THE POLITICS OF BUDDHIST ORGANIZATIONS IN TAIWAN, 1989-1997

by

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Date **1st OCTOBER 1999**
This dissertation looks at the political behavior of three Taiwanese Buddhist organizations since 1989: the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (BAROC), the Buddha Light Mountain monastic order (or Foguangshan) and the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Association (or Ciji). It concentrates on trying to understand the rationale behind the different strategies that each of them has adopted in its interaction with the government. The BAROC has adopted a strategy of lobbying in an attempt to remedy the steady decline of its status throughout the 1990s: it has tried to sway the government to adopt a law that would restore the authority over Buddhists the association held before 1989. Foguangshan has resorted to a strategy of remonstrance to advance its religious ideals between 1995 and 1997: its founder Xingyun supported the bid of his lay disciple Chen Lü’an for the presidency of the Republic of China (ROC) and launched large public demonstrations critical of the government that followed that election. During the same period of time, Ciji has steered away from the controversies over the law on religion and conspicuously avoided supporting Chen, while continuing to grow to become the largest organization of its kind in Taiwan. The theological views of the three organizations’ leaders are examined as key factors explaining the rationale behind the political strategies these organizations have adopted. Other factors such as availability of material resources, lay support, congruence between leaders and their followers on the dimension of ethnicity and gender are explored as possible sources of constraints on the leaders.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AACL</td>
<td>Asian anti-Communist League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAC</td>
<td>Buddhist Association of China, Beijing, 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAROC</td>
<td>Buddhist Association of the Republic of China, Shanghai, 1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCA</td>
<td>Bureau for Civil Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BFA</td>
<td>Buddhist Federation of Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLIA</td>
<td>Buddha Light International Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSA</td>
<td>Bureau for Social Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BYA</td>
<td>Buddhist Youth Association of the ROC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBA</td>
<td>Chinese Buddhist Association, Nanjing, 1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBAPS</td>
<td>Chinese Buddhist Association for the Protection of the Sangha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBLA</td>
<td>Chinese Buddhist Lay Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBLPS</td>
<td>Chinese Buddhist Lay Proselytizing Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBSA</td>
<td>Chinese Buddhist Sangha Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBTA</td>
<td>Chinese Buddhist Temple Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Central Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCP</td>
<td>Chinese Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>Council for Labor Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>Commission for Social Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSC</td>
<td>Central Standing Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOH</td>
<td>Department of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPP</td>
<td>Democratic Progressive Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPRK</td>
<td>Democratic People’s Republic of Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRV</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Vietnam</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIO</td>
<td>Government Information Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBPS</td>
<td>International Buddhist Progress Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>KMT</td>
<td>Kuomintang, Nationalist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KWP</td>
<td>Korean Workers’ Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MND</td>
<td>Ministry of National Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>Ministry of Interior</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTAC</td>
<td>Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCSE</td>
<td>National Commission on Science and Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>NLF</td>
<td>National Liberation Front</td>
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<td>NP</td>
<td>New Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCAC</td>
<td>Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OWC</td>
<td>Organization Work Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People's Republic of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROC</td>
<td>Republic of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROK</td>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSBA</td>
<td>South Sea Buddhist Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAIP</td>
<td>Taiwanese Independence Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPBA</td>
<td>Taiwan Province Buddhist Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCP</td>
<td>Vietnamese Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WBSC</td>
<td>World Buddhist Sangha Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>YMBA</td>
<td>Young Men Buddhist Association</td>
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Chapter One

THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF TAIWANESE BUDDHIST ORGANIZATIONS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

The political participation of religious organizations of different denominations and in different cultures is a major phenomenon in contemporary global politics.¹ Although we are

starting to understand the politics of religious organizations identified with Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism around the world, we know much less about the politics of religious organizations in the Chinese cultural area, especially those that are not identified with Christianity or Islam. This thesis attempts to augment our knowledge of this relatively unexplored topic by looking into the multifarious involvement of Buddhist organizations in the politics of a society that is unquestionably part of the Chinese cultural area, the Republic of China (ROC) established in Taiwan. In particular, it examines the factors that can best explain the variations observed in the range of political behaviors adopted by these organizations. The quietism of these organizations has long contrasted


4 Taiwan and the Republic of China (ROC) are used interchangeably in this dissertation.
with the boldness of the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church, which has been calling for the
islanders’ right of self-determination for more than two decades. During the presidential
election of 1996, however, Ven. Xingyun [Xingyun Fashi 星雲法師] the leader of a well-
known Taiwanese Buddhist organization, the Buddha Light Mountain monastic order
[Foguangshan Si 佛光山寺] (hereafter Foguangshan), broke ranks with his co-religionists’
previous practice, when he publicly endorsed a candidate from the opposition, Chen Lü’an
陳履安. One year later, Xingyun joined a campaign pushing for the removal of then-
Premier Lian Zhan 連戰. Since then, the interplay of Buddhism with politics in Taiwan
has not been limited to supporting government policy.

This does not mean, however, that a Buddhist political alternative to the Kuomintang
[Guomindang 國民黨], (KMT) or the Democratic Progressive Party [Minjindang 民進
黨](DPP) comparable to Christian Democracy is emerging in Taiwan. There is no
organization that can claim credibly to represent the views of most Taiwanese Buddhists.

Furthermore, the many Buddhist organizations found in Taiwan adopt a wide range of

5 On European Christian Democracy, see Kees van Kersbergen, Social Capitalism: A Study of Christian
Democracy and the Welfare State (London: Routledge, 1995); and the contributions to David Hanley, ed.,
The Christian Democratic Parties: A Comparative Perspective (London: Pinter, 1994). About the diversity
within Christian-Democracy in Latin America, see Edward A. Lynch, Latin America’s Christian Democratic
Parties: A Political Economy (New York: Praeger, 1993); Religion and Politics in Latin America:
behaviors that makes it difficult to determine on which grounds an eventual consensus could emerge. Their behaviors range from indifference to politics, as is the case with the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Association [*Ciji Gongdehui* 慈濟功德會] (hereafter Ciji), to cooperation with the government, as is usually the case with the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China [*Zhongguo Fojiaohui* 中國佛教會] (BAROC), to political opposition, as demonstrated by Foguangshan. The inability of Taiwanese Buddhists to constitute so far a viable alternative to the current government was made clear in 1996, when both the BAROC and Ciji refused to endorse the candidacy of Chen Lü’an for the ROC presidency.

This dissertation seeks to identify the factors that might explain the differences in the political behaviors these organizations adopt. It questions macro explanations according to which Buddhist theology, East Asian political culture or state policies can determine the political behavior of Buddhist organizations in Taiwan. These explanations fail in particular to shed light on the different ways these organizations get involved in politics, not only in different countries, but even within a single polity. In order to explain the

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variations that are observed in the political behavior of Taiwanese Buddhist organizations, this thesis focuses on organizational characteristics, exploring whether the views of organizations' leaders or the nature of their membership are more important.

Buddhist Organizations and Politics in Contemporary Taiwan

The relative importance of Buddhism among religions in Taiwan and the favorable political conditions that currently prevail in the ROC after a decade of democratization provide Taiwanese Buddhist organizations the opportunity for direct or indirect political involvement. Most Buddhist groups, however, do not behave like the Presbyterian Church and the other civic organizations on the island that have pressured the authorities for political and social reform. Even when their corporate interests are challenged by state actions, most Taiwanese Buddhist organizations are not very assertive. They tend to get involved in the political process only sporadically or to withdraw entirely from public debates. Some important exceptions to that rule, however, have emerged in the 1990s.
Organizations such as Foguangshan and individuals such as Xingyun have started to take advantage of political liberalization to mobilize Buddhists. This new phenomenon indicates that Taiwanese Buddhists are not always apolitical and that some of them do not uncritically support the government. A look at the place occupied by Buddhist institutions in contemporary Taiwanese society helps to illuminate the importance of these recent trends.

**Buddhism in contemporary Taiwan**

Buddhism in Taiwan is undergoing a remarkable revival. Prominent members of the Sangha (Sengjia 僧伽), the ecclesiastical community within Taiwanese Buddhism, are media icons with the same visibility as pop stars. Bookstores display a plethora of titles on Buddhist studies; one television channel is devoted entirely to the broadcast of lectures.

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6 "Fojiao Fuxing yu Taiwan Sushi 佛教復興與台灣俗世 [Buddhist Renaissance and the Secularization of Taiwan]," Zhongguo Shibao 中國時報 [China Times], September 27, 1995, 11; "Fojiao Faguang Fare Zai Taiwan 佛教發光發熱在台灣 [Buddhism Thrives in Taiwan]," Lianhebao 聯合報 [United Daily News], June 6, 1995, 34; Eugenia Yun, "Religious Renaissance," Free China Review, December 1994, 4-23.

7 The Sangha (or Samgha) in Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit languages, means “multitude” or “assemblage.” In the wider sense, it consists in four assemblies: monks [Skt., bhiksu], nuns [bhiksuni], male lay followers [upasaka], and female lay followers [upasika]. In this dissertation, I use the Sangha in its more restricted sense to designate only monks and nuns. See Heinz Bechert, “The Buddhist Sangha,” in Buddhism in Asian History, eds. Joseph M. Kitagawa and Mark D. Cummings (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 289-296. In Taiwan, bhiksu [biqiu 比丘] and bhiksuni [biqiuni 比丘尼] are known as “those who leaves the home [chujia 出家],” and lay people are simply known as those who remain at home [jushi 居士].
by several Buddhist Masters; huge temples have been built throughout the country. In 1992, according to statistics issued by the Interior Ministry, 48% of the population that claimed to believe in one or more religions identified themselves as Buddhists.\(^8\)

The reliability of these figures is routinely questioned on the grounds that self-declared Buddhists are not necessarily considered genuine adherents of the faith by clerics and scholars.\(^9\) Nonetheless, these numbers are highly significant in one respect, especially when they are compared with figures from scientific surveys using more rigorous methods.

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\(^9\) Many of the practices observed by self-declared Buddhists could appropriately be described as belonging to the realm of “folk religion or beliefs [minjian zongjiao 民間宗教 or xinyang 信仰],” This study adopts a more inclusive definition of Buddhism, and therefore considers as adherents of Buddhism people who may be considered by sociologists as adherents of popular religions. This choice is made on the grounds that many of the people who support the Buddhist organizations examined in this study financially, or otherwise, may not always be Buddhists in the more narrow sense.

The results of a study done by sociologists Zhang Maogui 張茂桂 and Lin Benxuan 林本炫 gives us an indication of the difficulties inherent to the collection of statistics on religion in Taiwan. Zhang and Lin note that 38.6% of their representative sample of the Taiwanese population say that they “believe [xin 信]” in Buddhism, and that an additional 16.8% of their sample, who say that they “don’t believe in any religion [wuxinjiao 無信教],” nonetheless “believe in the existence of some supernatural forces [xinshen 信神],” which they define as belonging to the Buddhist pantheon. See “Zongjiao de Shehui Yixiang: Yige Zhishi Shehuixue de Geti 宗教的社會意義: 一個知識社會學的課題 [The Social Representation of Religion: A Question for the Sociology of Knowledge],” Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Minzu Xue Yanjiusuo Jikan 中央研究院民族學研究所集刊 [Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica] 74 (Autumn 1992), 102.
definitions of belief in Buddhism and practice of the religion. Investigations carried out in the late 1980s by Academia Sinica sociologist Qu Haiyuan 翟海源, about observance of Buddhist beliefs and practices, for example, suggested that only between 7 and 15% of the Taiwanese population could be considered “real Buddhist devotees.” The enormous discrepancy between these numbers suggests that the label “Buddhism” is prestigious in Taiwan. In other words, relatively few people actually practice Buddhism but many profess belief. Some observers of religion in Taiwan argue that the stature of Buddhism as a transnational ethical system, in contrast to “superstitions (mixin 迷信),” and its roots in Asia, in contrast to “Western” Christianity, are central parts of people’s growing appreciation of the religion. 

Other figures help provide an idea about the importance of Buddhism in Taiwan. For example, statistics about the distribution of temples in the country combined with

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10 From “Taiwan Diqu Minzhong de Zongjiao Xinyang yu Zongjiao Taidu 台灣地區民族的宗教信仰與宗教態度 [Religious Beliefs and Religious Attitudes in the Taiwan Area],” in Taiwan Bianqianzhong de Shehui 台灣變遷中的社會 [Taiwan Society in Transition], eds. Yang Guoshu 楊國福 and Qu Haiyuan (Taipei: Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Minzuxue Yanjiusuo, 1988). See also Yang Guoshu and Qu Haiyuan, “Taiwan Diqu Shehui Bianqian Jiben Tiaocha Diyiqi 第一期 [First Survey on Social Change in the Taiwan Area]” (Taipei, Guokehui Weituo Yanjiu Jihua 國科會委託研究計畫 [National Science Council, Research Planning Commission], 1984); Qu Haiyuan, “Taiwan Diqu Shehui Bianqian Jiben Tiaocha Di'erqi 第二期 [Second Survey on Social Change in the Taiwan Area]” (Taipei, Guokehui Weituo Yanju Jihua, 1990).
demographic data indicate that Buddhism is practiced all around the country. In 1995, the ROC government noted that Buddhists had registered about 4,000 temples and a clergy of more than 9,000. In the domain of education, they administered twenty-four seminaries, two universities, two colleges, eight high schools and seventy kindergartens. In the area of social services, they operated ten nurseries and five orphanages. In the realm of health care, they owned fifty retirement homes, seven hospitals, and three clinics. Finally, in the area of culture, they administered forty-eight publishing houses.

The associations (hui 会), foundations (jijinhui 基金会), societies (xiehui 协会) and research institutes (xuehui 学会) that claim to represent the Buddhist tradition in Taiwan possess considerable resources and exercise significant influence in society. That influence, however, seldom goes as far as intervention in politics by Taiwanese Buddhist organizations. Most of them are engaged in proselytizing activities and charity work, and there are no associations in Taiwan comparable to the Japanese Soka Gakkai (Society for the Creation of Value) and its political arm, the Buddhist political party Komeito (the Party

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12 Zhonghua Minguo, Neizhengbu, Minzhengsi, Zongjiao Jianjie, 563-566.
When members of the Sangha seek to demonstrate their opposition to specific policies, most of them prefer to use informal means to influence the government. Whenever Buddhist leaders, whether clerical or lay, want to promote Buddhist interests, they do not mobilize their followers, but rather make representations to members of the executive, legislators, or civil servants in meetings or conferences. On these occasions, representatives of Buddhist organizations inform government officials about their concerns, and, as the chapter on the BAROC documents, may push for the adoption of laws serving their interests.

Many other Buddhist organizations, however, go further than avoiding open confrontation with the government by encouraging abstention from political participation altogether. They may even refuse to endorse any politician, even a respected lay Buddhist, as was the case when Ciji refused in 1996 to support Chen Lü’an for the ROC presidency. These organizations not only refuse to sponsor any opposition, but they also want to avoid giving the impression that they sanction the government. In sum, even though Buddhists

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are numerous and organized enough to be politically assertive, most of their leaders behave cautiously: they either cooperate with the government or profess indifference to politics.

Recently, however, a third trend has emerged, as some Buddhist leaders have become critical of government policies and have been willing to express publicly their disagreements with state officials. As previously mentioned, Xingyun, although a member of the KMT Central Committee, openly supported in 1996 the candidacy of a politician belonging to the party's non-mainstream faction for the presidency of the ROC.

As will be documented in chapter four, Xingyun and the organizations he has founded have since repeatedly adopted forms of political behavior and attitude that are more assertive than those preferred by the leaders of the BAROC and Ciji.

