and Bellah (1973). According to Weber ([1903-4] 2001: 19), they stem from Biblical commands, such as this exhortation in Proverbs 22:29: "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings." In modern, Western society, however, they have become a utilitarian, secularized ethos that promotes "honesty, ... punctuality, industry, [and] frugality" (17). There is no mention of relationships here; the primary ethos is one of doing one's job honestly, efficiently, and well. Moreover, there is no thought in this ethos of the common good. It is strictly an ethos of each individual managing

himself or herself well, while accomplishing his or her work. People who are honest, diligent workers in America earn the trust of others.

Buddhism in America

How and where does Buddhism fit into the social context of America? Many scholars consider Buddhism to be one of the “cross-pressures” described by Charles Taylor (2012) that push back against the excess of instrumental rationality, which characterizes late-stage capitalism. However, Lewis Lancaster (1997) notes that Buddhism, contrary to popular Western conceptions of the religion as mystical and spiritual (Van der Veer 2012), has always included an alliance with merchants and that Shakyamuni preached a kind of asceticism. Lancaster suggests that Buddhism’s greatest potential contribution to Western society may be “an asceticism that involves using less of the resources” (15). As mentioned in Chapter 1, Needleman ([1970] 2009) describes how Buddhism goes beyond mere teachings to include both doctrine and practice, making it more relevant to some Americans, who are tired of mainstream Western religions.

Overview of Buddhist History in the United States

Buddhism has a relatively long history in America. Fields (1992) and Chandler (1998: 16) mention that Buddhist monks from China may have journeyed to Mexico, which they called Fu-sang-guo, one thousand years before the time of Christopher Columbus. While definitive proof of such an early arrival by Chinese Buddhists is lost in the sands of time, the Chinese were the first to bring Buddhism to the US when they came as laborers in the 19th century to work on the railroad. In 1875, San Francisco had eight Chinese temples, which included Buddhist, Taoist, and folk deities. After the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in 1882, the number of Chinese in America dwindled, and these temples gradually disappeared (Chandler 1998: 16-17). The

religion did not spread out from them to the white community; instead, these early Chinese temples were the object of racial prejudice and derision (Fields 1992: 78).

The first white Americans to gain inspiration from Buddhism were the early American romantics and the Transcendentalists, such as Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau (Seager 2012: 40). Their writings caused Americans to be more interested in Asian philosophies, to the extent that the Buddhist representatives attending the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago were welcomed and heard. After the Parliament, two Japanese Zen missionaries, Soyen Shaku and D. T. Suzuki, did much to further the establishment of Buddhism in America. Suzuki, in particular, influenced many whites, such as Thomas Merton (1968) and the white Buddhists of the Beat Generation in the 1950s, most notable of whom were Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, and Alan Watts. Buddhism became extremely popular among the whites of the counterculture movement during the 1960s, especially after the opening of the San Francisco Zen Center by Shunryu Suzuki-roshi. As Buddhism became widely accepted in the 1960s and 1970s, teachers of other schools of Buddhism also came to work among whites in America. Now, American Buddhism among white Americans includes Japanese Zen groups, modern Japanese groups like Nichiren and Soka Gakai, Theravada groups with vipassana or insight meditation techniques, and Tibetan Buddhist groups. There are also feminist Buddhist communities and LGBTQ Buddhist communities.

Kenneth Tanaka (1998) describes an ethnic or racial divide among two kinds of Buddhist communities in the United States. There are immigrant or ethnic Buddhist groups that tend to serve specific communities of immigrants, and there are white or Euro-American Buddhists groups that serve white (and a few African American) Buddhists. Tanaka notes that the ethnic Buddhist communities usually include a cultural element, as they provide opportunities for their

immigrant members to bond and help one another in a foreign land. Fields (1998: 202) further notes that the white Buddhist communities exhibit three characteristics: primacy of the laity, focus on strenuous meditation, and admixture of Western psychology. Some Western Buddhists dislike the rituals of immigrant communities because they say, “It’s just like church” (203). Fields wonders how much racism plays a role in this division among Buddhist congregations. He notes that, since the 19th century, Asian Buddhists and white Buddhists in America have been treated differently.

Many American Buddhists, both immigrant and white, are engaged Buddhists. Seager (2012) describes several socially engaged Buddhist groups and leaders in the United States, including the Buddhist Peace Fellowship and the American followers of the Vietnamese monk Thich Naht Hanh. Sallie King (2009) gives a book-length overview of socially engaged Buddhism, including an in-depth chapter on its pro-environmental aspect. She finds that Buddhist thought correlates strongly with “deep ecology” (123), which is based on the understanding that all things are interrelated in the ecosphere and which includes an aspect of self-realization or understanding one’s own place in all of the natural world. King further identifies Gary Snyder as an engaged Buddhist deep ecologist who teaches that people must “overcome the dichotomy between the civilized and the wild” (126), while Barnhall (1997: 187) notes that Snyder’s view of nature as community is a “radical perspective [that] changes at the root level our view of nature.” King (1998: 135) also identifies two former students of Suzuki-roshi at the San Francisco Zen Center, who have undertaken individual initiatives to help relieve the suffering of farm animals in California and in Europe.

The preceding is an overview of the field of Buddhism in the United States in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. It includes white Buddhist groups of many different schools and ethnic

Buddhist groups that follow numerous different leaders from a wide variety of countries, such as Tibet, China, Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and Cambodia. Tanaka (1998) finds that these groups do not communicate amongst themselves at the level of the top leadership, although there is some communication at the grassroots level among the lay membership of different Buddhist sects in America. Thus, the field of Buddhism in the United States is very different from the field of Buddhism in Taiwan. Buddhism in Taiwan is fairly homogenous with 93% of all committed believers belonging to one or more of the four largest humanistic Buddhist groups (Lee and Han, Unpublished). In contrast, U.S. Buddhism is quite heterogenous with various groups from all the major strands of Buddhism and further division between white American congregations and immigrant congregations. The social context of a very divided American populace combined with the fragmentation of the field of Buddhism in America makes it more difficult for a consensus related to the environment to emerge among the various groups, as it did in the case of Taiwan.

Although the social situation in the United States makes it difficult for one or two religious groups to impact a significant segment of the population, my research finds that Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain are indeed influencing the people they contact in California to change their lifestyles. This study finds that the push-pull factors influencing believers of these groups in the US to adopt more pro-environmental lifestyle habits are similar to those in Taiwan. The believers in America adopt sustainable lifestyle habits as part of their religious cultivation. They are also influenced heavily by the strong moral communities of the groups. This feeling of community may be slightly stronger among first-generation immigrants, who have been separated from their former familial and friendship networks in their countries of origin (C. Chen 2008). The monastic pattern of a low-carbon lifestyle remains

important, even to believers in America. Moreover, perception of the existence of severe social strain from environmental degradation coupled with a sense that the government is not doing enough to ameliorate the situation are important factors pushing believers to adopt pro-environmental lifestyle changes. The biggest difference between the U.S. chapters and the Taiwan chapters of these organizations is that the U.S. groups earn trust through a combination of Confucian logic, especially among the Chinese immigrant community, and reliably fulfilling their institutional functions, according to Western bases for trust. This shows that the groups are equally fluent in the Utilitarian Discourse System and the Confucian Discourse System (Scollon et. al. 2012) and that they code switch between the systems, depending on the needs of the people with whom they are communicating. The remainder of this chapter will introduce Dharma Drum Mountain's San Francisco Bay Area Chan Center and the San Diego chapter of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation. It will then describe the ways in which these groups influence their believers and the communities around them.

A Brief History of Dharma Drum Mountain in the US and in the San Francisco Bay Area

In December 1975, shortly after obtaining his Ph.D. in Buddhist Literature in Japan, Master Sheng Yen came to New York at the invitation of Mr. C. T. Shen, founder of the Buddhist Association of the United States (S. Y. Shi 2012: 145). After his arrival in the U.S., Master Sheng Yen realized that to better reach the locals, he needed to teach them Chan meditation instead of Buddhist Studies because they wanted something efficient and practical (147).³⁹ In 1977, Master Sheng Yen's tonsure master, Venerable Dong Chu, passed away, and Sheng Yen became abbot of Nung Chan Monastery and Director of the Chung-Hwa Institute of

³⁹ This assessment is reminiscent of Needleman's ([1970] 2009) findings about why Americans were attracted to the San Francisco Zen Center in the 1960s and to Merton's (1968) comparison of Buddhism and Christianity.

Buddhist Culture in the Beitou District of Taipei. In 1979, Master Sheng Yen also founded the Chan Meditation Center in New York. From that time until 2007, Master Sheng Yen traveled back and forth between Taiwan and the United States, spending six months per year in each place and shuttling back and forth at three-month intervals. In 1989, he officially founded Dharma Drum Mountain “to transmit the wisdom teaching and save the future of Buddhism ... also ... to return to the original essence of the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha” (43). Over time, other locations in the United States established Dharma Drum Mountain Chan Centers, and the group obtained property for a large retreat center in upstate New York.

In 2002, Master Sheng Yen held a refuge-taking ceremony at the DDM Chan Center in Seattle, and Ms. Xie from the San Francisco Bay Area attended the ceremony to take refuge in the Three Treasures of Buddhism. Master Sheng Yen asked her to start a Dharma Drum Mountain field office in the San Francisco area. Upon her return to California, Ms. Xie and her sister worked with their friends and founded the DDM San Francisco Bay Area chapter in Millbrae, California. They rented office space for their meetings and officially started in April 2003. For the first few years, they used the small facility in Millbrae for group meditation, chanting sessions, and one-day Chan meditation retreats. They also met in members’ homes for book study sessions. Various DDM monastics visited them occasionally to lead bigger events.

In 2006, DDM San Francisco lost its meeting space and began what the members call their “Nomadic Period,” when they held their regular activities in rotation at the homes of three volunteers. During this period, they lost half of their 20 to 30 members, but the ones who persevered through this time of adversity became the core lay leaders of the group today. In 2007, the group found an appropriate space in an office park in Sunnyvale just in time to host a visit from the Abbot President of the global organization. The facility was next to a green belt,

which allowed them to expand their activities to include outdoor meditation and children's summer camp activities. The group grew to approximately 100 regular volunteers at the Sunnyvale facility, but they were forced to move again when their landlord did not renew the lease.

Group leaders had already been seeking to purchase a church property, as they hoped to avoid the need for zoning variations to obtain religious use permits. They found a church group in Fremont, who had put their building on the market, in order to obtain funds to build a bigger facility nearby. Dharma Drum Mountain purchased the building. For Dharma Drum Mountain's first year in its Fremont facility, they rented the main sanctuary back to the selling church, and both groups used the premises. Lay leaders stated that this period was good for both congregations, as it contributed to mutual understanding and helped them to better respect people of the other faith.

The Bay Area chapter now uses the entire facility as its permanent home. They have remodeled it to suit their needs, and they have purchased a residential house in the surrounding neighborhood for two full-time resident monks. The space in this monastic residence allows the group to host trainee monks from the DDM Sangha University, who come with a teacher every summer to practice serving a congregation.

The president of the lay association reported that although the DDM San Francisco Bay Area chapter lost many members in the move from Sunnyvale to Fremont, they have regained those numbers with new members from all around the Bay Area. Indeed, over the course of my research, I met people from the city of San Francisco, from the area just around the Chan Center, and from areas around Silicon Valley and San Jose. The current facility is at a midpoint in the East Bay Area, and it is readily accessible to people from all over the region.