The political environment of Taiwan

The current political attitudes of Buddhist organizations need to be put in the context of the more open environment in which they can articulate their own sets of concerns.

Until 1986, the ROC was under the regime of martial law, and political participation by actors outside of the KMT was repressed by a security apparatus that arrested, tried,
imprisoned and even executed individuals who were considered threats to the regime.¹⁵

Under its corporatist structure of governance, the ruling party also extended its control over different sectors of society by influencing the choice of leadership and providing financial support to key strategic organizations in business, labor and finance.¹⁶ In 1970, the Defense Ministry went further and issued a decree enlarging the powers of the Garrison Command, the organ charged with the implementation of martial law, to restrict civil rights, including the right to practice religion.¹⁷ As the next chapter will document in greater detail, a combination of other factors also dampened the political participation of Buddhist organizations when Taiwan was under martial law. The point to note is that independent political participation outside of the KMT until the 1980s was severely restrained, and criticism of the regime by the Sangha, let alone the emergence of a Buddhist political party, was fraught with enormous difficulties.

¹⁵ Although martial law was abolished in 1986, a few individuals were arrested on charges of sedition for advocating an independent Republic of Taiwan, until the revision of the Article 100 in 1992 ended that practice. See Linda Chao and Ramon H. Myers, The First Chinese Democracy: Political Life in the Republic of China on Taiwan (Baltimore: the John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 52-56; 224-226.
¹⁷ Ibid., 111.
Buddhist organizations no longer face such limitations in the current climate of democratization in Taiwan: as of 1996, 82 political parties have been registered in Taiwan.\(^{18}\)

Opportunities currently available to Buddhist organizations are the result of decades of effort by a few KMT liberals and many independent activists, who, despite government repression, pushed for more accountability from authorities. Thomas B. Gold has counted close to 2,900 demonstrations between 1983 and 1988 by social movements for a large variety of causes, from opposition to the building of a dioxide plant near the traditional city of Lugang 鹿港, to rallies for the rights of teachers.\(^{19}\) Movements for environmental protection, women, workers, aboriginal people, and veterans' rights, anti-nuclear activism, and the removal of partisan (read KMT) influence on the school curriculum have proliferated since the lifting of martial law.\(^{20}\)


\(^{19}\) “Civil Society and Taiwan's Quest for Identity,” in *Cultural Change in Postwar Taiwan*, ed. Stevan Harrell and Huang Chun-chieh (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 47-68. Hung-mao Tien indicated that during the 1970s, despite the regime of martial law, the KMT allowed a considerable number of interest groups to emerge. In 1987, the ROC had a total of 11,306 civic organizations. Of these, the 302 farmers associations, fifteen irrigation associations, over 2,300 trade unions and 1,799 associations involved in commerce and industry were quasi-government associations having close relations with the government. A “thousand” of professional associations and public interest groups; as well as the 80 religious associations registered in 1985, operated with minimum intervention from the government. See *The Great Transition*, 45-54.

\(^{20}\) For a survey of these movements, see Xu Zhengguang 徐正光 and Song Wenli 宋文里, eds., *Taiwan Xinxiang Shehui Yundong* 台灣新興社會運動 [Newly Emerging Social Movements in Taiwan] (Taipei: Juliu 巨流, 1994).
Buddhist organizations, however, do not figure as leaders in these movements.

Taiwanese Buddhists lack an alternative program on domestic issues on which they could
build an organization distinguishing them from the KMT and the DPP. Even though
most of them pose as impartial bystanders in the central debate of ROC politics between
partisans of Taiwanese independence and supporters of reunification with China, they do
not agree among themselves on many other issues. This emerged clearly in 1995-1996,
when the lay Buddhist candidate Chen Lü’an ran for the ROC presidency but failed to gain
the endorsement of many prominent Buddhist organizations in the country. These
divisions surfaced again when the BAROC proposed a law on Buddhism in 1996 against
the wishes of most Taiwanese Buddhist organizations.

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21 It is clear that the extreme positions of Taiwanese independence and reunification with China, represented respectively by the Jianguodang 建國黨 [the Taiwanese Independence Party] (TAIP) and the Xin Dang 新黨 [the New Party] (NP), have been relegated to the margins of politics. Meanwhile, the centrist factions of the two major parties, the KMT’s zhuliupai 主流派 (mainstream faction, led by President Lee Teng-hui 李登輝) and the DPP’s Meilidao paixi 美麗島派系 (Formosa faction, led by Xu Xinliang 許信良), are converging ideologically in order to gain the votes of a majority. See Chu Yun-han and Lin Tse-min, “The Process of Democratic Consolidation in Taiwan: Social Cleavage, Electoral Competition, and the Emerging Party System,” in Taiwan’s Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition: Riding the Third Wave, ed. Hung-
Defining political participation

At this point, it is important to clarify the dependent variable of this study, the political participation of Taiwanese Buddhist organizations. The political behavior of religious organizations can take extreme forms, ranging from quietist withdrawal from politics, on the one hand, to the waging of "holy war" for the establishment of a "purified" polity, on the other hand.22 Taiwanese Buddhist organizations during the 1990s have displayed behaviors ranging from the more quietist at one end of the spectrum to moderate at the other, and none has adopted an attitude that can be described as militant. Therefore, the findings of this thesis do not relate directly to the growing body of literature dealing with fundamentalism, religious nationalism, and other radical movements based on religious values.23

George Moyser has indicated nine ways in which religious organizations, as institutionalized pressure groups, can get involved in politics. They can address their concerns to the executive, lobby the legislature, rely on the judiciary, use links with

22 On the extremist potential of religion in all traditions, see Gunther Lewy, Religion and Revolution (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).
23 Mark Juergensmeyer, The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). For case studies from almost all cultures, see the contributions to
political parties, join with other pressure groups, sensitize public opinion through the media, mobilize their adherents, sponsor their leader for government position, or form religiously-inspired political parties. The leaders of the BAROC, Ciji and Fguangshan have all, to some degree, used their personal connections with members of the executive and legislators to gain a hearing. Their relations with political parties remain limited to the KMT, and none of the three organizations, in contrast with the Presbyterian Church, has any known links with the DPP. The organizations examined in this study do not seek the help of the courts to address issues of concern to them.

However, similarities in the political behavior of the three Taiwanese Buddhist organizations examined in this dissertation stop there. Fguangshan and Ciji rely much more than the BAROC on the media to sensitize public opinion to their views. Only Fguangshan has demonstrated its willingness to join ranks with other pressure groups and to mobilize its adherents politically. Although it did not sponsor its founder Xingyun for government position, Fguangshan came close by supporting one of his lay disciples for the presidency of the ROC. Ciji stands out from both the BAROC and Fguangshan in

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adopting a critical stance towards political participation by its members. Although none of the three organizations has formed a religiously inspired political party, the situation of Foguangshan and Ciji, on one hand, differs remarkably from that of the BAROC, on the other. In terms of resources, the organizations established by Xingyun and Ven. Zhengyan both have the potential to establish political parties, but the BAROC lacks this capacity, even though it occupied before 1989 a more favorable position than that of other organizations in Taiwanese politics. What are the factors explaining these differences?

Explaining the Political Participation of Buddhists

This section examines three explanations often advanced for the attitude of Buddhists, both in Taiwan and elsewhere, towards politics. Although each of these explanations sheds light on particular aspects of Buddhist political behavior, none of them is fully adequate. First is the argument that Buddhists are not likely to become involved in
politics because of their theology, which is based on the central tenet that the world is impermanent and does not value this-worldly matters. Second are the culturalist claims that in countries influenced by Confucianism, only a small political elite participates, and that Buddhists are unlikely to become involved in politics. Third is the argument that the religious policy of the government determines the political participation of Buddhist organizations. In evaluating these arguments, I employ a comparative perspective describing data on the behavior of Buddhist organizations elsewhere in Asia.

The implication of theology

There exists a widespread perception that Buddhists do not concern themselves with worldly matters and that they have no interest in politics. Buddhist religious organizations, with the exception of Tibetan Buddhists to be sure, do not generate the kind of media attention that is granted to Islamist movements, Hindu nationalists, or American Evangelists. Donald Eugene Smith, in his study about the political implications of religion in South Asia, has proposed an explanation for the relatively apolitical behavior on

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25 This perception derives from one of the central tenets of Buddhism, according to which the self is illusion. On the implication of this belief for the notion of human rights, see the contributions to Buddhism and Human
the part of Buddhists. The only factor within Buddhism that could facilitate the political mobilization of the laity, he indicates, is the organizational capacity of the ecclesiastical order. He argues that a lack of concern for history, religious tolerance, and a theological tradition emphasizing the separation between religious and secular authority, however, do not provide Buddhists with enough incentives to become politically involved.

Furthermore, he notes that contrary to Islam and Hinduism, Buddhism has never developed an elaborate system of laws to regulate society. There is no equivalent to the *shari‘ah* (Islamic law) and Hindu law in Buddhism, and therefore no interest in using the state to enforce a religiously-sanctioned jurisprudence.²⁶

Evidence from countries where Buddhists are politically active suggests that Smith’s conclusion needs to be modified. Monks and lay members of the YMBA (Young Men’s Buddhist Association), for instance, provided early leaders with techniques and ideologies for anti-colonial resistance in Burma.²⁷ The political participation of Buddhist organizations in Sri Lanka during the first decade of independence has decisively shaped

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developments on the island. The involvement of Buddhists in politics can also take many forms within a single polity. For instance, even if the Sangha is closely associated with the governing elites in Thailand, where Buddhism is the state religion, this has not prevented the emergence of a movement of reformist monks who promote a program known as Dhammic socialism. This diversity certainly casts doubts on the argument that Buddhist theology predisposes its adherents to an indifference towards politics.

The above appears to suggest, as Stanley J. Tambiah points out, that there are no “unambiguous prescriptions nor value orientations […] from which can be deduced behavioral correlates that bear an intrinsic and inherent relation to the [Buddhist] religion […].” As Bruce Matthews indicates in his own work comparing Thailand and Burma, two countries sharing the same Theravada Buddhist tradition, the diversity of Buddhist

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29 Peter A. Jackson, Buddhism, Legitimation, and Conflict: The Political Functions of Urban Thai Buddhism (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia, 1989), 222-225.
31 World Conqueror and World Renouncer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 402.
responses points to the flexibility of the religion and its capacity to respond legitimately in
different ways to the challenges associated with change.32

A variant of Smith's perspective on the constraint of tradition on political
participation by religious organizations emphasizes differences between schools or
doctrines within Buddhism. For instance, Hajime Nakamura argues that the Mahayana
(Great Vehicle) tradition that prevails in East Asia is more likely to encourage intervention
in politics because historically, it has paid greater attention to social and political matters
than the Theravada tradition prevalent in Southeast Asia.33 When one observes the
activist movements in Thailand and Sri Lanka that belong to the Theravada tradition, the
analysis of Nakamura does not appear to explain contemporary Buddhist behavior.

Could the diversity of behavior among Buddhists in South and Southeast Asia be
attributed to the cultural diversity found in that part of the world? If culture matters, we
should expect to find similar patterns of political behavior among Buddhist organizations in
East Asia, since societies in that region share a common cultural heritage.

32 "Buddhist Attitudes Toward Social Change in Burma and Thailand," in Southeast Asia: Women, Changing
Social Structure and Cultural Continuity, Selected proceedings, Ninth Annual Conference Canadian Council
for South East Asian Studies, ed. Geoffrey B. Hainsworth (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1981), 135-
149.
33 "Mahayana Buddhism," in Buddhism and Asian History, 237-238.
The impact of culture

Taiwan shares many cultural traits with China, Japan, Vietnam and Korea, notably the legacy of the ethical teachings known as Confucianism. Peter Moody and others have made the case that this common Confucian heritage shapes political developments in ways that are specific to East Asia. Lucian W. Pye, in particular, has identified as the foundation of Confucian culture the view that the family provides the proper model of government, with the result that patriotism has a sacred dimension in East Asian countries. Critical to this discussion, however, is Pye’s point that contrary to what is observed in the Middle East and Western Europe, religion is not supposed to play an important role in the politics of countries influenced by Confucianism:

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34 In the context of this discussion, “China” means both the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the ROC, and “Korea” both the Republic of Korea (ROK), or South Korea, and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK).
36 Peter R. Moody believes that politics in the PRC and other socialist states are still inspired by the legacy of Confucianism. See *Political Opposition in Post-Confucian Society* (New York: Praeger, 1988). Lucian W. Pye, however, is much more ambiguous. See *Asian Powers and Politics: The Cultural Dimension of Authority* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985). Samuel P. Huntington agrees with Moody that the Confucian legacy is alive, but disagrees with him and Pye, on the grounds that he considers Japan as a civilization distinct from the Sinic civilization. He also notes, correctly, that the latter, which includes China, Vietnam and Korea, “is more than Confucianism.” See *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 45.
37 See *Asian Powers and Politics*, 61-62.
The Confucian principle that political power resided only in formal government [...] meant that religion did not generally provide an alternative center of power. [...] As a consequence of treating formal government as the only proper arena of political power, the Confucian cultures never experienced the clash between church and state that took place in Europe, nor did they extensively exploit religious mysticism in order to generate greater authority for their secular power holders, as was the case in South and Southeast Asia.  

To be sure, all East Asian societies have been influenced by Confucian ethics at some point in their history, and there was never anything comparable to the European Papacy of medieval times that in China could have exerted a political influence above the state. The presence of that legacy, however, does not necessarily lead to a lack of political participation on the part of Buddhist organizations. The historical record in China, as the next chapter will document, shows that the Sangha and Buddhist lay people were politically involved during the traditional period when Confucianism was the state ideology. In addition, despite the existence of a common Confucian legacy, Buddhists in Japan, Korea and Vietnam have approached politics differently since the nineteenth century. 

In colonial Vietnam, the attitude of Buddhists has been very different from that of their Chinese co-religionists of the late Qing period. Local movements of resistance to

38 Ibid., 88.
French colonialism were inspired by a heterodox Buddhist whose teachings would later motivate the creation of a major millenarian sect, the Hoa Hao.\(^39\) Active in the resistance against France after 1945, it joined forces with the Cao Dai against the National Liberation Front (NLF),\(^40\) and four of its members even joined the first cabinet of Ngo Dinh Diem in 1955.\(^41\) These former movements were admittedly different from mainstream Buddhism, but as the country experienced political division and foreign intervention, even monks belonging to more orthodox Buddhist schools became involved politically. Some of them were instrumental in the overthrow of the Diem regime and led demonstrations against the American intervention during the war of 1965-1973.\(^42\) Although these groups did not create any formal political parties, their dramatic demonstrations, through acts such as self-immolation, contrasted with the absence of similar gestures on the part of Chinese...

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\(^{42}\) Three Buddhist factions were engaged politically during that period. The most visible was led by monks affiliated with the An Quang pagoda, and was able to shore up and bring down governments in South Vietnam. The United Buddhist Church (UBC), close to the famous monk Thich Nhat Hanh, was opposed to the Saigon regimes and American intervention. A third group was not only opposed to the Saigon regimes, but was also openly pro-NLF. See Sallie B. King, “Thich Nhat Hanh and the Unified Church of Vietnam,” in *Engaged Buddhism*, 326.
Buddhists, who also experienced the circumstances of foreign intervention, national
division and dictatorship.