The building has Spanish-style architecture with white stucco walls and brick-paved courtyards at the entrance and between the main hall and the other wings of the building. There is a community park directly across the street from the west side of the center, which is used for outdoor Chan practice during classes. In addition to two small guest bedrooms, a large dining hall, and a commercial kitchen, the Chan Center has a library with offices, a reception area and small bookstore, as well as a smaller meeting room near the hospitality rooms, a multipurpose area, and two large halls.

The Great Hall used to be the main sanctuary for the Christian church, so it has a high vaulted ceiling and is shaped like a Christian chapel. It is now the Buddha Hall with the same Buddha statue found in all DDM locations. The image is situated on the platform at the front of the hall with a kneeler in front and instruments to the sides. There is a multipurpose room between the two halls, and the other hall has a stage. It is the Guanyin Hall with a statue of Guanyin modeled after the statue at DDM's World Center for Buddhist Education in Jinshan, New Taipei City, Taiwan. The floors throughout the Center are all wood, except for the reception area, and people are required to remove their shoes and place them in shoe cupboards, which are located at all the entrances. There is no permanent furniture in the halls, multipurpose room, or dining room. Meditation cushions or tables and chairs are taken out of closets and arranged in each space to meet the needs of the event for which they will be used.

According to the president of its lay association, the San Francisco Chan Center currently has 200-300 trained volunteers who serve at their events, 100 of whom are the most dedicated. These 100 volunteers help run the regular group meditations, book study sessions, and group chanting ceremonies. The trained volunteers have all taken the Merit Field class of the DDM standard curriculum. Most have also taken Chan meditation classes. Because the group has "been

just trying to hold it together” for so many years, the complete schedule of classes offered in Taiwan has never been offered in San Francisco.

The group offers a wide range of activities, as it is able, depending on demand by students and the availability of monastic and lay teachers. During the first eight months of 2018, I was able to attend regularly scheduled activities, such as English and Chinese group meditation sessions, a Chinese book club study session, the monthly Great Compassion Dharani Repentance Ritual, and the Chan Arts Flower Arranging class. I also attended numerous special events, such as a two-day Water Repentance Ritual with the apprentice monks from Taiwan, an English dharma talk by a nun from the DDM New York Chan Center, a two-day Chinese language Basic Chan Intensive class taught by lay volunteers, an English one-day Chan retreat led by the nun from New York, and a two-day Chinese Buddhist Studies class on the Lotus Sutra taught by the monastic director of the DDM Vancouver Chan Center. Usually, the events are publicized on the Chan Center’s website and by mass email notifications. People sign up and attend the activities that they enjoy.

There are approximately 3000 people on the Center’s roster of event attendees and donors. Leaders told me that the regular attendees generally fall into three groups: those who like Chan meditation classes, those who like dharma gatherings (*fahui*) and chanting sessions, and those who like sutra studies and dharma talks given by visiting monastics. Most of the volunteers and attendees are Chinese-speaking immigrants. I met immigrants from Taiwan, mainland China, and Hong Kong at the various group functions. There are a few second-generation Chinese, and the group holds English-language meditation classes, which mainly attract Asian Americans from East, Southeast, and South Asia. I observed one Latina participant and two white participants in the English meditation classes.

Since January 2017, the Center has had one resident monk, and a second monk was assigned to the Center in July 2018 after the dining hall and kitchen remodel was completed. The San Francisco Center's resident monks often go to other locations in North America to hold Chan meditation retreats or to give Buddhist Studies lectures. As can be seen from the special events listed above, monastics from the other DDM Centers in North America come regularly to the San Francisco Chan Center for the same purpose, as do some of Master Sheng Yen's Western lay dharma heirs in Chan Meditation, such as Gilbert Gutierrez, who has his own meditation center in Riverside, California. The resident monks are working to increase the number of regular classes, so that more people have the opportunity to learn from the DDM standard curriculum of classes.

A Brief History of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation in the US and in San Diego

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation USA was founded by Steven Huang in 1989. Mr. Huang is a wealthy businessman, who met Master Cheng Yen in 1989 after the death of his beloved elder brother. Mr. Huang had been living in the United States for twenty years at that time, but a friend suggested that he travel to Taiwan to visit the Abode in Hualien. While there, Huang became convinced that America needed Tzu Chi. According to the video on the Tzu Chi USA website, Mr. Huang purchased a facility in the Los Angeles area of California and began hosting community teams to attract donors and volunteers. News spread quickly along personal networks in the Chinese American immigrant community, and Huang began flying across the US recruiting volunteers and forming chapters in New York, New Jersey, Chicago, and other places with large Chinese-speaking immigrant populations. Huang would fly to Taiwan once a month to meet with Master Cheng Yen in the Abode. He would record their conversations and copy

cassette tapes for all the various local chapters in the era before the internet. He also visited each new chapter regularly to keep them up to date on the latest news from Taiwan.

The Tzu Chi San Diego Chapter began on May 29, 1993 when Ms. Guo held the first community tea to attract donors and volunteers. By the end of 1993, the group was holding regular Buddhist sutra chanting sessions in the home of one of the volunteers. For the first ten years of its existence, the group was mainly active collecting donations for projects like the Tzu Chi community clinic in Los Angeles, for disaster relief, or for charity projects in San Diego, Tijuana, and Mexicali. They supported and helped medical patients from Taiwan, who came to San Diego area hospitals for special treatment programs. They also held lectures in local community centers or schools about health issues and Buddhist dharma.

In January 2003, after ten years of existence, they rented their service center in Mira Mesa with the help of the Tzu Chi USA's head office. With the new meeting place, the number and scope of the group's charitable activities increased. They began giving out backpacks with school supplies to low-income students in area schools. They started giving winter donations of cash, food and clothing to needy families in the cross-border area, both in San Diego County and on the Mexican side of the border. They also held activities promoting the Tzu Chi bone marrow donor registry. They partnered with other local religious groups to feed the homeless once a month at Pacific Beach. And they continued raising money for disaster relief efforts. Over time the scope and shape of their operations has developed into a regular program that encompasses all the Four Missions and Eight Footprints prescribed by Master Cheng Yen (see Chapters 2 and 3).

The Mira Mesa service center is a commercial unit in the Qualcomm business park. The group is housed in a large one-story office unit with small rooms at the front for use as a

classroom, reception area, and bookstore. The main part of the office unit is open, the group uses bamboo screens to separate off space as needed. The far wall of that space is the altar with the crystal statue of Buddha healing the world that is in all Tzu Chi facilities. There are two TVs mounted on each side of the altar and speakers underneath them. Towards the altar on the left is the AV table where a volunteer works the microphone and programming for the two TVs. For formal events, the emcee has a podium between the AV table and the first TV.

Behind the altar area, there is another classroom in the center of the building. There is an office to the left of a hallway behind the AV desk, and in the very rear of the facility, there is an unfinished storeroom area where dried food goods for charity, disaster relief supplies, equipment for programming, and donated recyclables are housed. This area also has a toy and children's clothing exchange area, so that families can recycle children's items instead of buying new and wasting them. Along the right side of the central area, screened off by a portable bamboo wall are doors leading to a kitchen, two bathrooms, and a pantry area. The floors in the finished area are carpeted, and the group sets up tables with blue cloths and folding chairs or kneeler cushions and chairs or low round tables with low plastic chairs, depending on the needs of each event. The various chairs and tables are stored in the back, and usually after an event, everyone stays to help clean up and to set up for the next event.

Tzu Chi San Diego has approximately 100 regular volunteers, who can be depended upon to help with all the events and service projects of the chapter. These include certified commissioners, trainee-interns, and general volunteers. There is a good mix among the regular members of Mandarin Chinese-speaking immigrants from Taiwan, mainland China, and Hong Kong. There are also a few Chinese-speaking immigrants from Southeast Asia, including Malaysia and Vietnam. Furthermore, the group includes non-Chinese speakers, with some

second-generation Chinese, some Spanish-speaking immigrants, and some whites. A few of the whites are married to Chinese-speaking members, but there are other white volunteers, who come because they like the group and its mission. One white couple from the eastern part of San Diego County has completed training and been certified as commissioners. The service center runs a Chinese language school on the weekend and Buddhist English-language programs for youth, with a club for elementary school children, a club for secondary school children, and a club for college students at UC San Diego. Several of the English-speaking volunteers and trainees are graduates of these youth clubs.

Creating Strong Moral Communities

Both groups fall under Tanaka's (1998) classification of "ethnic" American Buddhist groups with their high percentage of immigrant members. Most of the people I interviewed and talked to in both groups reported joining the groups after immigrating to America. Many of their conversion narratives were reminiscent of those reported by Carolyn Chen (2008) in her study of conversions among Taiwanese immigrants to America.

Respondents in my focus group session with beginning Chan meditation class members at Dharma Drum Mountain in the San Francisco Bay Area reported being familiar with Buddhism before immigrating, but they had not formally joined a group until they felt a need for support or "something" here in the US. Some people reported being introduced to the group through friends or relatives. Others stated that they had searched online for "something" to meet their feeling of need, and they liked the videos that they watched of Master Sheng Yen and the other DDM monastics teaching about the sutras. They then attended a local event, met people they liked, and continued coming to classes or to volunteer at the office.

Several Tzu Chi San Diego informants told me that they had been Buddhists for many years. They joined Tzu Chi San Diego because they had heard of Master Cheng Yen and wanted to be the disciples of such an excellent leader. They also liked the fact that Tzu Chi continues its active community service outreach in America, unlike some of the other humanistic Buddhist groups. Members in both groups seem to enjoy the community of people with a common language, similar experiences in American society, and common cultural backgrounds.

Both groups emphasize Chinese cultural traditions, in addition to their religious and community service activities. One of the most popular classes at Dharma Drum Mountain San Francisco is the Chan Flower Arranging class. It is so popular that the teacher has to teach two sections of the class every week because there is not enough space for all who want to attend in one section. Some of the students in the flower arranging classes are Christian, but they come to the Chan Center to connect with fellow Chinese in a cultural activity. Tzu Chi San Diego holds regular events on traditional Chinese holidays, such as the Mid-Autumn Festival and the Lunar New Year. Tzu Chi San Diego's Mid-Autumn Festival event includes traditional Chinese games, such as guessing character riddles, and everyone eats vegan mooncakes outside, at tables set up in the parking lot, under the full moon. Both groups have youth classes and activities that promote Buddhist and Confucian values. Parents with children in these classes reported feeling it necessary to find activities where their children would learn about filial piety to counteract the effects of American culture on the second generation.

Members in these Buddhist groups can be considered a double minority in America. They are members of an ethnic minority, and they are members of an ethnic religion. C. Chen (2008) reports that the Chinese American Buddhists in her study often felt persecuted for their religious beliefs by white and Chinese Christians. This intersectional minority identity seems to create

strong community bonds among the core members of each group. The Confucian and Chinese cultural elements of both groups are important to immigrant members, but this minority identity may be stronger for group members in America than the Confucian identities that resonate so well in Taiwan because it better matches their social standing in American society.

The Importance of Environmental Education with a Monastic Behavioral Pattern

Adoption of pro-environmental lifestyle behaviors among believers of both groups is less uniform in America than in Taiwan. Both American chapters in my study had influenced the behavior of the believers to some extent, but they were hampered by their relative size and their access to certain resources. These resources include access to fully trained teachers and access to the monastic model of low-carbon lifestyles.