While Buddhists were involved in anti-colonial resistance and advocated a policy of
neutrality in Vietnam, their co-religionists on the Korean peninsula were not as active.
The attitude of Korean Buddhists can be compared to that of their Chinese co-religionists.
After the Japanese achieved control of the Korean peninsula in 1910 and attempted to
implant their own form of Buddhism, the Sangha did not react like their Vietnamese
counterparts and only a few monks participated in the Korean independence movement of
1919. This lack of political participation on the part of Buddhists contrasted markedly
with that of their Christian compatriots during and after the colonial period. In the ROK,
there is no record of Buddhist institutions opposing military regimes, as did some Christian
churches. South Korean Buddhists are likely to have passively supported the

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44 Wi Jo Kang, Religion and Politics in Korea Under Japanese Rule, Studies in Asian Thought and Religion
45 On the political activism of Christians in Korea since the nineteenth century and on both sides of the 38th
parallel, see Wi Jo Kang, Christ and Caesar in Modern Korea: A History of Christianity and Politics (Albany,
46 On the ambiguous attitude of Christian churches, see Kim Kwang-ok, “Rituals of Resistance,” in Asian
Visions of Authority: Religion and the Modern States of East and Southeast Asia, eds. Charles F. Keyes,
Laurel Kendall and Helen Hardacre, (Honolulu: University of Hawai Press, 1994), 204-207.
government because of its opposition to the atheist authorities of the DPRK.\textsuperscript{47} In the current climate of democratization, they have yet to get involved politically and remain divided by serious factional infighting.\textsuperscript{48}

In Japan, Buddhists became involved with political parties early on during the nineteenth century. In 1882, a Buddhist intellectual founded the Eastern Socialist Party; others joined pacifist movements and progressive circles.\textsuperscript{49} The most radical among these individuals, such as Takagi Kemmyo, worked at the turn of the century for the liberation of the \textit{Burakumin} (outcasts).\textsuperscript{50} A majority of Buddhists, however, leaned towards more conservative positions and adopted strategies of accommodation with the government in exchange for state protection of their institutions.\textsuperscript{51} The most important Buddhist movement involved in political activism in Japan remains the \textit{Soka Gakkai}, a major lay Buddhist organization founded in 1930 and persecuted for its refusal to collaborate with the

\textsuperscript{47} Korean Buddhists were certainly not on record as opponents of the military regime: after his successor Roh Tae Woo was inaugurated president in 1988, General Chun Doo Hwan took up residence in a Buddhist temple.
\textsuperscript{49} The most important of these movements, the New Buddhist Movement, was founded in 1894 and criticized the militarist policy of the government in 1909. Winston Davis, \textit{Japanese Religion and Society: Paradigms of Structure and Change} (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 168.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 169.
\textsuperscript{51} Brian A. Victoria documents that prominent Zen monks went even as far as condone the militarist regime. See \textit{Zen at War} (New York: Weatherhill, 1996).
militarist regime. In 1964, the Soka Gakkai sponsored the creation of the Komeito to promote a policy of pacifism and "humanistic socialism." In 1993, the party joined the government on the strength of the fifty-one seats it had won in the Diet (parliament), and four Komeito leaders, all Soka Gakkai members, served in the Hosokawa cabinet.

Although this government was short-lived, it demonstrated that many Buddhists were keen to join the mainstream of Japanese politics.

Can we attribute greater political participation by Buddhists in Japan to the fact that the indigenous culture of the latter is less permeated with Confucian influence; or, as the theorists of the Nihonjinron assert, does it reflect the exceptional nature of Japanese civilization? This argument could not apply to Vietnam, a country that has been deeply influenced by Confucian ethics and other aspects of Chinese civilization. Political

52 More exactly, the Soka Gakkai supported the war policy but refused to join the official Buddhist organization set up by the regime. The Soka Gakkai claimed in 1992 a membership of 8 million people. It is affiliated with the Nichiren Soshu sect, the only major native school of Japanese Buddhism. The Nichiren Soshu stands out among others for its concern about material welfare and the requirement that devotees must seek to convert others. That activist attitude, in turn, results from the teachings of the sect founder, Nichiren, a Japanese monk noted for his theological innovations and political activism in the thirteenth century. See Daniel A. Metraux, "The Soka Gakkai: Buddhism and the Creation of an Harmonious and Peaceful Society," in Engaged Buddhism, 366-367.

53 In 1970, after a controversy involving attempts to prevent the publication of a book critical of the Soka Gakkai, the Komeito formally split from the Soka Gakkai. However, both organizations remain very close. See Daniel A. Metraux, The Soka Gakkai Revolution, 49-56.


participation by Buddhist organizations, especially before the reunification of the country, was more important than in China or Korea. In sum, the variations in the behavior of Buddhist organizations in East Asia call into question the argument that Confucianism causes Buddhist organizations to be less politically assertive.

Another factor also limits the utility of Confucianism as an explanatory variable. This is the erosion of Confucianism itself, either through forced eradication, or through other, more benign, influences. That is, political processes of nation building, modernization and secularization that have been underway since the late nineteenth century accelerated throughout the region after the end of World War Two. They have culminated in the establishment of states that have sought to prevent the manifestation of traditional cultural characteristics, including those of Confucian ethics and Buddhist teachings. This suggests the need to examine a third possible explanation for the quietist political behavior of Buddhist organizations in Taiwan: the impact of government policies.
The relevance of state structure and state policy

The constitution of each country in East Asia since the end of World War Two proclaims that the state is secular, and, contrary to what has occurred in the Middle East or South Asia, none of the countries in the region has established a specific faith as the state religion. Since the revolutionary upheavals of the mid-Twentieth Century, however, important differences have emerged among East Asian states with respect to their policies towards religion. On the one hand, the PRC, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and the DPRK, as states governed by Marxist-Leninist parties, assert tight control over religious activities. On the other hand, the polities of Japan, the ROK and the ROC have all adopted constitutions enshrining freedom of conscience, making it legitimate for Buddhists to become involved politically.

56 For a comparative discussion on freedom of religion from a Taiwanese perspective, see Wu Yaofeng 吳堯峰, Zongjiao Fagui Shijiang 宗教與法規十講 [Ten Lectures on Religion and the Law], (Kaohsiung: Foguang Chubanshe 佛光出版社, 1992), 55-67. See also Don Baker, “World Religions and National States: Competing Claims in East Asia,” in Transnational Religions and Failed States, 144-172.
Buddhists in East Asian Marxist regimes

In Marxist countries, religious institutions are not only highly regulated, but they face governments whose ideologies are premised on the theory that religion is bound to disappear. The record of religious revival in countries that have emerged from the former Soviet Union shows that Marxist regimes have been unsuccessful at achieving that goal.57 Some partial evidence from the PRC suggests that this is even the case in countries where the communist party still rules.58 The fact remains, however, that as long as they rule, Marxist-Leninist parties have the ability to monitor and repress, if not entirely prevent, any political activity on the part of religious organizations. In China, the state seeks to restrict religious activity within the confines of five recognized religious organizations that are overseen by the Religious Affairs Bureau.59 In Vietnam, religious organizations have to

59 The Bureau is under the jurisdiction of the State Council of the National People’s Congress. The five organizations represents Chinese Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims, Protestant and Catholics. On religious policy in the PRC, see Luo Shufeng, Religion under Socialism in China, Chinese Studies on China, translated by Donald McInnis and Zheng Xi’an, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1991). This book suggests a more tolerant attitude towards religion is emerging in China, especially when its author argues that “believers and non-believers today march forward hand-in-hand along the road of four modernizations.” For a different look at the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) policy towards religion in the PRC pointing to the suppression of underground Catholics, cults, evangelists and “feudal superstitions,” as well as repression in Tibet and Xinjiang, see Human Rights Watch/Asia, China: State Control of Religion (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1997).
join officially sanctioned mass organizations such as the Vietnam Fatherland Front.\textsuperscript{60} In North Korea, the local variant of Marxist ideology, the \textit{Juche}, functions as a quasi-state religion that is even less tolerant of independent political activities on the part of religious organizations than the more orthodox brands of socialism practiced in China and Vietnam.\textsuperscript{61}

It is entirely reasonable to expect that in countries ruled by Marxist-Leninist parties, Buddhists would not attempt to participate in the politics of their country, even less to criticize government authorities. However, as evidence from contemporary China and Vietnam demonstrates, this is not always the case.

Since 1949, the activities of the Sangha and the laity in the PRC have been closely supervised. There is no evidence of dissident political activity on the part of Chinese Buddhists.\textsuperscript{62} This is understandable in light of what Buddhists have experienced in China


\textsuperscript{61} Evidence on the situation in North Korea is difficult to come by and whatever information is available results from testimony by North Koreans who have defected to South Korea. These informants claim that Shamanist practices are increasing and that attempts by the authorities to eliminate them have been unsuccessful insofar as many high ranking officials are said themselves to consult fortune-tellers. See Sung Chull Lim, Young Tai Jeung, Seung-yul Oh, Hun Kyung Lee and Gee Dong Lee, \textit{North Korea in Crisis: An Assessment of Regime Stability} (Seoul: Institute for National Unification, 1997), 100-101.

\textsuperscript{62} One exception, to be sure, is Tibetan Buddhism. Many monks belonging to that sect have been and remain very active politically. However, their involvement in Chinese politics should be put in perspective: altogether, adherents of that school of Buddhism (distinct from both the Mahayana and the Theravada schools) numbered 10 millions in 1990 (less than 1% of the PRC population), and among them, half are Mongols and are not involved in politics. Source: Colin Mackerras, Donald McMillen and Andrew Watson, \textit{Dictionary of the Politics of the People's Republic of China} (London: Routledge, 1998), 30.
over the last five decades.\(^63\) Even though the Sangha adopted early on a policy of collaboration with the CCP, this did not prevent monks, nuns and lay people from becoming targets of persecution during the Cultural Revolution. Members of the clergy, reports Holmes Welch, were humiliated and had to return to lay life, and lay people themselves had to worship in hiding. The activities of the Buddhist Association of China \([Zhongguo Fojiao Xiehui 中国佛教協會]\) (BAC), to quote the euphemism used then by Guo Moruo 郭沫若, were “in a state of suspension.”\(^64\) Although Deng Xiaoping 邓小平 allowed religious organizations to resume their activities in 1979, Buddhists have remained cautious in their politics. Their interventions are limited to issues that concern them directly, and about which they can speak more frankly. In 1992, for instance, Zhao Puchu 赵朴初, the BAC President, criticized party cadres who had adopted a “leftist” approach in the implementation of religious policy.\(^65\) However, it is difficult to conceive that the Chinese Sangha will represent a source of opposition to the regime in the foreseeable future.\(^66\)

\(^63\) The account of Holmes Welch on that issue may be dated, but it provides nonetheless an excellent background on the constraints faced by the Sangha in the PRC. See *Buddhism Under Mao* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972).

\(^64\) *Ibid.*, 362.


\(^66\) The most serious source of concern for the CPC in 1999 is the *Falungong* 法轮功 [also known as the *Falundafa* 法輪大法, and known in English as the Buddha Law]. Despite what its name suggests, this organization, which claims a membership of 100 million members, is not a Buddhist sect. Its scriptures
The Vietnamese Sangha is more restive than its Chinese counterpart. As Sallie B. King reports, after the reunification of Vietnam in 1975, South Vietnamese orthodox monks who were affiliated with the Unified Buddhist Church (UBC) sought to cooperate with the new regime. The heads of the UBC argued that they had been critical of the Saigon regime before reunification and therefore the regime had no reason to question their loyalty. The Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP), however, fearing challenges to its legitimacy, sought to suppress any Buddhist activity independent of the mass organizations it had previously brought under its authority. Consequently, after it achieved control in the Southern part of the country in 1975, the VCP banned all independent activities on the part of the UBC. It is all the more remarkable, however, that despite the persecutions they still endure, South Vietnamese dissident monks affiliated with the UBC, either in exile or under house arrest, continue to assert the right of their organization to resume its activities.

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make references to Buddhism, but also to Taoism and the specific teachings of its leader, Li Hongzhi 李洪志. See the organization's website, http://www.falundafa.org/.

68 Ibid., 356.
Korean Buddhists, politically inactive before the partition of the peninsula, did not get involved in anti-government activities in the DPRK after 1948. This is not surprising, in view of the fact that the current regime, guided by its quasi-religious *Juche* ideology, is even more determined than its Chinese and Vietnamese counterparts to prevent any form of political activism outside of the Korean Workers Party (KWP).  

The only possible outlet for political participation offered to North Korean Buddhists is membership in the national Buddhist Federation, an organization that is designed to win friends for the regime among co-religionists abroad.  

The silence of North Korean Buddhists regarding a regime that is clearly hostile to their values clearly confirms that the DPRK regime’s repression is effective. However, as discussed above, the quietist attitude of Korean Buddhists before the division of the Korean peninsula between the DPRK and ROK regimes suggest that other factors than the KWP policy should be considered. To sum up, the similarities in the religious policies and state structures of the Marxist-Leninist regimes of the PRC, DRV and

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70 For reference in the Korean language on the Buddhist Federation, see Don Baker, “World Religions and National States,” 170, fn 23.
DPRK, led to similar outcomes in the three countries. In these three cases, the political participation of Buddhists was limited to two options: supporting the regime or altogether avoiding any involvement in politics. State policy, however, does not represent a sufficient explanation because, in at least one instance, indifference to politics existed before the Marxist-Leninist regime was established.

*Buddhists in East Asian non-Marxist regimes*

Buddhists in Japan, the ROK and the ROC enjoy more opportunities for political participation than their co-religionists in the PRC, the DRV and the DPRK. No religion in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan receives preferential treatment from the government, and none of these three countries proclaims any faith as a state religion. That said, in all three countries, religious organizations must register as branches of one of the denominations officially recognized by government agencies if they want to operate legally.\(^1\)

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\(^1\) In Japan, every religious organization must register with an office of the Agency for Cultural Affairs within the Ministry of Education. Each South Korean religious organization must register with the appropriate bureau in the Ministry of Culture and Sports. Taiwanese religious organizations have to register with the Religion and Temples section of the Bureau for Civil Affairs and the Bureau for Social Affairs of the MOI. For the ways in which these agencies have at times limited the activities of indigenous religions, new religions or some international organizations, see Don Baker, "World Religions and National States," 152-156.
Between themselves, the ROC and the ROK have a few additional features in common. Both countries have experienced four decades of military dictatorship in which religious activities were constrained, despite the liberal provisions of their respective constitutions. It is only since the late 1980s that actual government practices in South Korea and Taiwan, as opposed to mere official religious policies, have come to parallel those of Japan. However, there remains one major difference between the religious policies of the ROK and the ROC, on the one hand, and those of Japan, on the other. The former two states have institutions that are unambiguously secular, while a divinely sanctioned head of state, the Tenno (the Emperor, literally Son of Heaven), represents the latter.\(^2\)

Do the similarities and differences between the Japanese, South Korean and Taiwanese states' religious policies correlate with certain patterns of behavior on the part of Buddhist organizations in these three countries? Political participation by Buddhists in Japan and South Korea has already been discussed above. The salient point to note is that

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Japanese Buddhists, especially those identified with the *Nichiren Soshu* sect, are more assertive than their co-religionists in the ROK. Buddhists in Taiwan are also more quietist than their Japanese counterparts, including the organizations that belong to the Taiwanese branch of the *Nichiren Soshu*, known in the ROC as the *Rilianjiao* 日蓮教. While it is possible that state policies towards religion in South Korea, Taiwan and Japan may cause differences in the behavior of Buddhist organizations, it is rather difficult to make this case here.