Dharma Drum Mountain San Francisco Bay Area Chan Center

In its 15 years of existence, Dharma Drum Mountain San Francisco has not had the resources or opportunity to educate its believers with DDM's full Buddhist Studies curriculum. Most of the time, monks or nuns from other DDM centers come in for a weekend to teach an intensive course on a sutra or to give a dharma talk on the evening before a one-day meditation retreat. The group has never been able to offer the Happy Buddhist Studies class, and they have only run two courses of the Merit Field class, which covers all of Master Sheng Yen's integrated teachings on the Four Environmentalisms, the Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance Campaign, and the Six Ethics of the Mind. This lack of access to the full curriculum markedly affected the ability of DDM San Francisco's members to enter into DDM's full environmental program.

Respondents in the DDM San Francisco Bay chapter varied greatly in their understanding of Master Sheng Yen's basic teachings about environmentalism, depending on if they had been able to attend the Merit Field class in 2011 or in 2014, which were the only times it was offered

at the chapter. Members' experiences of Chan retreats also varied, depending on if they had been able to go to a weeklong retreat at the New York Retreat Center or in Taiwan. Respondents who had taken the Merit Field class and had attended a Chan Seven retreat in a monastic setting reported adopting many more of the groups' pro-environmental behavioral norms. Other members only knew about spiritual environmentalism and Master Sheng Yen's aphorism: "Human needs are so few, but human desires are too many." Nevertheless, these teachings in the strong moral community of the group did contribute to lifestyle changes among my informants.

The area in which DDM San Francisco respondents all reported a significant change in lifestyle was in the matter of reducing consumption and wasting less. For example, Jessica,⁴⁰ a middle-aged respondent from Taiwan, told me a story about how one of her classmates from Taiwan came to visit California, and they went shopping at the local mall. Jessica would pick up items that she admired, but whenever she thought about the difference between desire and need, she would replace the object without buying it. Jessica's classmate thought that Jessica was too poor to afford the things she liked in America because this behavior was so different from how Jessica had lived prior to immigrating to the U.S. and joining Dharma Drum Mountain. Jessica emphasized to me that it was not a matter of not being able to afford the items, but of her feeling that she did not really need those things, and that she could put the money to better use by donating it to charity (DDMBASF Interviews).

All DDM San Francisco respondents reported trying to live more frugally. They said they buy fewer new things. They try to repair and reuse the things that they have. Their standard now is not trying to have the newest material possessions, but to have things that meet particular needs adequately. A few respondents noted that getting non-Chinese Americans to be frugal was

⁴⁰ All names of respondents are pseudonyms per my research protocols.

a challenge. One volunteer stated that non-Chinese-American visitors to the Chan Center tend to grab handfuls of paper towels in the bathrooms, when only one is needed. The volunteers try to use the Chinese technique of pointedly modelling less wasteful behavior, but it has not been effective, so far. Perhaps this is because American culture teaches people to be independent individuals and to not worry about what other people think. There may need to be actual teaching to get this point across to people who have been steeped in American culture.

The importance of a monastic pattern is also quite evident at DDM San Francisco. Since the Chan Center has been upgraded from a field office to a monastery with resident monks, there has been a gradual, but noticeable, increase in the Chan Center's green practices that are part of the DDM monastic lifestyle. One of the top lay leaders reported that working with the resident monks forced him to consider many things that he had never thought of before with respect to the environment.

The DDM monastic lifestyle is quite austere, and the presence of monastics does seem to affect the behavior of the lay volunteers. For example, during my first visit to the Center in 2016, I was invited to stay for lunch. Master Woke, the director of the Dharma Drum Mountain Retreat Center in New York, was there that day for the Niles Community Garage Sale and for a discussion of Chan meditation techniques. The experienced kitchen volunteers laid out the metal bowls and chopsticks found in most DDM locations, but a newer volunteer grabbed plastic forks and disposable cups to set out for people who had not brought their own water bottles or who could not use chopsticks. The lead volunteer in the kitchen quickly changed these out for metal spoons and ceramic cups. She told the newer volunteers that they needed to follow the rules and only use non-disposable items and then wash the dirty dishes at the end. I suspect that if there

had not been a monk present, they would have all eaten with disposable dishes and cutlery to reduce clean up time.

Since the arrival of Master Progress, the new monastic director of the San Francisco Chan Center, the volunteers have made concerted efforts to minimize the use of disposable dishes, even when the kitchen was being remodeled, and there was no way to wash the Center's metal bowls and chopsticks (field notes 2018). After a few glitches, such as the time when people tried to eat large slices of cheesy pizza off one small cocktail napkin per person, event notices began to include language telling people to bring their own bowls and chopsticks. The participants were instructed to take their bowls and utensils home for washing, so that they could reduce trash and negative impact on the environment at the Chan Center. Even after the kitchen and dining hall were opened, event attendees were still encouraged to bring their own cups, bowls, and utensils and to wash them at home to reduce water consumption at the Chan Center.

The two-day Water Repentance Ritual was the largest event I attended at the San Francisco Chan Center. The monks instituted several green practices during the event. For example, the air conditioning was set to 71 degrees Fahrenheit, even though it was quite hot outside, and both halls were filled with several hundred participants, who were wearing ceremonial robes while chanting, kneeling, standing, bowing, and making prostrations all day. People were told to drink water on breaks to hydrate themselves and to relax into a meditative state as they performed the ritual to avoid getting heat stroke. The vegetarian lunches during the ritual were cooked in the newly completed kitchen, served buffet-style in the dining hall, and eaten at each participant's assigned seat for the ceremony, but there was only one garbage station for all the participants. That station was outside in the entry courtyard near the door to the multipurpose area, and there was one trash can, one compost bin, and one recycle bin. Everyone

was exhorted to reduce waste, and by having the garbage centrally located, peer pressure kept trash to a minimum.⁴¹

The kitchen is one area where the monks are consciously trying to promote aspects of a green lifestyle. Master Fountainhead, the resident monk who arrived in July 2018, told me that all food at the Center is locally grown and organic. They are careful to buy pesticide-free fruits and vegetables. He is working to build up the vegan cooking teams, so that more volunteers will learn to cook vegan meals. Furthermore, the monks promote the Chan of eating, which includes focusing on the food one is chewing and sensing it in one's mouth to taste the flavor of the food. After finishing the meal, everyone is encouraged to pour a small amount of warm water into one's bowl and drink it down, ensuring that all the food is eaten. This also makes washing the bowls easier and requires the use of less water in the kitchen dishwashing area. Many respondents mentioned this action as one of the greenest practices that they had learned at the Chan Center.

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation San Diego Chapter

Members of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation receive more teachings about environmentalism because Master Cheng Yen preaches almost daily, and the members either get up early to watch the dharma talks with the online devotional group, or they watch them on the Da Ai TV YouTube channel later in the day. As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, Master Cheng Yen frequently speaks of environmental issues and encourages her followers to work to save the earth as part of their Buddhist cultivation. Moreover, because Tzu Chi incorporates environmentalism

⁴¹ Nung Chan Monastery in Taipei has no garbage cans in public areas and asks visitors to take their trash home with them to throw away in their own trash bags, as Taipei City charges for garbage disposal by the bag.

into all aspects of its community service, training sessions about each mission include training on the pro-environmental protocols for each particular kind of outreach.

As part of its regular environmental service to the community, the Tzu Chi San Diego chapter collects recyclables at the rear of the service center and sorts them once a month. Many of the neighbors donate bottles and cans, including beer and wine bottles and cans, and the volunteers wash them, sort everything, and then take the sorted resources to a recycling center where they sell the recyclables. The money is added into the service center's fund of donations. Some volunteers have gone around to various companies in the Qualcomm office park offering recycling services. These companies allow the Tzu Chi volunteers to process their cardboard recyclables and take them to be sold. This is particularly important because San Diego's waste management program does not recycle anything from commercial waste. San Diego County's landfill is nearly full, so working to remove recyclables from commercial waste bins is an important contribution to the community.

Tzu Chi San Diego is also very good at incorporating environmentalism into its other three missions. When I participated in the winter charity outreach in eastern San Diego County in 2016, we gave out hats and gloves made from recycled plastic bottles. And, we only gave out vegetarian foods to the recipients. Every year before fire season, volunteers go out to the senior citizens, who are charity recipients in the poorest area of East County just north of the Mexican border, and they help them clean up their yards to reduce fire dangers. Because that area of the county is extremely poor, the municipalities of Campo, Jacumba Hot Springs, and Boulevard do not have regular weekly garbage service, so Tzu Chi San Diego rents garbage and recycling dumpsters on the weekends that they are doing fire season clean-ups. The organization invites the other residents of those areas to get rid of their trash and recyclables. The volunteers

overseeing the dumpsters help teach the residents how to sort their waste into garbage and recyclables.

Tzu Chi San Diego includes environmental education in all its educational outreach. Teachers in the weekend Chinese school report teaching the children about protecting animals, sorting recyclables, and eating vegetarian food. The after-school student clubs also have units teaching the children about environmentalism and about things the children can do to keep the environment clean, such as recycling, eating vegetarian food, conserving water, and avoiding single-use plastic items. Volunteers who teach in these programs reported that they do not just teach the theory; they also model the behaviors to the children as reinforcement to the lessons. In East County, the Tzu Chi commissioners Martin and Linda⁴² said they sometimes teach the local school children how to do arts and crafts using recycled bottles or other reused materials. The college students in UCSD Tzu Ching student organization did an environmental booth for a program that they attended. I do not know how the information was received by the people visiting the booth, but the exercise of researching and communicating pro-environmental messages deeply impacted the Tzu Ching members who shared the experience with me (TC San Diego Interviews).

Even the group's medical outreach and religious events frequently include environmental education components. For example, during the free medical clinics, there is often an environmental education booth where family members waiting for patients to finish with the doctor can make arts and crafts projects out of recycled materials, play games to learn more about preserving the environment, and even learn some recipes for simple vegetarian snacks. I observed similar booths at Tzu Chi San Diego's Buddha Bathing Ceremony in 2016. There was a

⁴² These are pseudonyms per my research protocols.

huge vegan feast after the ceremony, but the guests had to wait while the volunteers were preparing the feast, after having first participated in the solemn ceremony. During this hour-long hiatus, guests could go to the recycling booth to make a planter out of a recycled plastic bottle and play a game to learn about the different categories of recycling in San Diego. They could also try some simple vegan snacks and pick up the recipes. The snacks were made in separate cooking booths, and people crowded around to watch the preparation techniques and get the food. After eating the snacks, guests were taught how to sort the garbage related to the snacks into trash and recycling, according to local guidelines.

In general, the regular members of Tzu Chi San Diego, both the ones I observed and the ones I interviewed, had adopted quite a few of the group's recommended practices into their daily lives. Most were fully vegetarian or had reduced meat consumption considerably after joining the group. Most worked hard to reduce their consumption of material goods and their waste. A few of my interviewees were nearly at zero waste, while others had significantly reduced the amount of trash that they produce every week. San Diego does not provide separate collection of compostable waste, and many of my interviewees reported doing composting themselves in their gardens or feeding food waste to wild animals, if they lived in desert areas that were too dry for efficient composting. Most people whom I interviewed reported saving water from showers for watering flowers or scrubbing floors. Water conservation was important to them all.

Most respondents stated that they had learned methods of living sustainably from being in Tzu Chi. The ones who seemed to have the best practices had visited the Abode and picked up ideas from the nuns' austere lifestyle. People who had not had the opportunity to go to Taiwan learned from training meetings in San Diego and from other volunteers. They were able to

implement a large percentage of what they heard, but they did not feel as confident in what they were doing to live sustainably as those who had been to Taiwan and experienced the low-carbon lifestyle in the Abode. This again underscores the importance of the monastic lifestyle pattern for helping lay believers understand how to change their behaviors.