On the other hand, the fact that the political liberalization process in the latter two countries has occurred more recently than in Japan could perhaps explain the difference between the activist behavior of Buddhists in Japan, and that of their more quietist counterparts in the ROK and the ROC. This is especially true in Taiwan, where martial law was lifted only in 1987, six years after its abolition in the ROK. It is only recently that Taiwanese and South Korean Buddhists have benefited from the provisions of their

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73 When Taiwan was under martial law, the provincial police harassed Taiwanese Nichirenists on the basis of the Japanese Nichirenists affiliation to the *Soka Gakkai* and the *Komeito*. The KMT feared that the sect would take the same direction as its Japanese counterpart, but never found evidence of that intention. Today, the three Taiwanese Nichirenist organizations can operate legally in the ROC. See Ho Fang-jiau [He Fengjiao 何鳳姣], *Taiwan Sheng Jingwu Dang’an Huibian: Minsu Zongjiao Pian* 台灣省警務檔案彙編: 民意宗教篇 [Documentary Collection of Taiwan’s Police Administration: Folklore and Religion] (Hsintien [Xindian 新店], Taipei County: Academia Historica, 1996), 359-479. I am grateful to Philip Clart for pointing out this source to me.
respective constitutions on religious freedom, a right that the Japanese have enjoyed since 1945. Until the late 1980s, both countries had been ruled by authoritarian regimes using emergency decrees to overrule the liberal provisions of their respective constitutions. Under martial law, the participation of religious organizations outside state-sponsored or state-controlled organizations was not impossible, but permissible only within the limits defined by the government.\(^{74}\)

The relatively recent liberalization of the ROK and the ROC may explain the quietism of Buddhists in these two countries compared to the assertiveness of Japanese Buddhists, but it does not explain the high level of activism of the adherents of other religions in both countries. In my discussions with Buddhist individuals about the quietist behavior of their organizations when Taiwan was under martial law, they justified their cooperation with the government on the grounds of their fear of the regime's repression.\(^{75}\) Although the concern of Buddhist organizations for their self-preservation is entirely understandable, this answer appears unsatisfactory in light of the more assertive attitude of other organizations.

\(^{74}\) Religious organizations had to register with the government in order to operate legally. Failing to do so, they ran the risk of being subjected to government surveillance and oppression. 

that did become politically involved in the decades when the Emergency Decrees were enforced. Christians were especially active in both government and opposition in both the ROK and the ROC. The activism of Christians appears all the more remarkable in Taiwan when one considers the fact that adherents of that religion are far less numerous than Buddhists.

South Korean and Taiwanese Christians have, however, benefited from the strategic position of their countries in a way that put them at a distinct advantage over Buddhists. Don Baker argues that the highly activist attitude of Christian organizations, relative to that of other religious organizations in both the ROK and the ROC can be attributed to the fact that South Korean and Taiwanese Christians belong to international denominations based predominantly in the United States. Because the governments of both countries have depended on Washington for their security, they have been reluctant to clamp down too harshly on Christian organizations since that could have alienated American public opinion.

76 Kim Dae Jung, the current President of the ROK and a former major dissident himself, is a Roman Catholic layman. He succeeds Kim Young Sam, a member of the Korean Presbyterian Church. Two of the four candidates for the presidential election of 1996 in the ROC, the incumbent Lee Teng-hui and the DPP runner-up, Peng Mingmin 彭明敏, belong to the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church.

77 In 1995, more than 26% of all Koreans were Christians of all persuasion, while they numbered only 3.4% of the population in Taiwan. Sources: Republic of Korea, Korean Overseas Information Service, Facts About Korea (Seoul: KOIS, 1998), 158; ROC, GIO, Republic of China Yearbook, 1997, 466.
and jeopardized their main source of foreign support. As a result, Christian pastors and priests in both Korea and Taiwan have been more outspoken in their criticism of governments than their compatriots who were adherents of religions that did not have a significant international presence. In other words, different religious denominations have reacted differently to state policies towards religion. In particular, the greater the internationalization of a religious organization, the more likely it was to become politically assertive. However, the fact remains that Korean and Taiwanese Buddhists could also have benefited from international networks with co-religionists from Japan, a country whose political and economic support their governments also needed. This is becoming even more the case in recent years, as the Buddha Light International Association [Zhongguo Foguanghui 中國佛光會] (BLIA), the lay branch of Foguangshan, and Ciji are now developing an international membership reaching to North America, Western Europe and Japan.

The question about the factors behind the more quietist behavior of South Korean and Taiwanese Buddhists, compared to their Japanese - not to mention Vietnamese - co-

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religionists, remains unanswered. Only ten years after the end of the militarist regime in Japan, a major Buddhist lay organization, the *Soka Gakkai*, successfully ran 53 (out of 54) candidates as independents in the local elections of 1955. That precedent in turn paved the way for the creation of a full-fledged Buddhist political party, the *Komeito*, in 1964.

So far, no comparable developments can be discerned in the ROK or Taiwan even though liberalization in both countries was more than ten years old at the time of writing.

Having so far pointed to differences between Buddhist organizations in different countries, it is now necessary to shift the focus of attention to variations among Buddhist organizations in Taiwan. In particular, the nascent activism of Foguangshan observed in 1995-1996 and 1997 suggests that the diversity observed in the political behavior of Buddhists across East Asia to some extent parallels variance in the political behavior of Taiwanese Buddhists. This leads us into the central question raised at the beginning of the chapter: What explains the variations in the political behavior of different Buddhist organizations within a single country?

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The approaches reviewed above have in common the limitation of looking at Buddhism and culture as reified sociological categories. That is, these approaches adopt a holistic view of religion and culture. The following section adopts a different approach that views religions as institutions affected by their environment; and the units of analysis, instead of religious traditions taken as undifferentiated wholes, are specific religious organizations.

Understanding the Politics of Taiwanese Buddhist Organizations

In 1994, thirty-six Buddhist organizations were registered under the MOI as associations [shehui tuanti 社會團體] or legal corporations [caituan faren 財團法人] in the National registry for religious organizations [quanguoxing zongjiao tuanti minglu 全國性宗教團體名錄]. The registry includes individual temples registered as national organizations or federations of temples [sixiehui 寺協會], groups of lay devotees [jushihui 家協會].

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80 For details, see Zhonghua Minguo, Neizhengbu, Quanguoxing Zongjiao Tuanti Minglu [Registry of Religious Organizations across the Country], compiled by Zhong Fushan 鍾福山 (Taipei: Neizhengbu,
居士會], societies for the defense of the Sangha [huseng xiehui 護僧協會], youth organizations [qingnianhui 青年會] etc. Specific schools and sects, such as the Taiwan branch of the Nichiren Soshu, and adherents of Theravada and Tibetan Buddhism, have their own organizations.81

The case studies

This dissertation has selected Foguangshan and Ciji as case studies because they both stand out as the largest Buddhist organizations in the country: in number of lay adherents, they together comprise half of the self-declared Buddhists in the country. As such, they are representative of the prevailing trends within Taiwanese Buddhism since the late 1960s, when both were founded. Scholars studying contemporary Taiwanese Buddhism also write more often on Foguangshan and Ciji than on any other organizations as representatives of trends within that religion.82

81 This registry, however, is not representative of the entire population of Buddhist organizations in Taiwan. It does not include Ciji, a large charity organization, or the Dharma Drum Mountain [Fagushan 法鼓山], a monastic order that is widely considered as the northern equivalent to Foguangshan.
82 Jiang Canteng 江燦騰 has also studied Fogushan and Zhongtaichan 中台禪 along with Foguangshan and Ciji in his Taiwan Dangdai Fojiao 台灣當代佛教 [Buddhism in Contemporary Taiwan] (Taipei: Nantian 南天, 1997). Charles Brewer Jones has written the first western-language work on the institutional history of Chinese Buddhism. He has provided a survey on the BAROC, Foguangshan and Ciji in “Buddhism in
For an understanding of Buddhism in Taiwan, however, it is also necessary to look at the BAROC, even if that organization currently has fewer adherents and much less prestige and influence than Foguangshan or Ciji. This is because the current decline of this organization, which used to hold a monopoly of representation for all Buddhists in Taiwan from 1952 to 1987, is an illustration of important shifts within the Sangha and the lay community at large in the 1990s.83

The political behavior of Taiwanese Buddhist organizations

As discussed earlier, the pattern of political behavior adopted by Taiwanese Buddhist organizations has not been uniform. These various forms of behavior can be described by borrowing from and modifying the taxonomy of Christine Oliver, who has argued that organizations in general acquiesce to, compromise with, seek to manipulate, defy, or avoid...
their external environment. While the three religious organizations being studied in this dissertation are similar in pursuing strategies of acquiescence and compromise, they differ from one another in their readiness to adopt strategies of lobbying, remonstrance, and avoidance.

During the period of martial law, the few Buddhist organizations that were authorized to operate legally adopted a strategy of acquiescence to government directives. Since 1989, no organization has faced pressure or threat compelling it to acquiesce to KMT directives, as the current government has adopted a non-interventionist policy towards religious organizations. In the current context of liberalization, in which Taiwanese Buddhist organizations can express their concerns more directly and frankly, they generally pursue a strategy of compromise with the government in trying to achieve their goals. In cases where Buddhist organizations’ interests and those of the governments differ significantly, however, they have adopted varying strategies.

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84 This taxonomy is from Christine Oliver, “Strategic Responses to Institutional Processes,” Academy of Management Review 16 (1991), 145-179. In the context of this discussion, the external environment refers to the political environment.

A number of organizations participate in politics in one of two contrasting ways. On the one hand, organizations such as the BAROC and the Chinese Buddhist Sangha Association [Zhonghua Fojiao Sengjia Hui 僧伽會] (CBSA) prefer a variant to the strategy of manipulation, or lobbying. “Manipulation,” which describes the attempt by an organization to protect itself and improve its bargaining position by gaining access to important sources of power,86 is not entirely appropriate for BAROC. “Lobbying” more accurately describes the strategy pursued by organizations such as the BAROC which build on their already well-developed relations with state officials. During the mid-1990s, the BAROC adopted such a strategy when it tried to convince the government to pass laws on religious organizations and Buddhism that would have granted it more power over the Sangha and lay Buddhists.

On the other hand, there are organizations, such as Foguangshan and the Chinese Buddhist Temple Association [Zhonghua Fosi Xiehui 中華佛寺協會] (CBTA), which use more assertive methods to achieve their goals, including censure of the ruling party. The

strategy of defiance is pursued by organizations when their norms and interests diverge from those promoted by government policies. Because the term “defiance” implies an attempt to establish an alternative source of power outside of the structure established by the ruling party, it is an inappropriate way to describe the strategy and the more modest goals adopted by Foguangshan. “Remonstrance,” which refers to a rebuke or a censure, but not necessarily to an attempt to overthrow a regime, more closely describes the political behavior of Foguangshan. The latter adopted that approach in 1995-1996, after years of acquiescence to KMT supervision, when it supported Chen for the Presidency of the ROC.

Many other Buddhist organizations, such as Ciji, Fagushan and Zhongtaichan, however, do not get involved in politics. They adopt a strategy that can be best described as avoidance. Organizations adopting that approach publicly state their refusal to encourage political participation. This strategy differs from acquiescence to the extent

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88 Sociologists of organizations would define “avoidance” as an attempt by organizations to protect themselves or some of their parts from the effects of institutional demands on them. I use however a different definition. For sociologists’ definitions, see W. Richard Scott, *Institutions and Organizations*, 128. For a study on the strategy of avoidance, see John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan, “Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony,” *American Journal of Sociology* 83 (1977), 340-363.
that in instances such as elections, the incumbent government is explicitly denied support. The organization also refrains from lobbying the government to change its policies.

Why has the BAROC tried to lobby the government into passing legislation limiting the autonomy of the Sangha? Why has Fougangshan adopted a strategy of remonstrance towards KMT representatives in the executive branch of government? Why has Ciji refused to get engaged in politics, even though such an involvement could help it achieve its goals? Do differences in the leadership and membership of these three Taiwanese Buddhist organizations explain differences in their political participation? Do changes in these variables bring about changes in the propensity of these organizations to adopt specific forms of political behavior?

**Explanatory variables**

As the focus of analysis in this thesis has shifted from religious traditions as holistic categories to specific religious organizations, the literature on the politics of religious organizations in the United States will prove helpful. This literature proposes two

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89 Among the most useful sources for the study of religious organizations and politics: the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *Sociology of Religion*, the *American Sociological Review*, and *Sociological Review*. 

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contrasting explanations for variations in the political involvement of religious organizations.

In his analysis of religion and politics among Protestants, Catholics and Jews, Robert Booth Fowler has noted four factors likely to influence the involvement of religious interest groups in politics: theology, opposition from forces in the environment, strategic location, and internal strength. Among these factors, the last-named stands out as particularly appropriate for an understanding of the factors behind variations in the political behavior of Taiwanese Buddhist organizations. Significant variations exist among the Buddhist organizations studied in this thesis along three of the five dimensions of internal strength and unity outlined by Fowler: financial wealth, lay support, and membership numbers. Fowler’s findings suggest that lay support represents a critical factor of political behavior,
while resources and size of membership are only necessary conditions that help an
organization to achieve its goals.

In his study of churches’ social action policies, James R. Wood reaches different
conclusions and stresses that the attitudes of religious leaders stand out as a determinant of
political behavior of religious organizations. In developing this argument, he raises an
issue that is central to this thesis. Wood seeks to address Robert Michels’s argument that
the actions of organizations’ leaders are constrained by the interests of their followers. The implication of Michels’ view is that organizational constraints have more weight than
leadership in governing the behavior of organizations. Wood tested this hypothesis in his
study of the involvement of religious organizations in social action policies and reached a
different conclusion. According to him, religious leaders are granted a formal legitimacy
that allows them to “transcend” the reluctance and resistance of ordinary members. In
other words, Wood argues that religious leaders can convince their followers to get
involved politically, on the basis of the legitimacy conferred on their leadership by their

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92 The other findings of this study point to the importance of financial wealth, the attitude of members, and the
legitimacy of the leader in explaining variations in churches’ social actions. See Leadership in Voluntary
Organization: The Controversy Over Social Action in Protestant Churches (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers
own organization.\textsuperscript{94} This thesis provides a useful test of the contradictory hypotheses of Wood and Fowler: do leaders lead or are they constrained by their followers? Or, more realistically, to what extent are leaders constrained by their followers and the characteristics of the organizations over which they preside? The next two sections elaborate, in turn, on the potential roles and influence of leadership and other organizational characteristics.

\textit{The catalyst of leadership}

The political participation of a religious organization often depends on the vision of its leader, as is the case in American Evangelist movements and in the pontificate of John Paul II.\textsuperscript{95} The leader who encourages political participation of a religious constituency need not be part of the clergy. Within the Hindu tradition, for instance, politicization of religious organizations has been inspired by lay people such as Bal Thackeray, leader of the \textit{Shiv Sena} (Shiva’s Army).\textsuperscript{96} Figures such as Ikeda Daisaku, the head of \textit{Soka Gakkai},

\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Ibid}, 88-95.
\textsuperscript{96} The \textit{Shiv Sena}, is a regional party in the state of Maharashtra defending the interests of Hindus. It is an
demonstrate that Buddhist leaders also have the ability to mobilize believers in ways comparable to Billy Graham, Khomeini, and other leaders of Abrahamic religions.97 Evidence from “engaged Buddhist movements” in South and Southeast Asia further suggest that Buddhist leaders can also inspire and organize the laity for the purpose of social and political reform, as well as establish durable institutions.98 The charismatic leadership of nuns and monks such as Zhengyan or Ven. Shengyan 聖嚴 - the head of Fagushan - has yet to stimulate the political participation of Taiwanese Buddhists. However, the involvement of Xingyun in Taiwanese politics suggests that for some individuals within the Sangha, leadership can encourage, rather than dampen, engagement in politics.