The Importance of Perceived “Terrestrial” Strain and Lack of Appropriate Government Response to Impelling Lifestyle Changes

There was a significant difference between respondents in San Diego and respondents in the Bay Area with respect to their perception of the need for changing lifestyles. This seems to be related to their view of the social strain related to environmental issues and to the local governments’ green policies. Monastic leader reports about Dharma Drum Mountain believers in New York when compared to believers in California support this analysis.

The leaders at the DDM San Francisco Chan Center and all of my respondents individually reported that they follow the governmental guidelines for recycling in their various municipalities. (Most cities in the Bay Area require separating compost, recyclables, and trash.) They also reported trying to avoid using Styrofoam and plastic bags, regardless of whether these things have been banned in their particular municipalities. A few reported reducing their carbon footprint by riding the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) or carpooling whenever possible. One respondent is the director of an NGO, and she told me how she had used her authority to institute a number of required green procedures in her office (DDMBASF Interviews).

Some Bay Area respondents wondered about my topic because they felt that all the people they know, including and especially white Americans, are more environmentally conscious than they are. They believe that Trump’s denial of climate change is an isolated anomaly and are not aware of the wide variety of attitudes toward environmentalism in America.

Since these informants live and work in a politically progressive area of the U.S. with highly educated colleagues, their views are not surprising. According to the theory that a disruptive social strain (Smelser [1962] 1965, Geertz 1973, Snow et. al. 1998) is necessary before people will take collective action to find new ideas and new ways to ameliorate a problem, these immigrants' direct experience of only a narrow slice of American culture and American life may contribute to their lack of a sense of urgency with respect to outreach and promotion of green lifestyles.

Master Woke, the former director of the Dharma Drum Retreat Center in New York, reported a confirming example when he told me that he had a hard time getting New Yorkers to conserve water at the DDM Retreat Center because there is no water shortage in upstate New York. His visit to California was his first to a region plagued by drought, and he found that the lay members in California were much more conscious of their water usage than the lay members in New York. The Californians were more apt to adopt the group's suggested behaviors to conserve water (field notes 2016).

San Diego, in contrast to the Bay Area, is not a progressive place. As noted above, the San Diego landfill is nearly full, yet the city is prohibited from doing more than it does now to require residents to reduce waste and sort out recyclables and compost by a law that has been on the books for decades (field notes 2015). As noted above, three municipalities in East San Diego County are so poor that they cannot afford weekly trash collection. Tzu Chi San Diego learned about this problem in the course of its disaster relief efforts after wildfires in the area and began to help with this matter, as described above. Thus, Tzu Chi's service projects allow the volunteers to interact with populations and areas that they may not otherwise contact in their

neighborhoods and workplaces. Through these interactions, the Tzu Chi volunteers learn about problems in neighboring communities, who are less fortunate than they are.

Tzu Chi's disaster relief missions also bring the volunteers into direct contact with the results of environmental degradation, and they see first-hand the insufficiency of government responses and the wide range of environmental literacy among various sectors of the American populace. These experiences give Tzu Chi volunteers in San Diego a greater sense of urgency with respect to preserving the environment than that held among Dharma Drum Mountain volunteers in the Bay Area. This evidence from comparing the two California groups in my study strongly supports the theory that "terrestrial" strain, which significantly disrupts the quotidian, is an important push-pull factor in getting populations to change lifestyles and take social action. Moreover, a feeling that the government is not doing enough to alleviate the strain is an important push-pull factor that impels organizations in civil society to take action to alleviate social strain (Smelser [1962] 1965).

Building Trust in the American Social Context

The push-pull factors described in the preceding chapters—sacred Buddhist cultivation, strong moral communities, pro-environmental training, the monastic model lifestyle, a sense of strain, and the feeling that government efforts are inadequate—are the same for Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain in both Taiwan and the United States. The matter of building trust, however, is quite different in the two different social contexts. Tzu Chi San Diego and Dharma Drum Mountain San Francisco must build trust along two vectors in American society. They first need to build trust among members of their own immigrant communities, in order to attract and retain their largest pool of donors and volunteers. They do this by deploying elements from the tool kit of the Chinese Confucian Discourse System and by

allowing their members to feel truly at home in a group with their own language and their own Confucian ethics. The *guanxi* rituals that are so prevalent in Taiwan are significantly diluted among the members of both groups, most of whom are highly educated and hold high-paying jobs in the tech or biomedical fields in the Bay Area and San Diego, a fact which forces them to regularly live and act within the parameters of the Utilitarian Discourse System. Individuals did not give me karma-creating gifts in the context of America, nor did I observe individuals giving such gifts to non-whites when they came to the groups. When I had a need for my research, various individuals were quite generous in giving me the things that I needed as gifts, but I did not observe the greeting gift ritual in the U.S. context. The groups, however, did give mementos to class members at the end of a class and to donors at special events. Members of both groups do call one another “brother” and “sister.” They also help one another in times of need. The members of both groups value family and community and hold a less individualistic ethos than most neoliberal, locally born Americans. Respondents from both groups reported liking the fact that their form of Buddhism includes outreach to society and helping the community.

The other vector on which the groups must garner trust in America is in their interface with non-Chinese, non-Buddhist members of American society. Here the characteristics that garner trust are the virtues listed by Weber ([1903-4] 2001) in the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, such as: honesty, industry, and frugality. Although components of the Utilitarian Discourse System, these ethics correspond with the aspect of disciplined Buddhist cultivation promoted in these groups. And both groups seem to be earning the trust of their American neighbors, despite their foreignness. For example, the fact that Dharma Drum Mountain allowed the church that had sold them their property to share the space with them for a year helped build trust and respect between the groups. During that time, DDM did not touch the sanctuary. They

allowed the Christians to keep their cross and other religious symbols to the surprise of the Christians. They also allowed the church to continue using the office space until their new facilities were ready. These concrete actions of kindness and respect in dealings with others go a long way towards garnering trust in American society. The Chan meditation methods are also seen as quite effective in reducing stress and promoting health among the Bay Area's high-tech workers. Providing inexpensive, effective relief from a widespread problem is another way that DDM San Francisco builds trust in American society (field notes 2018).

Tzu Chi gains trust by faithfully completing its service missions. Martin and Linda are the white couple from San Diego who became Tzu Chi commissioners. Martin is a retired fire battalion chief, and he met Tzu Chi volunteers when they were doing disaster relief after one of the frequent wildfires in East San Diego County. He was deeply impressed at the efficiency with which the Tzu Chi volunteers gave the relief and the respect that they showed to all the victims, regardless of their social status. He observed more instances of Tzu Chi's method of providing charity and "checked the group out thoroughly" before joining with his wife Linda. They and their growing community of volunteers in East San Diego County have developed trust for Tzu Chi because of its excellent performance in disaster relief, medical outreach, and afterschool educational programming for schools in low-income areas.

An important aspect of garnering trust in the American context is that expectations must be met for a person or group to be considered honest and trustworthy. Americans consider fulfillment of expectations to be the best indicator of honest work. Such an expectation seems occasionally to produce a challenge for Tzu Chi, with its hybrid nature as an "alternate civility" that does not quite fit the category boxes for an American faith-based non-profit. Because Tzu Chi is structured according to Taiwan's *guanxi* logic, it may, at times, fail to meet American

expectations due to cultural differences. I argue that this mismatch of expectations caused by unintelligibility to average Americans is one of the main reasons for the failure of Tzu Chi San Diego's English-language environmental educational outpost—EcoVerse. Another reason for the failure of EcoVerse may be that American society does not value education in the same way that Taiwan society does, and there is not enough demand for this aspect of Tzu Chi's environmental mission in the U.S. A third reason may be that EcoVerse prioritized scientific messages framed according to the Utilitarian Discourse System; this means that it did not successfully bridge the gap to the moral traditions of a communitarian discourse system to motivate deeper commitment to its mission from American visitors.

The EcoVerse Experiment

From 2013 through May 1, 2017, Tzu Chi San Diego tried a pilot project called EcoVerse. Tzu Chi USA purchased a double store front in a combination residential/office building at the far edge of the Gaslamp District in downtown San Diego, across from the San Diego Main Library. It was called EcoVerse Jing Si Books and Café. One section of the facility had tables and chairs and a reading section with armchairs. There was a small kitchen, and for a donation (suggested amount \$2), visitors could drink a cup of coffee or tea. The books on the shelves were for sale, and the shop also sold items made by the nuns at Tzu Chi's Abode, such as candles and soap. In the other section of the facility, there were clothing items from Da Ai Technologies, which is the Tzu Chi Taiwan company that makes products out of recycled PET bottles (see Chapter 3). There were also other products, such as glass water bottles and shopping bags that people could buy to help cut down on consumption of single-use plastic items. Furthermore, the center of this section had two long tables with benches for workshops on doing arts and crafts with recycled materials. One of the most frequent projects was making planters

out of empty plastic bottles. The windows of the workshop side were full of such planters, as a model of an urban garden.

When I first started my field work at EcoVerse in 2015, it was partnering with the City of San Diego and the Main Library to do a series of free talks on various issues related to living sustainably. In those sessions, a Tzu Chi volunteer would speak first, giving a presentation on the facts about why we need to change our behaviors in a certain area (such as waste reduction, water consumption, electricity usage) to save the planet. Then, an official from the related city department would describe city programs that homeowners could sign up for to get tax reductions or rebates for installing rainwater containment systems or solar energy panels. Those lectures were well-attended, at first, but after the second run, most of the people in the area who were interested in that kind of information had obtained what they needed, and they were not interested in further explorations of environmentally sustainable lifestyles. Another free class that EcoVerse taught several times at the library on Saturday afternoons was one where library patrons could make planters out of empty plastic bottles and take them home. These classes were well-attended, at first, but again, attendance dropped off after a while.

Eventually, EcoVerse moved into doing urban gardens for homeless shelters in the area, using recycled materials, such as old tires, for planters. EcoVerse got small grants to teach the homeless people in the shelters how to make and care for planters made with recycled materials as part of their occupational therapy to help them transition from life on the streets to a more normal lifestyle. EcoVerse was also certified and received grants to have special needs patients come with their therapists to do art from recycled materials as a therapy program. Another outreach effort involved helping the students of a charter school, which is housed in the top floors of the Main Library building, to develop sustainable waste management and urban

vegetable gardens in their school. Some of the students from that school worked at EcoVerse over the summer trying to invent useful items from household waste, like turning broken racks from toaster ovens into letter holders. The school moved to new programming the next academic year, and there did not seem to be as much demand for EcoVerse class offerings.

Part of the problem was that the location of EcoVerse is far away from the Tzu Chi San Diego service office and from the homes of most volunteers in San Diego, who tend to live in communities north and south of the city center. There is no free parking in the downtown area, and fewer and fewer Tzu Chi volunteers felt comfortable coming to EcoVerse, as they had to pay exorbitant parking fees to help at programs with only one or two outside attendees. Another problem seems to have been the language barrier. Many of the volunteers in San Diego are not fluent enough in English to give talks on environmental issues. The constantly shifting nature of the programming probably magnified that problem, as volunteers had to learn new scripts for nearly every talk.

I think another problem was the expectations from non-Chinese Americans coming to EcoVerse in contrast to what was offered. Prior to my first visit, I looked up EcoVerse on the internet and found its Facebook page. To me, it appeared to be a restaurant or at the very least a coffee shop that would serve some kind of vegan snacks with coffee or tea. I did not eat lunch before leaving for the bus, expecting to buy something when I got to EcoVerse Jing Si books and Café. But when I arrived two hours later, I learned that all they served was very expensive tea or coffee. I had to buy an entire package of crackers made by nuns in the Abode, as a snack, because I was so hungry. This was my first contact with Tzu Chi, and if I had not been planning to do research on the group, I probably would not have returned after feeling cheated by a “café” that did not offer food. I suspect that it would have been better named “EcoVerse Jing Si Books

and Coffee Bar” to attract a non-Chinese-speaking American audience. During my later participant observation visits, I saw many people come into EcoVerse looking for food and drink, only to walk away disappointed.

Moreover, while the space was tastefully laid out, it was not intelligible to non-Tzu Chi members. After visiting Tzu Chi Taiwan and the gift shop at Tzu Chi USA headquarters in San Dimas, I now understand that EcoVerse was based on the pattern of Taiwan Tzu Chi’s Jing Si Books and Café (*jing si shu xuan*), which serve only drinks, and then sell Tzu Chi products, including full packages of vegan snacks. The second room was based on the shops selling clothes made by Da Ai Technologies, which are often located next to the Jing Si Books and Café in the Jing Si Halls in Taiwan. To American speakers of English, the word “café” implies that some kind of food will be served. If there had been food available, more people might have been interested in staying longer to find out about the mission of the place and its products made from recycled PET bottles. Instead, they left disappointed at the pretty shop that did not meet their expectations.

I think a second problem comes from Tzu Chi’s hybrid nature. Most Americans coming to the rational, scientific, educational presentations at the library undoubtedly believed that Tzu Chi and EcoVerse are standard faith-based non-profits with fat grants from government organizations. They may have assumed that the people in Tzu Chi uniforms were paid NGO staff. In any event, they would probably not have considered volunteering or joining or even donating. Unlike Tzu Chi’s other outreach efforts in the charity, medical, and education missions, EcoVerse presented itself too much like a standard U.S. non-profit without showing Tzu Chi’s unique culture of compassionate Buddhist service with respect for the recipients. To my observation, the people who came to the seminars took the information that they wanted and

walked away. Most would probably donate to or volunteer with any of the many U.S. environmental non-profits but would not think of working with a group that is mainly made up of immigrants, many of whom speak heavily accented English.

If the purpose of the EcoVerse shop was to market products made from recycled PET bottles by Da Ai Technologies, then the space should have been organized and billed as such. Instead, the post-consumer-waste merchandise was along the wall farthest from the unlocked entrance, and it was not clearly marketed. Because the facility did too many things at once, it does not seem to have done anything well. I think part of the reason the shop was not a success was because Americans do not generally consider things to be interconnected. American culture divides things into clear categories. Clothing stores are clothing stores. Cafés sell food and drink. Some bookstores sell books and drinks with cakes or cookies at a coffee bar, but they do not also sell clothes and hold classes on recycling and zero waste lifestyles. Americans would not consider spaces used for selling clothing, books, or food and drink to be good places for making arts and crafts out of recyclables, and especially not for workshops on composting food waste.

Tricia⁴³, the director of EcoVerse, did a heroic job trying to make the place work. She worked tirelessly building contacts in the local community, but because the purpose of the space was so scattered and the moral underpinnings of the outreach were not clearly articulated, it seemed hard for anyone in the local community to fully commit to the EcoVerse mission. I am sure that lack of commitment from locals made it even harder for other Tzu Chi volunteers to want to spend the time, gas, and parking money to help out at EcoVerse.

As a white American, I can envision a project like EcoVerse situated in the suburbs, especially in an area with some middle-class immigrants, where people are more used to

⁴³ All names are pseudonyms per my research protocols.

accented English and diverse populations. It would best be housed in a building large enough for three separate, clearly marked rooms: one for selling books and clothing, one for selling vegan food and drink, and one for workshops and classes. An outdoor area for processing recyclables and a demonstration organic garden could further enhance the facility. Sufficient parking would also be imperative for California's car culture, especially in a city like San Diego, which does not have convenient public transportation.

In short, I think that something more along the lines of Taiwan's recycling and environmental education centers combined with a Jing Si books/Da Ai Technologies shop and a small vegan café would have worked better in America for the purposes that EcoVerse aimed to achieve because it would be intelligible to locals, as the various functions would be appropriately separated into American categories of knowledge (Durkheim 1995). Such a facility would most likely eliminate confusion and feelings of breached trust among non-Chinese American visitors.⁴⁴ Further articulation of the moral underpinnings of the environmental work framed in a way that resonates with communitarian strands of American society would undoubtedly attract more new volunteers to commit to the cause.

Conclusion

A comparison of the results of my study in Taiwan with those of my research in America demonstrates that the adoption of pro-environmental lifestyle changes is strongly influenced by membership in a strong moral community, by sensing the social strain of environmental degradation coupled with a feeling that the government and other official institutions are not

⁴⁴ Tzu Chi San Diego has recently acquired an old fire station in East San Diego County. The facility has room for the group's regular free medical outreach clinics and for educational programming. At one point, there were discussions of creating a recycling center and model low-water, organic garden on the grounds to serve an area of San Diego County that is in desperate need of such services. Further research will be needed to determine if such a model is viable for the group's environmental mission in the U.S.

doing enough, and by integrated teachings that include theory and praxis from authoritative figures who model the desired behaviors. Moreover, this chapter shows the power of the sacred to inspire behavioral change in the example of Dharma Drum Mountain San Francisco. Although many members of DDM San Francisco did not have the benefit of the full array of DDM's integrated teachings on environmentalism, and even though many of them had not had the opportunity to participate in seven-day Chan meditation retreats in a monastic setting, they still were able to absorb the available teachings and practices and to make significant changes to their lifestyles with respect to consumption and wastefulness. Their disciplined Buddhist cultivation produced some of the desired results.

Tzu Chi San Diego might seem to be mainly a service organization, but it does maintain the hybridity of Tzu Chi Taiwan with respect to religion and service. Most of Tzu Chi San Diego's core members are devout Buddhists, and they begin their days at 5:30 am, when they connect to a Webinar of Master Cheng Yen's morning dharma talk in Taiwanese. Because of the time difference, the talk has been transcribed into Chinese characters after Master Cheng Yen finishes speaking, and San Diego's local moderator of the Webinar sends out the transcript for the people who do not speak Taiwanese to follow along. After Master Cheng Yen's talk is over, the group discusses the talk and how they can apply the teachings in their daily lives. This Webinar frequently runs for 1½ hours. Every other Saturday morning, the group holds a sutra chanting ritual in the service office, which is followed by a period of copying the *Sutra of Infinite Meanings* in Chinese calligraphy (with a brush) following the pattern of the sutra written in Master Cheng Yen's calligraphy. Every week, there are a Chinese book study session of one of Master Cheng Yen's books on Tuesday evenings and a Webinar English book study session of one of Cheng Yen's books in English translation on Wednesday evenings. Every other Saturday

afternoon is spent practicing singing Tzu Chi's sign language songs, which also have spiritual significance. All the core Buddhist members consider Tzu Chi to be their religious practice, and all their service activity and outreach are part of their Buddhist cultivation.

Most regular volunteers agree that faith is an important part of being a Tzu Chi volunteer, although that faith does not necessarily have to be Buddhist. One of San Diego's most dedicated volunteers is Wendy⁴⁵, a Catholic woman from Taiwan. I did not observe her participating in the sutra studies, but she does participate in the book clubs, which tend to cover Master Cheng Yen's books that have more general moral and ethical principles. Wendy told me that she remains a faithful Catholic, and she finds Master Cheng Yen's teachings to be helpful to the practice of her own faith. She is fully committed to Tzu Chi's mission to serve society, and she contributes much to the Tzu Chi San Diego chapter. She also visits the Abode and Tzu Chi functions when she returns to Taiwan to visit her family. Other volunteers at Tzu Chi San Diego are not practicing Buddhists, but they appreciate the spiritual and ethical virtues that underpin all the missions of the group. Hence, the power of the sacred is one motivation for their work to serve the community.

The beginning of this chapter described the changes occurring in American religion today. There is an exodus from monolithic church institutions and an increase in membership in local congregations. In some ways, the field of religion in America is beginning to resemble the field of religion in Taiwan with different groups scattered across society, each with its own specialty of belief and practice. This is most likely inevitable in America's contemporary pluralistic society. Since the power of the sacred is so important to changing lifestyles, a model resembling Buddhist groups in Taiwan might be viable among various religious groups in the

⁴⁵ All names are pseudonyms per my research protocols.

U.S. If the consensus of most religions is that environmental degradation and climate change are critical problems, each group can promote the lifestyle changes that best fit its doctrine and practice. Loose coalitions of church networks with a general consensus on the problem and individual variations on the ways to resolve it could be the best way for religion in America to exert its moral authority in service to the cause of saving the planet. These ideas will be more fully developed in the concluding chapter of this study.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: The Power of the Sacred in Today's Post-Modern, Multicultural World

Why are so many of the push-pull factors contributing to the adoption of an environmentally sustainable lifestyle among members of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain the same in both Taiwan and the United States? The important factors for such behavior among my research subjects on both sides of the Pacific Ocean include sacred Buddhist cultivation, strong moral communities, integrated pro-environmental teachings and practices, the monastic model lifestyle, a sense of “terrestrial” strain, and the feeling that government efforts to solve the problem are inadequate. The answer to the question of why so many factors are the same in both societies can be found in Durkheim’s (1995) analysis of religion and how it operates as a moral and ethical force upon individuals in society.

In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Emile Durkheim defines religion as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them” (1995: 44). He further insists that religion is “an eminently collective thing” (44). Durkheim then analyzes the primitive religion of Australian aborigines to understand its fundamental nature.

From his analysis of the intense collective emotions felt by participants in the aboriginal Australian corroboree, Durkheim posits that the feeling of effervescence among humans gathered together is the source of religious sentiments. Individuals experience a reality beyond themselves, which is just society, and they explain it as their god. From these feelings, the group gradually develops the components of religion: beliefs and rites, which are sacred and set apart from the profane activities of daily life. In the process of separating the sacred things from the profane and of defining the rites through which the sacred is to be contacted, each society creates

its moral code. For, in Durkheim's thought, "religious forces ... are moral powers" (224). They stem from the moral collectivity and act upon moral individuals. Thus, according to Durkheim, religion is the collective consciousness of a society, symbolically expressing the values, ethics, and morals of that society through its systems of belief and ritual practices.

Once the collective consciousness of a group becomes expressed in religious symbols, that group's religion functions upon all individuals in the society as a moral force. As new members are born into the society, the religion acts upon them to bring them into the consensus of their group. This is why Durkheim theorizes that humans have a dual nature (1973) with an individualistic component and a component produced by society. As the society's situation changes over time, its collective consciousness changes, and its religious institutions adjust to the changing social views. Hence, there is no secularization in Durkheim's thought, just changing modes of religious expression as societies evolve.

Although Durkheim bases his analysis of religion on the most primitive form he could find—the totemic religion of Australian aborigines—he notes that religions become more complicated as they evolve over time. Christianity and Buddhism are complex religions that are "[systems] of myths, dogmas, rites, and ceremonies" (1995: 33), which developed gradually and even assimilated other religions as they spread into new geographic regions. Moreover, Durkheim avers that as societies change, their religious systems spontaneously change to reflect the new social facts of the updated social order. These changes in religion stem from the "creative effervescence during which new ideals ... spring forth and new formulas emerge to guide humanity for a time" (429). Thus, society constantly renews its collective moral sentiments, as old paradigms lose their usefulness, and new paradigms emerge.