*Meditating theology.* Theology is not immutable. The growth of the *Soka Gakkai* out of the teachings of the monk Nichiren shows that an innovative leader can shape a religious tradition in different ways. Nichiren articulated a nationalistic vision of Buddhism that emphasizes Japan as the land where the religion is predestined to achieve its

98 See the contributions to Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King, eds., *Engaged Buddhism*.
most perfect form. This example refutes Donald E. Smith’s claim that religious tolerance can explain the political quietism of Buddhists. Other examples could be added. The point to note is that under an activist and charismatic leadership, theology can be reinterpreted in many ways. An account of the philosophy of prominent monks and nuns, therefore, can yield important findings about how theology plays itself out in Taiwanese Buddhist organizations.

As the next chapter will document, the role that Ven. Taixu 太虛 (1890-1947) and his successor Ven. Yinshun 印順 played in shaping the modernization of Chinese Buddhism has been considerable. Both monks have fostered the emergence of a laity devoted to social work, a significant departure for a religion that used to be focused on individual salvationist practices. The importance of individual leadership is demonstrated by the fact that both Xingyun, the activist leader of Foguangshan, and Zhengyan, the advocate of non-involvement in politics, claim to be the spiritual heirs of Taixu and Yinshun. Despite this common background, however, their organizations have pursued very different paths.

99 For an introduction and bibliographical references to the Nichiren Soshu, see Daniel A. Metraux, The Soka Gakkai Revolution, 11-20.
Mediating culture. What has been mentioned above for theology is also true with respect to culture. The administrative structure for each organization examined in this dissertation can be summarily described as illustrative of the influence of Confucian culture. This impact, however, means very different things from one organization to another. The BAROC is modeled along the lines of the KMT structure, Foguangshan is compared to a military organization, and Ciji is referred to as an extended family. Should all three organizations be considered “Confucian” because they have in common a structure based on deference to authority? This is missing a central point about Buddhism. Buddhist organizations depend on an institution, the Sangha, comprising individuals who have renounced the performance of their filial duties, a responsibility that is central to Confucianism. It is difficult to determine whether Buddhist renunciation of the world or Confucian deference to authority determines the reluctance of the members of Ciji to become politically involved, or whether Buddhist ethics of compassion or Confucian ethics of responsibility inspire the members of Foguangshan to join a political campaign. Again, culture may explain the political behavior of specific organizations only to the extent that their leaders openly articulate how they interpret it.
Relating to state policy. The leaders of Buddhist organizations, finally, respond differently to the same government policy according to their respective views on the appropriate role that they should play in politics. Despite the fact that Buddhism is a monastic religion based on renunciation, many of its leaders do not avoid the pursuit of activities in social welfare and education, and often become entangled with politicians. As mentioned above, the leaders of “engaged” Buddhist organizations in Sri Lanka and Thailand, argue that their religious beliefs enjoin their involvement in politics or social work.

The dedication of Buddhist leaders to secular activities related to government policies, such as the provision of relief for the poor, education and health care represents indeed one of the central features of Taiwanese Buddhist organizations. These activities matter for some leaders at least as much as their proselytizing activities because they express in a tangible way the religious goals of their leaders. The responses of Buddhist leaders to various government policies of relevance to religious organizations are far from uniform. While some, such as Xingyun, the founder of Foguangshan, believe that a religious leader should offer guidance to politicians and act as counselor, others, such as Zhengyan, the
head of Ciji, would argue that spiritual leaders must avoid the corrupting influence of politics.

Organizational characteristics and their influence

Below we elaborate on how four characteristics of Taiwanese Buddhist organizations - the availability of material resources, lay support for the clergy, and congruence along the dimensions of ethnicity and gender between leaders and their followers - could influence the political choices of their leaders.

Scarcity or abundance of material resources. Few religious organizations dispose of a wealth comparable to that of the Catholic Church, which can afford an unrivaled independence from state governments. As is often the case in Islamic countries, the dependence of the Egyptian Ulama on the Ministry for Religious Endowments for their income ensures that they are subservient to the regime.\(^\text{100}\) Accumulation of wealth from private sources, as was the case in traditional China, brought Buddhist organizations under suspicions of the state, and therefore, made them cautious and eager to demonstrate that

they do not oppose the government. Do the private sources of wealth free religious organizations from government interference in their affairs and embolden them to be more politically assertive, or do they provide them an incentive for prudence? Such a question matters for the leaders of Foguangshan and Ciji because they manage abundant resources generated by the success of their respective fund-raising activities.

*Lay support.* In Egypt, lay people head the Islamist organizations opposed to the authorities while the state-appointed *Ulama* support the government. The *Mullah* (lower-level *Ulama*) led the Iranian Islamic revolution because the relationship between clergy and laity differs from that which prevails in Egypt. In these cases, the clergy gains more political influence when it receives support from the laity, and the latter is more likely if the clergy appears independent from the state. In his study on the Sangha in Sri Lanka in the sixties, Donald E. Smith found that the radicalization of Buddhism coincided with the decline of the Sangha and the tenuous link of the monastic orders with an increasingly assertive laity. In his survey of Chinese sects belonging to heterodox or

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101 This issue is discussed in the following chapter.
102 Glenn E. Perry, "The Islamic World," 110-114.
104 "Political Monks and Monastic Reform," 508-509.
folk Buddhist traditions, Daniel L. Overmyer has noted that the groups that were involved in militant political activities were predominantly lay and separate from the orthodox Sangha.\(^{105}\) Is it always the case that when the relationship between the clergy and the state is too close, the laity is more likely to become alienated and join dissident political movements? Does the prevalence of the laity in terms of sheer numbers in some organizations necessarily encourage a more activist orientation in politics? Does the preponderance of lay members in Foguangshan and Ciji make them more politically assertive than the BAROC?

Above we have elaborated on the fairly straightforward organizational characteristics of resource availability and lay support, and why they might constrain organizations' leaders. However, other variables which emerge from Dankwart A. Rustow’s discussion of leadership also potentially influence the nature of the political strategies adopted by religious leaders. In its sociological dimension, he notes, leadership reflects the needs of followers. “Successful leadership,” Rustow asserts, “rests on a latent congruence between

the psychic needs of the leaders and the social needs of the followers.” The collection of indicators that could point to the existence of such congruence, however, goes well beyond the scope of the research undertaken for this thesis and therefore the discussion of this variable can only be suggestive and tentative. In the absence of data on leaders’ psychological needs and their followers’ social needs, this study offers therefore as a substitute a survey of congruence between religious leaders and their followers on the dimensions of ethnicity and gender. Admittedly rough indicators with which to evaluate congruence between lay people and clergy, these two dimensions deserve examination because of the centrality of ethnicity in ROC politics and the importance of women in Taiwanese Buddhism.

Congruence between leaders and lay followers on the dimension of ethnicity.

Theories of ethnic conflict note that religious cleavages often coincide with ethnic

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107 On this issue, see Christopher Hughes, Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism: National Identity and Status in International Society (London: Routledge, 1997); Cheng Tun-jen and Hsu Yung-ming, “Issue Structure, the DPP’s Factionalism, and Party Realignment,” in Taiwan’s Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition, 137-173.
boundaries. Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs in the Balkans have been fighting wars over ethnic boundaries as much as over the protection of their respective religious values. According to some scholars, Islamism, Jewish fundamentalism, Hindu and Sikh revivalism are seen as struggles for “nation-building” along indigenous, often religious lines, rather than foreign, usually secular, concepts of an abstract nature.  

With respect to Buddhism, Donald E. Smith long ago noted the interplay of nationalism and religion in Sri Lanka. Considering the political relevance of the divide between native (bendiren本地人) and mainlander (waishengren外省人) Taiwanese, how does ethnicity play itself out in each Taiwanese Buddhist organization? Do ethnic cleavages within the clergy, or within the laity, influence the political orientation of these organizations? Does the previous policy of corporatist control enforced by the mainlander-dominated KMT and carried on by the leadership of BAROC, who shared similar backgrounds, explain the deference of this organization to the government? Is the refusal of the bendiren leader Zhengyan to sponsor the Buddhist candidate Chen Lü’an related to the fact that he is a waishengren?

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109 The research project currently undertaken by Ted Gurr on Minority at Risks at the University of Maryland explicitly uses this framework of analysis.
112 On this issue, see Christopher Hughes, Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism; Cheng Tun-jen and Hsu Yung-
Congruence between leaders and lay followers on the dimension of gender. The religious scriptures of most traditions have relegated women to a subordinate status. A remarkable phenomenon of the last two centuries, however, has been the emergence of religious lay organizations with a large female membership, often led by women, involved in charitable activities in Western industrialized countries and in Japan. These organizations offer a striking contrast with exclusively male, militant groups such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [National Army of Volunteers] (RSS) found in India. Many Taiwanese Buddhist organizations are led by nuns, who outnumber monks by a ratio of five to one in Taiwan, and are involved in charitable activities. Does the predominantly male composition of the BAROC leadership affect its preference for a more traditional theology that asserts deference to monks? Does the large proportion of women

113 Sabrina Petra Ramet, “Spheres of Religio-Political Interaction: Social Order, Nationalism, and Gender Relations;” Jo Ann McNamara, “Canossa and the Ungendering of the Public Man,” in Render Unto Caesar, 59-64; 131-150.
in Ciji influence the strategy of the organization to avoid confrontation with the government?

**Organization of the Thesis**

The case studies will explore the BAROC, Foguangshan, and Ciji, in order to answer the above questions. In order to provide some background, the next chapter will describe the history of relations between Buddhism and the state in China and Taiwan, and describe the broad influences that have shaped the tradition as a whole.

This account will be followed by case studies of the BAROC, Foguangshan and Ciji. Each chapter will proceed with a description of organizational goals and structure, and examine the organizations’ political behaviors. Each will then explore the leaders’ religious and political views. Finally, each will look into the constraints faced by organizations’ leaders in terms of resource available, lay membership support, and congruence between leaders and followers on the dimensions of ethnicity and gender. The last chapter will assess the relative importance of leadership and internal constraints as factors influencing the political behaviors of these Buddhist organizations.
Conclusion

This thesis explores which internal variables of Taiwanese Buddhist organizations have determined the nature of their involvement in politics. It tries to elucidate why the BAROC would – alone among Buddhist organizations – lobby the KMT to pass legislation granting the government more authority to regulate religion. It endeavors to understand why the BAROC and Ciji have not supported Chen Lü’an for the ROC Presidency, despite the fact that he was the standard-bearer of values which were in complete harmony with those of these organizations’ leaders. It seeks to explore why Xingyun and Zhengyan, who both claim to actualize the theology of the same individual – Taixu – have ended up promoting modes of political participation that differ markedly from each other.

Is the main cause for these discrepancies to be found in the religious, philosophical and/or political beliefs of individual leaders or in the nature of the organizations that each of them heads? How do these variables affect the political behavior of the three
organizations? The exploration of these matters will be the subject of the case studies.

First, though, we must examine the history of Buddhism on both the Chinese mainland and Taiwan to provide the necessary background for understanding the subsequent case studies.
The Chinese Buddhist tradition that the Taiwanese Sangha and laity have inherited is rich in episodes in which adherents of that religion have been politically active, a fact that demonstrates that the generally quietist attitude of contemporary Buddhists in Taiwan is not immutable. The following survey of the Chinese Buddhist tradition in Taiwan first considers its origins in China and brings out the theological and cultural elements that are relevant to understanding the current political behavior of Buddhists in Taiwan. The religious doctrines themselves have not changed much for centuries and some of their
effects on political behavior can still be felt today. The Confucian cultural resistance to Buddhism has also been remarkably consistent, although Western influences, manifested in the rationalist, materialist and secularist ideologies of nationalism, socialism and liberalism, have considerably eroded its effects. The second part of this chapter, devoted to Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan, will emphasize the political context in greater detail. The national security imperatives faced by the KMT are singled out to explain its policies towards the Buddhist community and the Taiwanese population in general. During the more recent phase of liberalization, the ethnic cleavage specific to Taiwan emerges as a key dimension of politics influencing Buddhist organizations. This survey pays particular attention to differences in the political attitudes displayed for centuries by the Sangha and the laity respectively, throughout the history of the Buddhist tradition in China.
Taiwanese Buddhism owes much to its antecedents on the continent. Therefore an examination of that tradition in China is deemed necessary. In addition, many of the most prominent monks in contemporary Taiwan arrived on the island as refugees after the founding of the PRC in 1949. Thus, even though the island was not affected directly by the upheavals in China from 1895 to 1945 because of Japanese colonial rule, the state of contemporary Taiwanese Buddhism owes much to these members of the Sangha, as they brought with them the institutional memory of Buddhism in China.

Buddhists and politics in Traditional China

The involvement of Buddhism in politics during the traditional era was extremely complex. It varied in response to changes within society and the state. These transformations influenced the different practices that the Buddhist theology sanctioned over centuries. During the early phase of its introduction to China between the first and sixth centuries, the Sangha sought the patronage and the protection of the state to ensure its
growth. In time, that association of spiritual and secular authority made expressions of religious dissidence *ipso facto* political dissidence. The Sangha and the state both had a vested interest in preventing the development of religious heterodoxy. The Buddhist theology was variegated enough to provide both the Sangha and heterodox groups a rationale for different policies. This flexibility also helped the religion adapt to Chinese culture, despite the obstacles raised by proponents of the rival Confucian and Taoist traditions.

*The adaptability of Buddhist theology.*

The features of Buddhism mentioned by Smith in his ground-breaking study on the political implications of the religion were relevant to the Theravada tradition practiced in Sri Lanka and South East Asia, but do not relate very much to the Mahayana [Dasheng 大乘]117 tradition adopted in China. These differences did not originate in religious schisms, but resulted from additions that adherents of the Mahayana school have made to the original beliefs shared by all Buddhists. Believers of all persuasions have borrowed from

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Hindus the belief in the doctrine of the Karma [Yinguo 因果],\textsuperscript{118} which stresses that every act produces a result, and that the rebirths that every being experiences depend on the accumulated Karma of the past. Another fundamental belief shared by all Buddhists is the idea that this cycle of rebirths brings misery and suffering, and salvation can be reached only by stopping transmigration from one rebirth to another, a state known as Nirvana [Niepan 涅槃].\textsuperscript{119} The earliest tradition of Theravada Buddhism emphasized the practice of a strenuous discipline known as the eightfold path to salvation. Dissatisfaction with the conservative character of the Theravada school and its focus on individual salvation led to the rise of the Mahayana school, which stresses devotion to the Buddha and universal love through compassion, charity and altruism.

An important element of Mahayana Buddhism is the elevation of the historical figure of Sakyamuni [Shijiamoni 釋迦牟尼], or Gautama Siddharta, as only one incarnation among many of the Buddha. According to that belief, the Buddha is an eternal being that appeared on earth countless times and will continue to do so in the future. Another form of the Buddha is Amitabha [Amitofo 阿彌陀佛], who presides over the mythical Pure

\textsuperscript{118} In Sanskrit, action, fate. In Chinese, 因 cause, and 果 effect.
\textsuperscript{119} In Sanskrit, extinction. In Chinese, 涅 to blacken, and 槿 a wooden tray, describe a candle that has
Land, and whose name’s evocation suffices to guarantee deliverance in that paradise. A third form of the Buddha is the laughing Buddha, known before as the future Buddha, Maitreya [Milefo 彌勒佛]. His coming on earth, some devotees believe, will purify the world and restore the Dharma [Fa 法]. A fourth form of the Buddha is the deity Avalokitesvara [Guanyin 觀音], a female deity that stands out as the symbol of compassion. The intensity of the devotion to each deity varies throughout history, according to the particular aspect of the religion that appeared more relevant to the concerns of the faithful at specific times. In periods of trouble, for instance, worship of Maitreya as the Buddha of the future prevailed and was central to the doctrines of the millenarian movements engaged in anti-dynastic upheavals. In contemporary Taiwan, the compassionate figure of Guanyin is the most widely revered form of the Buddha, followed by Amitabha.