Durkheim (1995: 425) posits this ongoing religious project because he believes that society only exists insofar as it has an idea of itself. As noted above, in Durkheim's thought, humans are dual creatures with an individual component tied to their physical senses and a moral, conceptual component that is society within each human (1973: 162). The collective consciousness within us demands that we transcend our individual desires for the sake of enjoying the collective good, and this is the important role that religion plays in our lives (1995: 214-218). Religion is the voice of society within us, teaching us how to think and act as a member of the group. Moreover, in modern organic societies, there are a variety of religious forms in any one society that express and regulate the various subgroups making up the social whole.

With this understanding of the relationship among society, individuals, and religion, we can see why the power of the sacred is so important in motivating the members of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain to be disciplined in their lifestyles and behaviors. As described in Chapter 2, membership in the group connects them to the collective consciousness of all Mahayana Buddhists, which holds cultivating oneself on the bodhisattva path to enlightenment as the most sacred belief and practice of their faith or moral community. The groups' training classes on how to practice the bodhisattva ethic and the role models of the groups' monastic leaders further encourage the believers to mold themselves to the collective standards of practice and behavior that are informed by their specific group's consensus regarding the proper way to practice bodhisattva cultivation, which in both these groups includes putting principle into practice through serving the community. This, then, is the mechanism by which the sacred and all it entails in a faith community have such great power to inspire lifestyle changes among the believers.

The Effect of Social Strain in Updating Religions

As noted above, Durkheim (1995) posits that religions are constantly updating themselves as societies and their surrounding environments evolve. In the face of new social situations, new ideas are needed to express the collective good. These updates to religion occur during times of effervescence when the social situation has changed, and the members of society are energized to resolve the tension between outdated social institutions and new social facts. According to Maffesoli (1996), epochs of social unrest, such as the 1960s Civil Rights Era in the United States, are examples of such times of effervescence. During these times, groups of people gather in response to a social strain (Smelser [1962] 1965, Snow et.al. 1998), and their activity evokes new moral standards.

The crisis of environmental degradation in Taiwan in the 1980s and 1990s spurred such a time of effervescence among the populace there. New environmental organizations formed. There were protests and civil disobedience to force the authorities to clean up the mess and to enact laws to prevent further environmental degradation. Chapter 3 described how, at this time of heightened effervescence in Taiwan's society, Master Cheng Yen and Master Sheng Yen adapted their teachings and caused Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain to develop new religious teachings, practices, and behavioral norms, as a response to the social situation. Their actions are a prime example of Durkheim's theory of how religions change to meet changing societal needs.

It is interesting to note that at the time these religious leaders changed their doctrines and practices in Taiwan, the government and other social structures were seen as ineffective and unable to ameliorate the crisis. At such times, Maffesoli differentiates (1993, 1996) between a

society's old behavioral norms, which he calls morality, and the emerging norms, which he calls ethics. He states:

It is perhaps more necessary than ever to make a distinction between morality which decrees a certain number of behaviors, determines toward what an individual or society must aim, and functions according to the logic of the *ought to be*, and ethics which refers back to the equilibrium and the reciprocal relativization of different values constituting a given ensemble (group, community, nation, people, etc.). The ethical is above all the expression of the global and irrepressible will to life. The ethical expresses the responsibility that this ensemble bears concerning its continuity (1993: 7).

This passage, indeed, can describe the environmental situation in Taiwan of the 1980s. The entire island was threatened existentially with its overflowing mountains of garbage and the contamination of other industrial waste. Various groups in civil society responded to the crisis, including the Buddhist organizations in this study. Their efforts succeeded in changing mores regarding environmentalism in Taiwan, which eventually led to a change in environmental politics and law. There is still more work that can be done to improve the quality of the environment there, but the existential threat of the smoldering mounds of garbage has been resolved due to the effervescent activities of numerous social groups on the island, including Taiwan's Buddhists with their updated religious doctrines, practices and behavioral norms.

The relative ineffectiveness of religion in addressing climate change in the United States can be seen as a negative example of this theory. During the 1960s and 1970s, when the U.S. last had an effervescent environmental movement, many religious groups adapted their doctrines to reflect the pro-environmental collective consciousness of those times (Gibson 2009). As the existential threat waned, the secular groups promoting environmentalism lost their effervescence, and, for the majority of U.S. citizens, protecting the environment came to mean donating money to routinized environmental NGOs and receiving colorful calendars with pictures of wildlife or plush stuffed animals representing various endangered species. The focus of most U.S. religious

groups then shifted from pro-environmental doctrines to other matters, deemed more pressing in the contemporaneous social situation.

The collective consciousness about the environmental degradation of climate change in the West seems to be changing, though, and some Western religions have begun responding to this “terrestrial” strain. Recently, in the context of increased societal concern about natural disasters linked to global warming, Pope Francis issued his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si* and restarted Western religion’s moral conversation about the environment. In 2018, the Church of England challenged its believers to give up plastic for Lent (Pasha-Robinson 2018), adding its moral authority to the discourse and behavioral norms about protecting the environment. These vicissitudes in religious discourse on environmental protection demonstrate the function of religion as the embodiment and reflection of critical collective values. It also shows that religion uses its tool kit of cultural symbols to reflect the values and norms of the community, instead of imposing normative instructions from outside the group’s collective consciousness.

The Importance of Collective Conversations to Elucidate Solutions to Social Problems

As noted in Chapter 1, civil society can be seen as the place for social contact and conversations from which the collective consciousness coalesces around a consensus, which eventually enables the government to formulate effective and coherent policies to deal with social ills. These conversations in the public sphere are aided by national culture and a national sense of identity when arriving at a collective consensus on the best ways to deal with them. In the case of Taiwan, which is a small island with a fairly homogenous ethnic population, the cultural tool kit of China’s traditional Three Teachings, in other words, the Confucian Discourse System that was used to help develop a national consciousness in Taiwan (Schak 2018), enabled the Buddhist groups in this study to draw upon multiple symbols, cultural scripts, and social

structures to promote pro-environmental lifestyles among Taiwan's Buddhists and among the general population, as described in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapters 1 and 6 both describe how the United States is a large, multicultural society with several competing topics of collective discourse (Madsen 1993b) and three general moral paradigms for finding solutions (Williams 1999). Scollon, Scollon, and Jones (2012) suggest that there are many competing discourse systems in America, as each identity group generally develops its own system of discourse. Many of these smaller discourse systems challenge the values of our country's hegemonic Utilitarian Discourse System. The result is a chaotic cacophony of voices and ideas, which have not yet arrived at a consensus about mitigating climate change. Moreover, our neoliberal capitalistic culture emphasizes the individual over the community, and many people in the U.S. seem obstinately unwilling to consider the common good (Mansbridge 1998, Calhoun 1998, Bellah, et. al. 1985, 1991). Even our social groups do not seem interested in considering all of American society (Bellah, et. al. 1991). What can be done about the excessive individualism in neoliberal American society, especially in light of the fact that our religious and other social institutions seem increasingly irrelevant and fragmented, as noted in Chapters 1 and 6?

Effervescence in *Ad Hoc* Socialities of the Post-Modern World

Perhaps the withering of formal institutions, the retreat to individualism, and the increase of memberships in more personal groups are merely signs that our society is in the throes of a paradigm shift. Georg Simmel (1971: 16) posits that our very human existence consists of social interactions, stating, "at any given moment we consist of interactions with others." Maffesoli (1996) builds on Simmel and Durkheim and their ideas of the importance of sociality to human existence. He theorizes that, in our current post-modern society, people who are disillusioned

with existing social institutions have retreated to *ad hoc* socialities in their neighborhoods and in the many social interactions they have daily. People socialize with other people of like sentiments because this is what humans do, and in these interactions, the effervescence or *puissance* of the masses continues as a “social divine.” This effervescence operates in contrast to some of the power structures in society that stand in the way of needed social change. Therefore, Maffesoli (1996) sees the current state of humanity as a hopeful situation.

Maffesoli (1996) theorizes that, in post-modern society, human interaction is hyperlocal and highly networked in communities, which I argue each construct their own discourse system. This allows effervescence to act despite the seeming alienation and atomization of residents in major urban centers. This model is also reminiscent of the field of religion in Taiwan (c. f. Chapter 4), where the various Buddhist institutions have positioned themselves strategically in the field of Taiwan’s Buddhism, and overlapping, networked cohorts of believers attend the institutions that best serve their perceived immediate needs. Despite the apparent chaos of that situation, the groups in this study have successfully influenced many believers to change their lifestyles. Maffesoli’s (1996) theory is also similar to the findings of Cruz and Forman (2015), who note the importance of working at the level of neighborhoods and communities to effect meaningful change with respect to implementing green solutions. This most likely also explains why the groups in my study have been able to influence members of the Chinese American immigrant community and members of other local communities, affected by environmental degradation, who appreciate the groups’ assistance and resonate with their moral discourse, which most closely resembles the stewardship paradigm identified by Williams (1999).

A Way Forward at the Hyperlocal “Terrestrial” Level in America

Indeed, some research shows that not all sectors of American society are individualistic and anti-communitarian. Maffesoli (1993, 1996) finds that hyperlocal urban populations often maintain communitarian traditions through a process of sedimentation, which connects group memories to certain places and develops a sense of local community. While the focus of Maffesoli's research in the 1990s consisted of deviant groups, such as the homeless living under Paris bridges and members of Goth communes, his theory of post-modern society as a shifting kaleidoscope of *ad hoc* local communities is increasingly valid in the U.S. today, as income and wealth inequality leave more and more populations at the margins of the American dream, isolated from our failing public institutions and dependent on the members of their hyperlocal communities and *ad hoc* networks of socialities. Raudenbush (2012) uses research methods of symbolic interactionism to analyze poor, black and affluent, white populations riding buses in Chicago. She finds that there is greater social cohesion, evidenced by *ad hoc* sociality, among poor, black riders, which belies the narrative that all populations in the US are atomized. She attributes this to the shared fate and linked identity of black populations in the U.S. In a further study, Raudenbush (2016) finds that even when members of poor, black communities state they stand alone, they are forced by their situations to engage in social cohesion for the purpose of survival. Thus, an adverse immediate environment, such as the realm of the "Terrestrial" posited by Latour (2018), forces people to come together to find practical strategies for survival. Cruz and Forman (2015) concur that, within the U.S., marginalization binds many local communities together and impels them to develop creative strategies for coping with the fallout of neoliberalism, such as the negative impacts of environmental degradation. Indeed, a 2013 study commissioned by the Union of Concerned Scientists found that even climate-change deniers will discuss how their local communities can work together to solve the immediate impacts of climate

change, such as rising sea levels, on the coastal regions where they live (Furth and Gantwerk 2013).

An example from Africa shows what happens to people living in a nation-state where public institutions fail almost completely to provide necessary public services, a fate that may not be too far off for many in the U.S. In such failed nation-states, although the institutions of liberal society have withered into meaninglessness, people still find *ad hoc* ways to survive. The documentary *Elephant's Dream*, directed by Kristof Bilsen (2014), follows the lives of three public servants in the Democratic Republic of Congo where the trains no longer run regularly, the Post Office does not usually succeed at delivering the mail, and the fire fighters do not have sufficient water pressure to save their own fire station from burning down. But life goes on. Religion is important to the people featured in the film. It gives their lives meaning in the face of society's absurdity, and it helps them build communities that enable them to survive. Henriette, the Post Office worker sings hymns as she sits before her stamp window in the vast, empty lobby of the Post Office. Outside of work, she finds solace in a new charismatic religious movement, which holds worship services under the corrugated metal roof of a temporary pavilion that seats hundreds on plastic chairs and stools. The fire fighters at the only fire station in the capital city of Kinshasa begin their day with prayer and exercise, even though there is very little food, and many only had a cup of very weak tea for breakfast. Their sergeant exhorts them to treat each other with respect and maintain their sense of community, despite the difficulties of their situation. They end their exercise period with more prayer and keep pressing forward in their nearly hopeless lives. Religion and community, then, are the antidotes to the ravaged society that has resulted from the exploitation of the masses by unfettered global capitalism in our neoliberal world. But they are the religious forms and communities of the grassroots populace, and they are

different from many dominant religious institutions, which seem irrelevant to people in such marginalized, desperate straits.

In the U.S., non-mainstream religions and hyperlocal marginalized communities may contribute to a grassroots effort to save ourselves from climate extinction. Victor Turner (1977) notes that religious rituals among liminal populations are a source of creativity for social renewal. This was true in the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which was inspired by the 1950s revival of Native American religions and the Asian religions made popular by the New Age movement (Gibson 2009). In 2016, Native American tribes with their religious leaders were again at the forefront of more recent resistance against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline at the sacred indigenous burial site near Standing Rock, North Dakota (Donnella 2016). Scholars consider the Standing Rock protests to be related to climate change and climate justice (Whyte 2016).

To meet the needs of marginalized communities already suffering under negative impacts of climate change, Cruz and Forman (2015:205) suggest finding “new interfaces between the knowledge of institutions and the community-based knowledge embedded in marginalized neighbourhoods.” The immigrant Buddhist groups in my study may be an excellent vehicle for such an interface. Most of the members of these Buddhist groups, especially in the U.S., are highly educated professionals and academics. In this respect, they have mastered the “knowledge of institutions” and are often at the cutting edge of the latest technology. Their religious commitment to community service and outreach pushes them out of their own social circle and into more marginalized communities around them. Their Buddhist doctrine of the equality of all life causes them to respect the groups with whom they interact and to find the best ways to help them. In Taiwan of the 1990s, these groups served as a bridge between the secular environmental

activists and more conservative segments of the population, who were uncomfortable demonstrating or committing violence for the cause. In other words, they bridged the gap between populations living in the Confucian Discourse System and the developing Utilitarian Discourse System that came in with the industrialization and modernization of Taiwan's society, helping those most comfortable in the Confucian Discourse System to make their needs known and compel the hegemonic forces of the Utilitarian Discourse System to consider the fate of local populations. These Buddhist groups may be able to provide a similar bridging function in the U.S. today between community-oriented discourse systems of marginalized populations and the Utilitarian Discourse System of more elite populations.

Such a paradigm is particularly evident in the Tzu Chi San Diego's service projects at schools in San Diego County with high percentages of students qualifying for free lunches and breakfasts. It is also evident in Tzu Chi San Diego's sponsorship of an elementary school in a poor neighborhood of Tijuana, Mexico. Because I am fluent in Spanish and Mandarin Chinese, I assisted Tzu Chi San Diego volunteers on a trip to bring school supplies and prizes to the graduation ceremony of Tzu Chi Elementary School in Tijuana in the summer of 2015. On that trip, I met the principal and teachers of the school, and I learned how Tzu Chi funded buildings for classrooms at the school and gave annual gifts of school supplies for the students from poor households. Furthermore, Tzu Chi provided curriculum materials on ethics that the principal and teachers found quite helpful in teaching the students to respect one another and to care for the earth. The principal set up a recycling program at the school modeled after the Tzu Chi San Diego program. She said that the students and their families bring recyclables to the school's recycling center, which she then sells to obtain funds to buy pencils and paper for her students (field notes 2015).

While I was doing my field work in Taiwan, this principal and two teachers from Tzu Chi Elementary School in Tijuana visited the Abode to meet with Master Cheng Yen and to request funding from Tzu Chi to build more classrooms. I again assisted with some of the translation for these women. While they were at the Abode, the principal and teachers from Tijuana spent time at the recycling huts and got more ideas on how they can expand that aspect of their work at the school. They also enjoyed the vegan food at the monastery (field notes 2017). When I next saw them on their visit to Tzu Chi San Diego in January 2018, the women reported that they had maintained the Tzu Chi vegan diet since returning to Mexico. They were now promoting reduced meat consumption among the students and their families at the school (field notes 2018).

Although Dharma Drum Mountain's San Francisco Chan Center has not engaged in community outreach since moving to Fremont, the new resident monks stated that they are looking into how they can build up this aspect of the group's mission. Lay informants told me that when the group was in Sunnyvale, they had held several community outreach events (DDMBASF Interviews). Dharma Drum Mountain's sangha continues Master Sheng Yen's involvement with the United Nations. One of the DDM nuns participates in a UN working group to train and empower young leaders in developing countries (DDM Taiwan Interviews). These trainings frequently include an element of environmental justice.

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation USA is best known for its disaster relief efforts. The organization was recently invited by FEMA to partner with it in efforts to assist the victims of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico (TC USA Notification 9/2018). Tzu Chi San Diego leaders informed me that Tzu Chi was invited to Puerto Rico with the specific objective of helping FEMA deal with the waste from a year's worth of plastic water bottles that had been given out to the residents while the island was recovering its electrical infrastructure and water treatment

systems in the year after the disaster. The organization has earned an excellent reputation for its pro-environmental protocols when engaged in disaster relief.

Tzu Chi and Dharma Drum Mountain's Buddhist discourse about building a good land on earth for future generations and the underlying family values of their Confucian Discourse System match the stewardship strand of discourse identified by Williams (1999) and the communitarian strand of discourse identified by Madsen (1993b). Such discourse resonates with non-Christian populations. It also resonates with groups in America that value family. Many marginalized local groups in American society place a strong emphasis on community and family, and they resonate with these Buddhists' message. Furthermore, the highly educated volunteers in Tzu Chi and Dharma Drum Mountain are non-white immigrants, some of whom reported experiencing discrimination and marginalization in U.S. society themselves. Both their message and experiences may help them relate to many different communities in American society and to be a bridge between the middle class and marginalized groups, giving the marginalized a stronger voice in the collective conversation.

The Impetus of Disruptive “Terrestrial” Strain Promoting Consensus about Problems Among Many Groups

The “terrestrial” strain from global warming has increased dramatically over the course of my research study. Each year of my study has been record-breaking with respect to its warm temperatures. Hurricanes, typhoons, and other storms have been increasingly severe and have caused record-breaking amounts of damage. California's drought has worsened with the heat, and each year the fires have covered more acreage and burned more homes than ever before. Public opinions about climate change are shifting, as the quotidian of more and more Americans is disrupted by the social and material strains caused by an overheating planet. More and more

people are apprehending the reality of the Terrestrial in the age of the Anthropocene (Latour 2018).

Calhoun (1998: 25) notes that Americans have a strange dichotomy in their ideology. On the one hand, they value individualism, but on the other, they also deeply value community. McKibben (2005) argues that for most of human history, people have defined themselves in terms of community, and the community limited them in what they could or would do. McKibben notes that Western civilization since the Enlightenment has been gradually tearing away at our value for community and replacing it with a value for individual freedom, but he also states that we still maintain a sense of community, which causes us to rally for various causes. We tend to see Americans engaged in humane communitarian actions in the wake of disasters with their outpouring of generous responses to calls for donations to benefit the victims.

The Buddhist groups in my study tap into this communitarian impulse that lies deep within humans. They foster that impulse and strengthen it with the sacred discipline of their Buddhist cultivation of the bodhisattva ethic of compassion for all life. In this respect, they resonate with many minority groups and communities on the margins of mainstream American culture, who repudiate the selfish individualism of neoliberal elite culture and cling to the humane traditions that allowed humans, as a species, to survive and develop to our current state. Although the Buddhist groups in my study are two small voices in the context of American society, they are two of an increasing number of voices calling for an end to our destructive culture of waste and individualism. As the “terrestrial” strain of climate change worsens, more and more people will likely resonate with such voices and join them in their cultivation of a different lifestyle. In response to the strain of climate change, the voice of each hyperlocal⁴⁶

⁴⁶ I follow Latour (2018) and do not mean to imply that local is in any way traditional or in opposition to the global/modern. By hyperlocal, I mean that these communities are grounded in the material situation of

community will have its own characteristics, just like the various humanistic Buddhist groups in Taiwan, but their general impetus will be in the same direction. As the need grows, I believe the Buddhist groups in my study and other American social groups will form coalitions among society's grassroots that will effect important social change. As more and more groups join the network, the sheer weight of their numbers can impel the government and powerful institutions to change.

Indeed, such a change is occurring. The groups in my study are just two voices among many in the chaotic effervescence of post-modern global society. As the social strain of climate change worsens annually, the chorus of these hyperlocal, highly networked voices are already influencing the polity. The results of 2018 elections in Taiwan and the United States show the impact of this growing consensus about climate change among the masses. As noted in Chapter 1, a grassroots campaign of "Go Green with Nuclear" (*yi he yang li*), which was personally supported by world-renowned climate scientist James Hansen and which utilized activists wearing polar bear masks to tie the campaign to global warming, persuaded a majority of Taiwan's electorate to agree in a November 2018 referendum to maintain and expand the island's nuclear power program, in order to reduce the need for power from coal-burning electrical plants (Shellenberger 2018). In the 2018 United States congressional elections, progressive Democrats won a surprisingly large number of seats across the nation, usually by relying on small-dollar donations and door-to-door campaigning instead of taking corporate money. These newly elected Democrats have started strong with pro-environmental legislation in Congress by holding hearings on climate change for the first time since 2010 (Hersher 2019).

their surroundings and conscious of the negative effects of climate change. In short, they are living in the Terrestrial section of Latour's (2018) schema.

They have further proposed a Green New Deal to move the US from a fossil-fuel-based economy to one based on renewable energy sources (Wolf 2019).

As the social strain of climate change worsens, communities around the globe will increasingly develop a collective consciousness of the need for beliefs, practices, and behavioral norms to mitigate the problem. In such instances, Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain can serve as role models of religious groups that updated their most sacred beliefs and practices to include pro-environmental elements in response to the needs of the local communities in which they operate. They can also serve as patterns for effectively inculcating those updated beliefs and practices into their believers' lives with integrated teachings, practices and norms and for disseminating their updated canons beyond their members by tying into the most important cultural symbols and social structures of their communities. Although they are but two small voices in the cacophony of our post-modern, multicultural, globalized society, they do have a valuable message for us, if we are willing to listen to and learn from them.

One of the most important things that Western religions can learn from the Buddhist groups in my study is their balanced approach to doctrine and practice, to spirituality and the quotidian. Needleman ([1970] 2009) discusses the problem of relevance faced by Western religions in the face of modern science. Like Maffesoli (1996), Needleman ([1970] 2009) critiques the morality from on high that is so prevalent in modern Western religions. He notes that the appeal of Eastern religions like Buddhism lies in the way they balance engaging the mind with a focus on the practical (16, 18). He also states that Eastern religions can “revive the psychospiritual instrumentality of moral behavior,” which makes religions relevant “in the milieu of a popular ideal of human morality” (248). The two Buddhist groups in my study have achieved a good balance between psychospiritual development and practical service to society

and the community. In this way, they can serve as patterns for Western religions adapting to contemporary collective consciousness and making themselves relevant again by reinstating the practicality of religious faith. This will be a challenge, as the example of my old indigenous Christian church (see Chapter 1) shows, because many Americans consider the application of one's faith to all aspects of daily life to be a radical proposition. However, the worsening strain of climate change and the disintegration of the global neoliberal social order are producing a new collective consciousness that demands new ways of living and new moral paradigms, which are practical and relevant to the current crises of humanity.