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burned out.

120 In Sanskrit, decree, custom. In Chinese, law, truth, the Buddhist way.
121 Kenneth Ch’en has documented these changes from the year 500 to 720, from the Northern Wei Dynasty until the Tang. *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton University Press, 1964), 172.
Another important innovation of the Mahayana tradition, for our purpose, is the religious ideal of the bodhisattvas [*pusa* 菩薩], individuals qualified to attain *Nirvana* because of their accumulated merits, but who have chosen instead to remain in the world in order to help all sentient beings attain salvation.\(^{123}\) The ideal of the bodhisattva signals a shift from the Theravada religious practice of salvation based on individual practice to the Mahayana religious ideal of striving for the salvation of all through charitable activities. Criticisms expressed by Taixu, which will be reviewed below, about the attitude of aloofness from society adopted by monks, suggest that too many Buddhists did not abide by this aspect of their religion. Current developments in Taiwan demonstrate how much the relative importance of specific elements of theology can change over time. The ideal of the Boddhisattva, as articulated by individuals like Xingyun and Zhengyan, is now the most striking characteristic of contemporary Buddhism on the island.\(^{124}\)


The ever-present challenge of Confucian cultural resistance

From the beginning of its introduction to China, Buddhism, as a tradition originating from India, has had to bridge a huge cultural gap. Not only were there major linguistic and psychological differences between the two civilizations, but more importantly, familism and the particularistic ethics inherent to China contrasted markedly with the emphasis on universal salvation of the religion.\(^\text{125}\) After the fall of the Later Han dynasty (25-220), however, Confucian ethics were discredited and experienced an eclipse that would last seven centuries due to their association with the previous regime. This greatly facilitated the spread of Buddhism in the North – previously the heartland of China - by foreign rulers who were reluctant to adopt Confucian ways, and in the South, where Buddhist beliefs either competed or mingled with Taoist practices and spread with the advance of Chinese colonists.\(^\text{126}\)

Such progress triggered sporadic reactions from the native traditions. In the South, Confucian scholars condemned Buddhism as alien and criticized it for its allegedly

In the North, controversies instigated by Taoists led to two waves of persecution, one in 446 A.D. and the second from 574 to 577. Buddhist institutions nonetheless weathered these challenges and experienced their greatest period of spiritual and intellectual achievements during the Tang dynasty (618-906), and became completely acculturated to China. Under the Song (960-1279), a new intellectual movement would prove fatal to Buddhist prominence: the synthesis of Buddhist metaphysics with Confucian ethics, known as Neo-Confucianism, rose rapidly as the dominant trend and supplanted the religion. By the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), Buddhism had ceased to represent a serious institutional challenge to the Neo-Confucian literati.\(^{128}\)

The rationale for the criticism of the religion has remained the same over centuries: Buddhism was considered to be alien to traditional Chinese values. When Buddhist monastic orders were prosperous, as was the case from the fifth to the ninth centuries, the monks were blamed for impoverishing society by living off the work of peasants and

\(^{127}\) Kenneth Ch’en, *Buddhism in China*, 136-144.  
laborers, and for undermining the rearing of new generations through their vow of celibacy.\textsuperscript{129}

The Neo-Confucian literati that arose during the Song attacked Buddhism at the level of its ethics and metaphysics: they felt that the religion represented an escape from life and its responsibilities, and they rejected the doctrine that the physical world is empty and illusory.\textsuperscript{130} In contemporary Taiwan, the echoes of traditional Confucian criticism can still be heard. This much was apparent in the controversy surrounding the ordination of university students in the Zhongtaichan temple in 1996, when anguished parents publicly opposed the decisions of their sons and daughters. The parents objected to their children’s decisions on the ground that their vow represented a repudiation of the duty of filial piety.\textsuperscript{131} That is, even if the influence of Western ideas and the repudiation of

\textsuperscript{129} C.K. Yang, \textit{Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and some of their Historical Factors} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991; reprint, Taipei: SMC Publishing, 1994), 121-122, 200. Kenneth Ch’en wrote that the religion was criticized on five other grounds. The Buddhist view that life is illusory and full of suffering was opposed to the Confucian and Taoist views that life is to be enjoyed. The monastic ideal of celibacy was in contrast to the traditional stress on family life. Mendicancy was at odds with the emphasis on labor. Life away from the household was incompatible with the ideal of harmonious relationships. Monasticism was seen as tantamount to sedition because it advocated non-observance of the state’s laws. See \textit{Buddhism in China}, 204.

\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Ibid.}, 396.

Confucianism by intellectuals at the beginning of the century have considerably eroded its influence at the level of state policy, residues of Confucian values remain in society.

*The ambivalent impact of state policy*

During the three centuries that followed the fall of the Han in 220 A.D., Chinese governments were weak and the North of the country fell under foreign rule in 316 A.D. Chinese rulers in the South were not powerful enough to control the Buddhist monastic communities, which became wealthy enough to constitute a state within the state. In the North, imperial encouragement of Buddhism under the Wei (386-534) and following dynasties came at a price. The religion depended on the power of the ruler for its survival. This situation made the monastic community vulnerable to persecutions, as was the case in 446 and 574-577.\(^{132}\) The religion nonetheless survived these persecutions and during the reign of Emperor Wen, founder of the Sui dynasty (581-618), Buddhism became the unifying faith of the Empire.\(^{133}\) Although the Tang (618-906) rulers rescinded the policy of Buddhism as state religion and favored Taoism, they practiced religious tolerance in

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accordance with their claim that they were ruling a cosmopolitan realm comprising not only Chinese but also "barbarians."\textsuperscript{134}

Buddhism benefited enormously from the patronage of some of the Tang rulers, but intrigues in the court led to a third wave of persecution in 843-845.\textsuperscript{135} This repression took several forms: a majority of monks were ordered to defrock and return to the laity; most Buddhist establishments, including monasteries, were destroyed; and land was confiscated.\textsuperscript{136} Although this persecution was short-lived, and the monastic community became more numerous and its economic activities more extensive during the Song dynasty (960-1279) than under the Tang, Buddhists never reclaimed their previous position of dominance in Chinese politics.

Although the religion was embraced by the succeeding alien dynasties of Liao, Jin and Yuan (1260-1368), heterodox Buddhist sects, inspired by belief in the imminent return of the Maitreya Buddha, instigated opposition to the government. The Ming (1368-1644)

\textsuperscript{134} \textit{Ibid.}, 213.
\textsuperscript{135} Jacques Gernet provides an in-depth analysis of some of the underlying factors behind these persecutions. He mentions that the growth of Buddhism created an imbalance between production and consumption, as it diverted resources to the monasteries. In particular, the exemption of monks and nuns from all taxes and corvée service, on the grounds that they had renounced secular life, led over the years to an ever-increasing fiscal deficit. \textit{Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries}, translated by Franciscus Verellen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 29-33.
\textsuperscript{136} Kenneth Ch’en, \textit{Buddhism in China}, 231-232.
dynasty was established after one of these uprisings. It was inspired by the belief that its leaders were sent by the Buddha Maitreya, and the uprising led to the downfall of the Mongols. The new regime, drawing lessons from these events, quickly turned against heterodox sectarian activities and outlawed these groups, while maintaining the privileges of the Sangha. The attitude of the Ming rulers was more a function of utilitarian calculations than religious tolerance: they appreciated the values of any religion, including Buddhism, as long as it could promote good order and sanction the regime.\textsuperscript{137}

During the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), the ruling Manchus sponsored their own practice of Buddhism, known as Lamaism [lamajiao 喇嘛教]. Considerations about Inner Asian politics also played a role: this tradition originates from Tibet, and Mongols living on the frontier of the empire were also adherents of Lamaism.\textsuperscript{138} However, this ostensible support of the religion could not prevent the recurrence of rebellions instigated by Buddhist heterodox sects such as the White Lotus Society [Bailianjiao 白蓮教].

By the end of the Qing, the fortunes of the religion had changed again as orthodox Buddhists faced a new and more serious challenge from the government. In an attempt to

\textsuperscript{138} Kenneth Ch’en, \textit{Buddhism in China}, 454.
respond to Western incursions in China, Qing authorities adopted a reform program which
promoted modernization, secularization and mass education, and which had important
consequences for Buddhists. One of the most prominent reformers, Kang Youwei 康有
為, for example, proposed in his 1898 memorial to the emperor Guangxü 光緒 that
Buddhist and Taoist temples be converted into modern schools. 139

Although the modernization program of Guangxü was short-lived, the elements of the
reforms that were relevant to Buddhism were soon implemented after the Boxer rebellion,
and in 1904, notes C. K. Yang, the government ordered that temple property be used
wherever available for the establishment of schools. 140 According to Arthur Wright,
Buddhist monks and nuns were ill prepared to confront these challenges, 141 and, as Holmes
Welch documents, many of them came to rely on lay Buddhists to ensure the survival of
the tradition. 142 In order to understand this phenomenon, it is necessary to focus on the
relations of the Sangha and the laity with governments.

141 *Buddhism in Chinese History*, 114-115.
The different responses of the Sangha and the laity to state policy

From the beginning, Buddhism was primarily a monastic movement whose members could put aside their concerns about material sustenance and relations with family and society. As mentioned above, this situation left the Sangha open to Confucianist accusations of it being a parasitic institution. But as long as rulers were willing to base their legitimacy partly on Buddhism, the monastic order did not have to fear the wrath of the state. In return, the monastic community tacitly acknowledged the supremacy of the government that granted it patronage.143

Lay Buddhists, often associated with heterodox traditions, had throughout history a more troubled relation with the state. A distinction was made between the Sangha and lay Buddhists as early as 403, when the monk Huiyuan 慧遠(334-417) wrote that although the clergy did not have to concern itself with worldly affairs, the laity had to pay homage to the secular rulers.144 In other words, only the clergy enjoyed an autonomous and privileged status.145 Lay Buddhists did not benefit from the state patronage of their religion and, in

143 Kenneth Ch’en, Buddhism in China, 257.
144 Ibid., 76.
145 To be sure, not all monks collaborated at all times with the secular rulers. A few monks did get involved politically, if not led rebellion against the emperor. Yuji Muramatsu mentioned a few monks during the various rebellions in which Buddhist got involved between the year 515 and 1351. See “Some Themes in
times of trouble, they were likely to become involved in anti-dynastic politics when their faith led them to believe that the emperor had lost the “mandate of heaven.”

Early on, the monastic community was very close to political authorities. This was the case during the fourth and early fifth century, when it rendered service to rulers in North China in the form of military and diplomatic counsel. Because conflicts between the various non-Chinese kingdoms had led to permanent strife, the monks needed state support and protection in order to be able to propagate the religion. The association between monks and warring states failed to satisfy the people who were looking to religion as a refuge from their misery. It is no surprise, then, that associations separate from monasteries, inspired by Buddhist theology, but led by “rebel monks,” appeared in that period. In the South, during the eastern Jin dynasty (280-420), the Sangha managed to assert its independence from the state: it enjoyed extra-territorial rights, monks were governed by their own monastic laws, were exempt from taxation, and received support

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146 Kenneth Ch’en, *Buddhism in China*, 92-93.

The political activism of Buddhist dissenting sects and the importance of lay people in their midst has lead to the conclusion that their religion was simply an ideological excuse for rebellion. The dissenting Buddhist sects considered here were different from the secret societies or “triads,” who used religion as a cover for their political, and often subversive, activities. See Daniel L. Overmyer, “Alternatives: Popular
from state officials and the aristocracy. Under these favorable conditions, the Sangha was more successful in spreading the faith within the population.¹⁴⁸

During the Tang dynasty, the Sangha was supported by all elements of society, from the imperial household, the nobility, and wealthy great families to the common people.¹⁴⁹ This was in part due to the fact that the conception of Buddhism as a religion of compassion aimed at the salvation of all beings led to the development of many welfare activities.¹⁵⁰ Secular rulers welcomed these social welfare activities, but as a consequence, the Sangha came under the firm control of the court. Before the Tang, entry into the Sangha was an individual act over which the state had no influence, but as the responsibilities of the monks became increasingly important, ordination became regulated by the state.¹⁵¹ A symbol of the complete subordination of the religion to the state can be seen in the fact that civil servants rather than monks undertook supervision of the Sangha.

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¹⁴⁸ Kenneth Ch’en, *Buddhism in China*, 77.
After the Song dynasty, state authority became so complete that the monastic orders had no choice but to come to terms with the supremacy of the secular rulers.\textsuperscript{152} Although monasteries continued to be built and monks continued to be ordained during the Song, the monastic orders went into decline. Two reasons, in particular, brought about that situation. Firstly, in an effort to address its financial problems, the state started selling monk certificates and titles, which led to competition and corruption within the Sangha.\textsuperscript{153} Secondly, the revival of the examination system in the Song diminished the attractiveness of the monastic lifestyle as a path to prosperity. As the imperial bureaucracy increasingly attracted the best minds of the country, fewer educated people were interested in joining the monastic order. The result was that many adherents of Buddhism preferred to remain laypersons.\textsuperscript{154}

There is a consensus among scholars that many of the religious uprisings after 1351 were fomented by heterodox Buddhist societies that were opposed to the orthodox Sangha because of its association with the established regime.\textsuperscript{155} Some of these uprisings had

\textsuperscript{153} Kenneth, Ch'en, \textit{Buddhism in China}, 393-394.
\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Ibid.}, 447.
\textsuperscript{155} Sects such as the White Lotus, despite heterodox practices such as the worship of the Unbegotten Mother [\textit{Wusheng Laomu 無生老母}], belonged to Buddhism. C.K. Yang, \textit{Religion in Chinese Society}, 230; Daniel
profound political consequences: the establishment of the Ming Dynasty followed a massive uprising generated by the widespread belief about an enlightened ruler [mingwang 明王] announcing the coming of the Future Buddha. Several motives drove lay people to participate in anti-dynastic upheavals. The point to note is that while the social-political order based on Confucian orthodoxy and the official Sangha proved its efficacy in times of tranquility and prosperity, it was inevitable that the same institutions would be discredited in times of crisis, and that heterodoxy would have more appeal. While the Sangha remained generally passive during the five centuries of Ming and Qing rule, many lay Buddhists, generally pious evangelists, became political rebels when faced by extreme poverty, oppression by officials and other difficult sociopolitical conditions.

L. Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion, 2; Kenneth Ch’en, Buddhism in China, 429-431; Arthur F. Wright, Buddhism in Chinese History, 74.

156 Kenneth, K.S. Ch’en, Buddhism in China, 434-435.

157 Sectarian movements were generally apolitical, and only occasionally would they be engaged in opposition to the ruler. Harrell and Perry concluded in their analysis of sectarian beliefs and the social environment of these movements that most of them were strictly pietistic, and when they pursued political activities, it was for purely religious reasons, such as protecting their institutions. Stevan Harrell and Elizabeth J. Perry, “Syncretic Sects in Chinese Society,” Modern China 8 no. 3 (July 1982), 283-303.

This statement, to be sure, should not downplay the seriousness of the conflicts opposing them to the state: the latter represented a cosmic order encompassing all realms of authority that could not tolerate the challenge implicitly raised by the former. Daniel L. Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion, 3-4.


159 Daniel L. Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion, 12, 51-52.
The harassment of religious institutions during the last decades of Qing rule inspired a series of transformations within the Buddhist community, often interpreted as a revival, but more appropriately described as a modernization of the religion. This process was triggered by the turmoil of the Taiping rebellion (1851-1865), which sought to eliminate idolatrous worship and inflicted a devastating blow against the property of the Sangha. The physical survival of the religion depended then on the efforts of a few determined lay devotees.

Buddhist intellectuals such as Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong, and Zhang Binglin, went further: all critical of Confucianism, they upheld their religion as an ideology of modernization. However, that specific project was doomed to fail because most Chinese intellectuals, whether they subscribed to the ideologies of Republicanism and nationalism, or later on, liberalism, socialism and anarchism, believed that religion prevents the advance of progress and ought to be eliminated.

160 Holmes Welch himself, the authority on the topic, is reluctant to describe the process of change within the Buddhist community as a revival. The word secularization is also an imperfect substitute for the French language word “lai'cisation,” which referred initially to the growing role played by lay people in the life of the Catholic Church. See The Buddhist Revival in China.

161 Kenneth Ch’en, Buddhism in China.

This review of Buddhism in traditional China reiterates the point made before that theology and culture cannot decisively determine the way Buddhist organizations become involved in politics. Although traditional state policy enormously constrained the ability of Buddhists to become involved, the efficiency of that policy varied according to circumstances. When the government appeared illegitimate and society suffered serious economic crises, lay Buddhists belonging to heterodox sects were more likely to become politically involved. The combination of an ecclesiastical organization concerned with the survival of the tradition with an egalitarian soteriology was bound to generate tension within the religion between support for and opposition to the status quo. The Buddhist monastic order, content with the performance of individual spiritual practice as a response to the problem of human suffering, was generally obedient to secular authorities. However, when they judged secular authorities illegitimate, lay Buddhists were more likely to find in the egalitarian ideals of the religion reasons to oppose them.\(^{163}\)

\(^{163}\) I agree with the view of Daniel L. Overmyer and C.K. Yang about the political activity of Buddhist organizations in traditional China. They found that these activities arose from the visions of the devotees for an ideal world replacing the current order, that the goal of universal deliverance was always present in the religion, and that the political activities of these organizations identified with their salvationist ideal. Daniel L. Overmyer, *Folk Buddhist Religion*, 50-51; C.K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 112, 229-230.
Sangha, with its vested interests in state sponsorship, found itself challenged by the laity when state authority was questioned.

**Buddhism in modern China**

Buddhists did not get involved in politics during the Republican era, despite the efforts of lay intellectuals to make their tradition more responsive to modernity. Three factors explain this situation. Firstly, cultural changes blunted the ability of religion to address the crises faced by China. Secondly, the circumstances of anarchy and division deprived the Sangha of state support. Thirdly, the monastic orders resisted attempts by a handful of reformist individuals to reorganize Buddhism with the help of the laity.

The following section is structured chronologically, not thematically, because the Republican period represents a series of upheavals and transformations with different consequences for Buddhists. The first period of fifteen years represents a period of development despite the hostility of a repressive political environment. After tumultuous beginnings, the Nanjing decade (1927-1937) favored the growth of the religion, but the ensuing periods of war with Japan (1937-1945) and the civil war on the Chinese mainland
(1945-1949) threatened its very survival. These circumstances set the stage for the escape of a few hundred monks to Taiwan, out of a total of over seven hundred thousand.164

The involvement of lay Buddhists during the era of uncertainty (1911-1927)

For four years after the outbreak of the Republican Revolution, local administrators in North China perpetuated policies already undertaken between 1902 and 1908 under the Qing dynasty. They sought to appropriate temples and temple property for conversion into schools.165 Welch wrote about the excesses of these campaigns: “Confucians, Christians, modernizers, predatory officials, and bandits (the categories are obviously not exclusive) carried on expulsions of monks and destruction of monasteries.”166 Because of political divisions, these policies of expropriation were never fully implemented, but they nonetheless provided lay Buddhists with the incentive to organize. A few monks and local lay people decided to respond with a three-tiered strategy. They sought to build a set of institutions which could serve as a lobby for the Sangha, to establish a strong lay

166 The Buddhist Revival in China, 23.
movement on which the Sangha could rely for support, and to set up an education system that would train monks on how to spread the faith.\textsuperscript{167}

One of the leaders of that movement was Taixu, who would thereafter have considerable influence on the development of Buddhism in Taiwan, even though, notes Welch, during his lifetime his authority was quite limited.\textsuperscript{168} Taixu, a rather eccentric monk, proposed a greater role for the laity and other reforms that generated the opposition of a majority within the Sangha.\textsuperscript{169} His activities during the first decade and a half of the Republican Period represented a continuation of endeavors he had already undertaken during the last decade of the Qing Dynasty. Most of his lay disciples were socialists, and one of them, Ou Yangjian, the founder of the Chinese Buddhist Association [\textit{Zhongguo Fojiaohui} 不要被 BAROC 錯誤] was notorious for openly despising the Sangha.\textsuperscript{170} Taixu had befriended the revolutionary monk Ven. Qiyun 棲雲, who had joined the \textit{Tongmenghui} 同盟會 (The precursor of the KMT), and by 1910,

\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Ibid.}, 28-29.
\textsuperscript{168} \textit{Ibid.}, 71.
\textsuperscript{169} The opposition was led by Ven. Yuanying 圓瑛. Holmes Welch, \textit{The Buddhist Revival in China}, 71.
\textsuperscript{170} On the struggle between Ven. Taixu and his more conservative colleagues, see Holmes Welch, \textit{The Buddhist Revival in China}, 29-35.
he had become intimate with a number of Chinese socialists and anarchists.\footnote{Ibid., 71.} Most other monks were ambivalent towards Taixu: they acknowledged the value of his ideas, but he did not fit their view of what a monk should be.\footnote{Taixu participated in the first standing committee of the BAROC in 1929, but in the following years, he squabbled with Yuanying and his disciples, and as a result, he failed to influence the association until 1945. Taixu finally gained control of the association that year, but passed away in 1947, when the BAROC was formally reconstituting itself. For more biographical details, see Holmes Welch, The Buddhist Revival in China, 42-44. Taixu participated in the first standing committee of the BAROC in 1929, but in the following years, he squabbled with Yuanying and his disciples, and as a result, he failed to influence the association until 1945. Taixu finally gained control of the association that year, but passed away in 1947, when the BAROC was formally reconstituting itself. For more biographical details, see Holmes Welch, The Buddhist Revival in China, 42-44.}

Although the Sangha resisted reforms of the monastic order, lay Buddhists actively worked for the preservation, promotion and aggiornamento\footnote{From Italian, to update. Usually refers to the results of the Vatican II Council, used by Catholic observers to describe the meanings of the reforms proposed by Taixu. See "Religions in Taiwan Today," 13.} of their faith. The modernization of Buddhism took various forms. New publishing houses were established to propagate Buddhist literature, lay organizations were founded for charitable and social purposes, ecumenical contacts with Buddhists abroad were initiated, and modern education for monks was developed.\footnote{Holmes Welch, The Buddhist Revival in China, 1-9,} These activities were for the most part inspired by lay people, because most monks feared that these humanitarian activities could entangle them in
politics and run against their vows of renouncing worldly matters. In their efforts to promote their interests, Buddhists petitioned the government for the protection of their property, and between 1912 and 1929 formed at least eighteen separate Buddhist associations, most of which ceased to exist after a few years.

Organizing Buddhism in response to the state modernizing zeal (1927-1937)

As a result of the Northern Expedition of 1926-1927, the KMT established a government which briefly provided some measure of stability in central China. In 1928, its authority was limited to only four provinces: Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui and Jiangxi. Incidentally, it was within the first two provinces that proportionally greater populations of Buddhist devotees could be found. After 1927, Buddhists faced a new challenge from

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175 Ibid., 20.
176 Ibid., 26.
177 The integration of China, to be sure, was limited. Tibet and Xinjiang were only nominally part of the Republic. In China proper, the province of Sichuan was under the control of a warlord until 1935, and temporary warlord regimes were formed in Guangxi in 1929, Henan and Shanxi in 1930, and in Fujian in 1933. See Robert A. Kapp, “Chungking as a Center of Warlord Power, 1926-1937,” in The Chinese City Between Two Worlds, ed. Mark Elvin and G. William Skinner (Stanford University Press, 1974), 143-170. On the failure of the KMT to integrate China within the area under effective KMT control, see Chapters VI and VII of James E. Sheridan, China in Disintegration: The Republican Era in Chinese History 1912-1949 (New York: The Free Press, 1975).
178 Financial difficulties, foreign pressures and internal dissension prevented the government from solving problems in the countryside, but some progress was achieved in the cities. Jonathan D. Spence, The Search for Modern China (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990), 367.
179 Holmes Welch, using figures from surveys done by branches of the BAROC in 1930, indicates that more than half of all devotees in the entire country were found in those two provinces, and one monastery or
the state. The KMT, then under the influence of the radical Anti-Religious Federation and the Great Federation of Non-Religionists, launched a campaign against “superstitions” and institutional religions such as Buddhism, 180 which included sporadic attempts to confiscate Buddhist property in various parts of the country. 181 Lasting until 1931, this phase of radicalism was in tune with the iconoclastic spirit generated by the May Fourth movement, which was anti-traditionalist in its nationalism. The rationalist policy of the KMT was similar to other anti-religious movements occurring at the same time in countries as different as Mexico, the Soviet Union and Turkey. 182

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180 KMT leaders at the time saw themselves as inheritors of the May Fourth Movement and its anti-religious views. See Prasenjit Duara, “Knowledge and Power in the Discourse of Modernity,” 77. That campaign was launched by the “Society to Expedite the Promotion of Education with Temple Property.” According to Holmes Welch, the confiscation of Buddhist property was concentrated on Eastern Zhejiang, and the adoption of a proposal for nation-wide confiscation was made by the 1928 national conference on education in Nanjing. See The Buddhist Revival in China, 40-41, 44. Prasenjit Duara writes that the campaign extended to the Lower and Central Yangzi plain and was led by KMT activists. See “Knowledge and Power in the Discourse of Modernity,” 75. The archives of the BAROC suggest that the last campaign was limited in scope. They only mention for those years the “Campaign against Buddhism [Fandui Fojiao Dahui 反對佛教大會]” sponsored in 1928 by KMT cadres in Cixi 慈谿 county, Jiangsu province, and the activities of the “Movement to Destroy Superstition [Pochu Mixin Yundong 破除迷信運動]” launched by cadres from the provincial branch of the KMT in Guangzhou the following year. See Shi Miaoran 釋妙然, Minguo Fojiao Dashinianji 民國佛教大事年紀 [Annals of Buddhism in the Republic] (Taipei: Haichaoyin Zazhishe 海潮音雜誌社, 1995), 129, 139.

182 To be sure, these three historical watersheds were also distinctive in several respects. Hence, Latin American anti-clericalism did not aimed at destroying religion per se, but sought to curtail the power of the Catholic Church. See David C. Bailey, Viva Cristo Rey! The Cristero Rebellion and the Church-State Conflict in Mexico (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974). With respect to the Kemalist revolution in Turkey, Bernard Lewis has argued its goal was neither irreligious nor anti-Islamic, but laicist. Its primary goal was limited to the desestabliment of Islam. See The Emergence of Modern Turkey, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 412. On the early Soviet policy, see Bohdan Bociurkiw, “The Shaping of Soviet Religious Policy,” Problem
This second campaign was less successful, however, for two reasons. Firstly, the Buddhist community had become more cohesive. Secondly, as Chiang Kai-shek consolidated his authority within the KMT, he sought to reduce the importance of radical mass movements such as the anti-superstition campaign. He disapproved of them and sent instructions to stop the implementation of expropriation threats. Eventually, Chiang, who himself had converted to Christianity, went further and decided to emphasize the positive dimension of religion in his effort to instill in the citizens of the ROC a sense of discipline. In 1934, he launched the New Life Movement [Xin Shenghuo Yundong 新生活運動], a campaign advocating goals that were incompatible with the iconoclast views of the anti-religious activists.

The brief period of anti-religious intolerance within the KMT was not, in the end, likely to endure, because the ideology of that party was not based on a rationalist teleology...
premised on the eventual disappearance of religion. Rather, its policies toward religion represented the continuation of the perennial concern of the state, prevailing throughout the traditional era, that it have exclusive authority in determining religious orthodoxy. This may explain why the authoritarian religious policies of successive KMT governments, in tune with indigenous experiences, were never resented as a form of foreign cultural imperialism, as is the case in other societies where states are implementing secular policies seen by many as alien to their own practices.

The most efficient means to protect the Buddhist community, in the end, proved to be the involvement of lay Buddhists in Chinese cities after the twenties. Not only did these groups foster devotion, but, like their Christian counterparts, they also undertook educational and charitable activities, starting a tradition pursued today in Taiwan by both Foguangshan and Ciji. Although the endeavors undertaken by lay Buddhists may have

187 Lu Shih-chiang has argued that although intellectuals of the early Republican period consciously criticized Confucius, his concepts were “quietly and inconspicuously exerting their influences and being accepted as the theoretical basis by the anti-religious intellectuals.” See “An Analysis of the Antichristian Thoughts of Chinese Intellectuals in the Early Republican Period,” in Symposium on the History of the ROC, August 23-28, 1981, Vol. II. Early Period of the Republic (Taipei: China Cultural Service Compilation Committee of the Symposium, 1981), 142.


189 Holmes Welch, The Buddhist Revival in China, 26-27.
helped diminish the impression that Buddhism was a religion aloof from society, most members of the Sangha did not support these trends. One episode in the many attempts by Taixu to establish a Buddhist representative organization uniting lay and clergy in 1928 suggests why most monks and nuns adopted that approach. After Taixu urged the desirability of establishing such an organization to Chiang Kai-shek himself, government officials told him it would be better to establish an association for Buddhist studies [Foxuehui 佛學會] because of the anti-religious movement. In other words, the monks, more dependent than lay people on donations from the public or state patronage, were made aware of the prevailing mood in society, and told not to provoke non-believers. The advice of Chiang Kai-shek notwithstanding, monks founded the BAROC in 1929. However, on Chiang’s advice, the organization successfully prevented the implementation of Taixu’s ideas about the modernization of Buddhism.

190 Ibid., 64.
191 Briefly member of the standing committee of the BAROC in 1931, Taixu tried to implement his reforms but conservative monks prevented his endeavors and compelled him to resign. Holmes Welch, The Buddhist Revival in China, 42-44.
Surviving the circumstances of war (1937-1949)

During the Japanese invasion of China, the KMT did not have the ability, the willingness, or the incentive to pay attention to the needs of the Buddhists. The existence of a national Buddhist organization was irrelevant considering the fact that China was under the jurisdiction of separate governments. During the war, members of the Buddhist laity and clergy had to deal with the various regimes propped up by the Japanese invaders, the warlords of North China, or the KMT in Chongqing. From the defeat of the Japanese in 1945 until 1949, China remained divided between the CCP bases in North China and the KMT government, which was trying to establish its authority from the capital Nanjing. During these critical years, the KMT proved unable to consolidate its rule and legitimacy in most of China and, as a result, the regime crumbled after the CCP resumed its military operations in 1948.