Indeed, American society and American religions need to learn many of the practical behavioral norms that Tzu Chi and Dharma Drum Mountain teach their believers to cultivate as the outward manifestations of their faith. To adopt these norms, we first need a compelling moral reason, a powerful "sacred" imperative, to reduce consumption and waste in our daily lives. Second, we need to feel it our moral and ethical duty to consider others and the environment before we act as individuals. And third, we should adopt many of the groups' practical strategies for sustainable lifestyles, such as Tzu Chi's Da Ai Technologies' emphasis on creating useful, high-quality products from recycled materials. This is particularly important now that the People's Republic of China no longer buys U.S. recyclables (Watson 2018). If we do not find ways to effectively reuse these materials, we will be buried under a mountain of plastic waste, which directly contributes to global warming as it disintegrates (Waters 2018). By emulating these matters, Western religions can adapt themselves to reflect the emerging collective consciousness about changing our lifestyles to mitigate climate change.

More importantly, however, Western religions, and even other engaged Buddhist sects, can learn to foster the strong sense of community in Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma

Drum Mountain, as the robust moral communities in these groups organically impel the members to change their behaviors and enable the groups to influence their surrounding communities. Chapter 1 of this study mentions the Thai forest monks who ordain trees to preserve them from logging (Darlington [1998] 2014, 2012). Those monks work individually to prevent deforestation. Chapter 6 cites Queen (1996) and King (2009), who describe many engaged Buddhists—such as the Dalai Lama, Thich Naht Hahn, and Gary Snyder—all of whom are internationally renowned Buddhist leaders who preach pro-environmental messages of preserving all life. Yet, unlike the humanistic Buddhist groups in this study, those famous leaders have not organized their followers into teams that go out to serve the community and work practically to preserve all life.

The collective identities of family members and classmates for the believers in Tzu Chi and Dharma Drum Mountain facilitate teamwork, and the teamwork of the groups' volunteers enables the groups to positively impact their communities in ways that other religious groups do not. Tzu Chi and DDM impacts are compounded because both groups are international in their scope, and all their chapters have such teams that look outward to serve their local communities. If the altar guilds and service cohorts of all America's religious groups could shift part of their focus from caring for other members of their own congregations to caring for all the people and living things on the piece of our planet in their hyperlocal spaces, the world would become a dramatically better place.

It would, however, most likely require a conscious effort on the part of each group's leadership to shift the social ties of the group from bonding inward to bridging outward (c. f. Putnam and Goss 2002). Each religious leader would have to follow the examples of Master Cheng Yen and Master Sheng Yen to seek out and highlight the particular doctrines of their faith

that best encourage sustainable lifestyles. They would also have to develop new, more environmentally friendly faith practices, and lay out specific pro-environmental behavioral norms for their believers. All these would need to be integrated into the framework of their specific religious forms, so that believers would see these changes as a logical update to their faith in the face of earth's looming environmental disaster.

In addition to updating religious teachings, practices, and behavioral norms within the symbolic system of their respective faiths, religious leaders can also learn from Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain how to tie their message into the discourse systems of the populations around them. If they can frame their message in discourse and symbols that resonate with their neighbors, who are not members of their groups, they can increase their impact for good. This may require a shift in attitude on the part of the religious leaders, as they will need to listen to the concerns of their neighbors and not just pontificate at them.

The example of Taiwan and its humanistic Buddhists gives hope. Thirty years ago, Taiwan was a "garbage island," nearly buried under a smoldering pile of refuse. Taiwan's society pulled together under the combined leadership of secular grassroots organizations and the Buddhist organizations in my study. They educated the public and forced the government to implement change. By canonizing pro-environmental lifestyles into their faith doctrines and practices, the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Dharma Drum Mountain have produced a core mass of the population who continue to cultivate themselves in ways that are beneficial to the earth. Both groups keep expanding the scope of their practices and behavioral norms related to protecting the natural environment, so that what began as a push for recycling now includes green religious rituals, green religious buildings, vegetarianism, reducing consumption, taking public transportation, reducing waste, conserving water, and avoiding single-use plastic items.

The sacred mandate for these behaviors helps the believers maintain these lifestyles, even today, when the original strain of garbage mountains has been replaced by global warming.

Appendix A

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation Flyer of Environmental Teachings (2017)



Figure 2: Tzu Chi’s 2017 Environmental Flyer Side A

The 2017 summary of Tzu Chi’s teachings on environmentalism can be found on the Foundation’s latest comprehensive environmental flyer, which is a two-sided sheet of size A4 paper (see Figures 2 and 3). It is meant to be folded in half to show four different pages. The first half page tells the purpose of and need for the organization’s environmental mission. It has two banner lines that read: “Let us leave a clean planet to our children,” and “We cannot leave environmental catastrophes to the next generation.” The top part of the page tells people that they will be reading a trilogy of love for the Earth, which consists of 1) knowing the danger to the Earth; 2) practicing recycling and reducing consumption to save the Earth; 3) practicing environmentalism of the mind and heart by living a low-carbon lifestyle with a purified heart.

The beginning section also includes exhortations by Master Cheng Yen that everyone must have the same “general knowledge, common consensus, and coordinated actions to save the planet.” She asks people to always carry out three good practices and speak three good intentions. The three good practices are to speak blessings, do good deeds, and have good hearts. The three good intentions are to purify one’s heart, be a good citizen, and to pray that the earth would be free of disasters.

The bottom of the first half-page gives ten points of knowledge about the dangers to the Earth from climate change: 1) heat waves on land masses, 2) droughts on land masses, 3) strong winds on land masses, 4) heavy rains on land masses, 5) lack of potable water on land masses, 6) lack of food on land masses, 7) rising sea levels, 8) increased air pollution, 9) changes in biospheres, 10) increased danger of epidemic diseases. On the second half of the first side of the flyer, there are two more sections of ten points each to complete the trilogy. The top section talks about recycling to save the planet. It first stresses the “Five R’s”: Refuse (do not buy it), Reduce (use less), Reuse, Repair, and Recycle (recycling is the last choice.) Then, it gives the mnemonic device for the ten different sorting areas found at Tzu Chi recycling stations (Lee and Han 2015: 321). The bottom part of the page gives ten suggestions for living a clean, simple lifestyle: Food—eat vegetarian food and carry your own eating utensils; Clothes—only buy what you need, not what you want; Housing—conserve water and electricity; Transportation—walk, ride a bike, or take public transportation whenever possible; Education—keep learning and maturing; Entertainment—helping others gives the greatest joy; Two Top Virtues—doing good and practicing filial piety; Four Secrets to Being Happy—Be satisfied with what you have, Be thankful, Be understanding of others, and Be inclusive; “A big heart is better than a big house”; and “Action is the best commitment.” The entire “trilogy” concludes with a quote from Master

Cheng Yen encouraging people to consume vegetarian foods until they are 80% satisfied and to use the money saved by consuming less to help the poor.



Figure 3: Tzu Chi's 2017 Environmental Flyer Side B

The second side of the flyer is divided into a half-page on conserving water and a half-page on eating a vegetarian diet to save the planet. Both half pages give scientific facts that are simply stated to help people understand the need to change their habits with respect to water and food. The half-page on water shows how only 1/1000th of the Earth's water is potable. It also gives facts about the amount of water used in slaughterhouses and meat-packing plants, providing further evidence of the need to adopt vegetarianism. The half-page on vegetarianism gives scientific facts about how vegetarianism can help mitigate global warming, as well as improving one's health, and it encourages people to participate in Earth Ethical Eating Day by eating no meat on January 11 of every year.

These flyers are posted at all the Tzu Chi Recycling and Environmental Education Centers, including the recycling huts at the Abode of Still Thoughts—the organization’s headquarters. Tzu Chi volunteers are trained about basic facts on environmentalism with the flyers, and they are trained to use the flyers to educate others in their communities. In general, Tzu Chi has distilled much scientific information, combining it with Buddhist ethics and practical lifestyle tips, to construct its teachings on preserving the environment. The environmental flyers were designed to make all the information accessible to people of all ages, including elementary school students and elderly individuals without too much schooling. Tzu Chi is using the flyers to change its image with respect to environmentalism because most people think that recycling is the organization’s only environmental activity. Now, Tzu Chi volunteers are working to promote vegetarianism, water conservation, and low-carbon lifestyles, as they attempt to save the planet from the disaster of climate change (field notes 2017).

Appendix B

Karma-Creating Gifts



Figure 4: Devotional Cards with Buddhist Aphorisms, Decorative Objects that say “Happiness” (left) and “Blessings and Wisdom” (right), and Booklet of Buddhist Aphorisms from the Teachings of Master Cheng Yen



Figure 5: Books from Focus Group Members with their Own Stories that Emphasize the Benefits of Service to Humanity



Figure 6: Funeral Memorial Booklet Commemorating the Life Story of the Interviewee's Mother and her Service to Buddhism and her Family



Figure 7: Books from Interviewees—Vegan Cookbooks Made by Volunteers entitled *The Blessed Kitchen* (left) and *Simple, Heart-felt Vegetarianism* (right)



Figure 8: Digital Chant Machine for Learning Funeral Chants



Figure 9: Gifts from Happy Buddhist Studies Class and Lecture on Dharma Drum Mountain's History—108 Buddhist aphorisms drawn from the teachings of Master Sheng Yen and a bookmark with Buddhist aphorisms



Figure 10: Weekly Gifts from Chan Meditation Class—books with pointers on how to practice meditation



Figure 11: Gift from Dharma Drum Mountain Lecture—a small notebook for recording one's thoughts



Figure 12: Receiving Gifts from the Nun Teaching the Class



Figure 13: Receiving my Prize at the Tzu Chi Community Tea



Figure 14: Sutra of Infinite Meanings from Master Cheng Yen



Figure 15: Hand-Assembled Lunar New Year Card from Nuns at Tzu Chi's Abode of Still Thoughts, Wishing the Recipient Blessings and Wisdom Year after Year

Appendix C

URLs of News Websites with Reporting from 2015 Media Scandal Related to Tzu Chi's Neihu Recycling Center in Taipei

<http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/business/paper/863301>

<http://news.ltn.com.tw/index.php/news/politics/breakingnews/1241713>

<http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/1242241>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpmKRei2I3I>

Appendix D

Glossary of Buddhist and *Chinese* Terms

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Chinese Characters</u>
Arhat	an enlightened being on an individual level who does not choose to save the world	羅漢
<i>Bai</i>	venerate or show respect	拜
Bodhi	enlightenment	菩提
Bodhisattva	an enlightened being postponing Buddhahood to save the world	菩薩
<i>Cai</i>	literary talent (male virtue)	才
<i>De</i>	morality (female virtue)	德
Dharanis	Buddhist chants	咒語
Dharma	Buddhist teachings and their practice	法
<i>Fahui</i>	dharma gathering ritual	法會
<i>Faxi</i>	dharma joy (religious ecstasy)	法喜
<i>Ganqing</i>	emotions or warm feelings	感情
<i>Guanxi</i>	relationship (organizational system and logic of traditional Chinese society)	關係
<i>Li</i>	etiquette, rituals	禮
<i>Lun</i>	ethics	倫
<i>Qizhi</i>	cultivation, refinement of manner	氣質
<i>Ren</i>	humaneness	仁
<i>Renqing</i>	human feeling, affection	人情
Samsara	the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth	輪迴

<i>Sangha</i>	the collectivity of Buddhist monastics	僧團
<i>Taishen</i>	god of the placenta	胎神
<i>Wulun</i>	the five main ethical relationships in Confucian thought	五倫
<i>Xiao</i>	filial piety	孝
<i>Yu lun</i>	public scolding	輿論
<i>Zhaijiao</i>	Taiwanese folk religion that practices vegetarianism	齋教

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