The war between the KMT and the CCP compelled the Sangha and lay Buddhists to take sides more openly in politics. Even if critical liberal intellectuals were ready to offer

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192 Charles Jones notes however that during the 1940s, monks were drafted in the War against the Japanese as well as during the Civil War, and had to be willing to do any work in the armed forces. See "Buddhism in Taiwan," 192-193.
193 Arthur F. Wright, Buddhism in Chinese History, 117.
qualified support to the CCP as the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek appeared imminent, many members of the monastic community were not ready to go that far. Clerical and lay Buddhists knew about the views of the CCP, which criticized all religions as weapons used by the ruling class to subjugate the masses. They may also have been aware that after the establishment of the Chinese Soviet Republic in Southern Jiangxi in 1931, the CCP had advocated confiscation of Buddhist property and deprived the clergy of civic rights.

Out of concern for the survival of their tradition, it is likely that most monks and nuns preferred to link their fate to the Republican regime. In the face of the inevitable, however, most of them had no other choice but to seek accommodation with the CCP.

Meanwhile, Taixu, having achieved control of the BAROC in 1945, had a chance to see his reforms implemented for a short while. According to Welch, the laity took charge of the BAROC; the Sangha became increasingly subordinated to the laity, while the

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195 Kenneth Ch’en, Buddhism in China, 461.
196 Mao Zedong declared that monks and other religious professional would be deprived of their right to vote, and land belonging to the Sangha had to be handed over to peasants. See Stuart R. Schram, ed., Mao’s Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings, 1912-1949. Volume IV: The Rise and Fall of the Chinese Soviet Republic, 1931-1934 (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 823, 871.
197 Taixu passed away in 1947, and conservatives again took over control of the organizations. The next chapter discusses these issues in greater details.
latter became increasingly independent from the Sangha. As lay Buddhists increasingly took up duties usually performed by the monks, lay devotees needed the Sangha less and less. The Sangha could hardly have prevented that trend, however, because it needed the protection of a large group of enthusiastic lay supporters against the enemies of the monastic orders. It is difficult to know whether the predominance of lay people within Chinese Buddhist organizations could have then led to their greater political participation, since the CCP quickly sought to limit the activities of parties and organizations outside of its sphere of control.

Summary of the findings

Buddhists were not politically active during the Republican period. Their environment, and the passivity of their leadership within the Sangha made them unable to respond adequately to change. The crisis faced by Chinese society during the Republican period led to the ascendancy of materialist and nationalist ideologies, a development with two consequences for Buddhists. Firstly, many central and local government leaders

198 Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 82-83.
adopted policies with a pronounced anti-religious bias.\textsuperscript{200} Secondly, the heterodox Buddhist organizations no longer offered a credible alternative to the current authorities. The few members of the Sangha or laity who wanted to get involved in politics at best represented a small élite aloof from the social reality of the times, and at worst were guilty of associating with the imperial regime and were blamed for the decline of China. As a result, most Chinese intellectuals and élites sought answers to the crisis of their society in ideologies associated with "wealth and power,"\textsuperscript{201} goals that were antithetical to the tenets of Buddhist religion and philosophy.

Another reason for the political inaction of Buddhists was the reluctance of the Sangha to encourage the laity to get involved in politics. Monks wanted to preserve their privileged status and feared that political involvement would sacrifice the essence of their religion. Although too few Buddhist clerics were ready to respond to the challenge of modernization, there were some remarkable exceptions, such as the monk Taixu. The policy of the Republican governments against religious organizations, which had compelled lay Buddhists to rise in the defense of their religion, triggered his drive for the reform of the

\textsuperscript{200} Prasenjit Duara, "Knowledge and Power in the Discourse of Modernity," 73.
\textsuperscript{201} On this quest, see Benjamin I. Schwartz, \textit{In Search of Wealth and Power: Yan Fu and the West} (New York:
Sangha. His views that the religion should not be limited to practices such as meditation but should also include involvement in secular affairs, represent an attempt at theological innovation that could not succeed in the unstable atmosphere of Republican China. In addition, his claim, intended as a cultural response to Western influence, that “Buddhism is a higher form of science,” ran counter to the prevailing trends among Chinese intellectuals.\(^{202}\) The reforms of Taixu failed mostly because a majority within the Sangha opposed his views. Most monks could not conceive of their lay subordinates running the affairs of the religion. In sum, if Buddhists were not politically active during the Republican era, it was not only a result of state repression, which actually was often marginal and ineffective, but also because of a conservative bent on the part of the Sangha.

\(^{202}\) On the naivety of Taixu on that point, see Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 65-66.
Buddhists and Politics in Taiwan Prior to 1989

The interplay between a Sangha with strong roots in East Central China, whose history has been sketched above, and a local laity that was not involved in most of the upheavals occurring on the Chinese mainland before 1945, shaped the situation of Buddhism in contemporary Taiwan. We have to keep in mind that when monks from the mainland reached the island, the Taiwanese had already experienced for centuries a tumultuous history that had molded the local Buddhist laity in distinctive ways. Until 1945, most Taiwanese Buddhists did not have much contact with their co-religionists from Zhejiang and Jiangsu, the most dynamic centers of Buddhist activity in China, and the main source of influence from the continent was limited to the province of Fujian.\footnote{For details, see Charles B. Jones, “Buddhism in Taiwan,” Ch. 1.}

Buddhists and politics in Taiwan before the arrival of the KMT (1945)

Taiwan has been on the periphery of traditional China since the twelfth century, but after the Chinese defeat in the war of 1895, it was ceded to the Japanese colonial empire...
until its “retrocession” into the fold of the ROC in 1945. During the first centuries of Chinese presence in Taiwan, the Buddhist clergy had no major impact on the island, and most lay Buddhists formed their own associations of devotees. The historical record indicates that when the island fell under colonial control, these organizations could not effectively resist the attempts by Japanese religious associations to incorporate them into their fold.

Buddhists and politics under Qing rule

There exists evidence of Chinese settlements in Taiwan dating back to the twelfth century, but effective administration by the central government of China was achieved only after the Qing court defeated the Ming loyalist Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 (also known as Koxinga) in 1683, who had used the island as his base. Sporadic uprisings directed against the “foreign” rule of the Qing continued to erupt on the island during the two centuries following the nominal incorporation of Taiwan into China, and it was only in 1885 that Taiwan acquired its current status as a province. Ten years later, the island was
ceded to Japan under the terms of the treaty of Shimonoseki, a decision that led to a brief uprising in which thousands of Chinese soldiers and civilians were killed.204

Owing to the status of the island as a frontier territory, religious activity in Taiwan differed from what could be found then on the Chinese mainland. Song Guangyu 宋光宇 indicates there were no orthodox Chinese Buddhist organizations in Taiwan during the Qing era, and only a few monks from Southern Fujian ever came to administer temples.205 Charles B. Jones notes that most of these monks were not ordained, that lay Buddhists did not know much about the doctrines and the scriptures, and that the temples were often turned into guild-halls and bases of political power.206 David K. Jordan and Daniel L. Overmyer note the existence of lay Buddhist organizations characterized by their vegetarian diets and strict morality, known as Zhaijiao 齋教.207 These movements are described by Song as heterodox and messianic, and one of the three major sects, the Dragon Flower sect [Longhuajiao 龍華教] had until the onset of the Japanese

206 “Buddhism in Taiwan,” 70-71.
administration as many as thirteen temples and sixty-eight vegetarian halls located in Taichung [Taizhong 台中], Hsinchu [Xinzhu 新竹], and Taoyuan 桃園 counties.\textsuperscript{208}

Jordan and Overmyer, quoting from Japanese scholars, note that these groups were conservative and provided alternative means of security and status to their members.\textsuperscript{209}

That is, there was no tradition of militant heterodoxy in Taiwan before 1895, and the absence of resistance on the part of Buddhists to Japanese colonial rule was consistent with their usually quietist attitude.

\textit{Buddhists and politics under Japanese rule (1895-1945)}

The effects of the Japanese colonial administration's policies towards Taiwanese Buddhists were complex. On one hand, the tradition was threatened because too few Taiwanese Buddhists remained in touch with developments on the Chinese mainland, and many of them depended on Japanese monks for their training.\textsuperscript{210} On the other hand, Buddhist institutions could prosper because some monks from China were allowed to

\textsuperscript{208} Song Guangyu, \textit{Zongjiao yu Shehui}, 172-174.
\textsuperscript{210} Charles B. Jones, “Buddhism in Taiwan,” 203.
transmit the precepts.\textsuperscript{211} This apparent contradiction is explained by the shifts in Japanese policies, which unfolded in three stages. At first, during the late Meiji 明治 period (1895-1911), the government was too busy quelling resistance to its rule to pay much attention to religious affairs.\textsuperscript{212} During the Taisho 大正 era (1912-1925), a generally tolerant policy was adopted, and many organizations emerged on the island. However, during the early Showa 昭和 era (1926-1945), the colonial government sought further to integrate Taiwan within its “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere” through a policy of cultural assimilation.\textsuperscript{213} This project included the transformation of some native Buddhist properties into Shinto shrines, and proselytizing by Japanese Buddhist sects.\textsuperscript{214}

Taiwanese Buddhists reacted to the policy of the Japanese colonial administration by adopting an attitude which Jones defines as “accommodation without assimilation.”\textsuperscript{215} Taiwanese Buddhists sought to cooperate with the colonial authority and joined their Japanese co-religionists in the South Sea Buddhist Association [\textit{Nanying Fojiaohui} 南瀛佛]

\textsuperscript{211} \textit{Ibid.}, 175.
\textsuperscript{212} Song Guangyu, \textit{Zongjiao yu Shehui}, 173.
\textsuperscript{213} \textit{Ibid.}, 173-174.
\textsuperscript{214} Chen Lingrong 陈玲蓉, “Riqu Shiqi Taiwan Zongjiao Zhengce Yanjiu 日據時期臺灣宗教政策研究 [Research of Taiwan Religious Policy During Japan’s Occupying Taiwan (Sic)],” (M.A. Thesis, Tamkang [Danjiang 淡江] University, 1990) 260-278.
\textsuperscript{215} Charles B. Jones, “Buddhism in Taiwan,” 177.
They sought to make themselves acceptable to the authorities in order to avoid the backlash against local religious associations that resulted from early rebellions.\textsuperscript{216} This attitude was understandable: Buddhist clerics and lay people had no reason to believe until the 1940s that Taiwan would again become part of China.\textsuperscript{217} When the ROC was ready to resume control of Taiwan, the Buddhist community on the island was divided between three different groups: a Japanese system attracting liberal intellectual élites, a more traditional Chinese system originating from the province of Fujian, and the folk tradition of Zhaijiao.\textsuperscript{218}

\textbf{The politics of Buddhists in Taiwan from retrocession to 1987}

The retrocession of Taiwan to Chinese rule, the concern of the KMT over Taiwanese separatist tendencies, the resumption of the civil war on the Chinese mainland, and finally the relocation of the central ROC government to Taipei, all affected Taiwanese Buddhism after 1945.

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 176.
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid., 266-267.
Throughout these events and for the following four decades, the ruling party would remain staunch in its resolve to prevent the activities of any potential opposition to its rule on the island, and would seek to control the activities of all sectors of society. Many Buddhists who abhorred communist ideology, especially monks and nuns coming from the Chinese mainland, found themselves in agreement with KMT policies. Although politics in the ROC have not been constrained by martial law since 1987, it is important to keep in mind that two of the events that led to its proclamation four decades ago still cast their shadow on current politics in Taiwan today. These are the yet-to-be concluded Chinese Civil War and the ethnic divide that was generated by KMT policies after the retrocession of the island to Chinese rule.

*The shadow of the ethnic divide (1945-1949)*

The immediate disappearance of the SSBA and the creation of the Taiwan Province Buddhist Association [*Taiwan Sheng Fojiaohui 台灣省佛教會*](TPBA) in its place were merely sideshows to the greater transformations sweeping China and East Asia after World War Two. The SSBA vanished as a result of the expulsion of the Japanese from Taiwan,
and within two years the TPBA would, in turn, transform itself into a branch of the BAROC, the organization that would shape the fate of the Sangha in Taiwan for the next three decades. Although the dissolution of the SSBA was a foregone conclusion because of its association with the former Japanese colonial ruler, the incorporation of the TPBA within the BAROC was different. This event came about as a result of a tragedy that has divided the Taiwanese born on the island and the Chinese migrants who came from the mainland after 1945. The population of Taiwan initially welcomed the KMT when it took control of Taiwan in 1945. Barely two years later, resentment against the policy of the governor Chen Yi 陳儀, sent by the central government in Nanjing, culminated in an island-wide uprising known as the February 28 incident [er er ba shijian 二二八事件].

In reaction to that disturbance, the ruling party launched a campaign of repression and purges throughout society aimed at preventing the emergence of Taiwanese nationalism.

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For the next three decades, many Taiwanese would come to think of their country as
governed by a foreign authority.\footnote{President Lee Teng-hui, himself a native Taiwanese, would himself say so about the first decades of KMT rule in Taiwan, which he described to the Japanese journalist Ryotaro Shiba as a “foreign authority [wai lai zhengquan 外來政權],” on 31 March 1994. For the context surrounding that interview, see Christopher Hughes, Taiwan and Chinese nationalism, 96.}

It is hard to tell precisely how Taiwanese monastic and lay Buddhists felt about the
related fact that the leadership of their community, through the BAROC, was, like a mirror
image of the political system, composed mostly of members from the Chinese mainland.
If the incorporation of the TPBA into the BAROC was not entirely the result of coercion, it
was not entirely voluntary either: Buddhists were aware of the dangers they faced if they
appeared to support greater autonomy for Taiwanese institutions.\footnote{Charles Jones, “Buddhism in Taiwan,” 185-186. The next chapter will discuss this issue in greater}

Low survey figures
for Buddhist lay believers at that time cannot be construed as a clear indication that
Taiwanese bendiren rejected the BAROC. These figures may simply indicate that
Buddhism was not considered a prestigious religion, or that people preferred to identify
themselves as adherents of folk religions. The only certainty is that Buddhist
organizations during those troubled years had to convince the authorities of their loyalty in
order to ensure their own survival.

\footnote{Charles Jones, “Buddhism in Taiwan,” 185-186. The next chapter will discuss this issue in greater}
The shadow of the threat from China (1949 to 1952)

Two years after the February 28, 1947, uprising, the CCP defeated the KMT on the continent and the ROC government had to relocate its capital to Taipei, triggering a series of events that decisively shaped the context in which Buddhists would later operate. In the immediate aftermath of the government’s retreat from the Chinese mainland, more than 1.5 million migrants arrived in Taiwan, and Chiang Kai-shek feared an imminent collapse of his regime.\footnote{Steve Tsang, “Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang’s Policy to Reconquer the Chinese Mainland, 1949-1958,” in \textit{In the Shadow of China: Political Developments in Taiwan since 1949} (Hong Kong University Press, 1993), 51.} In an effort to establish new foundations for the party in Taiwan, the KMT launched in 1950 a major campaign of reconstruction. The outbreak of the Korean War by the end of the same year dramatically improved the fortunes of the ROC: U.S. President Harry Truman reversed previous policies of non-interference in the Taiwan Strait and resumed direct military aid to the ROC in 1951.\footnote{Gu Weiqun, \textit{Conflicts of Divided Nations: The Cases of China and Korea} (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995), 109.} These events provided the KMT with the opportunity to consolidate its power on the island and, by the time the reconstruction campaign concluded in 1952, the ruling party had prescribed the
establishment of government-controlled mass organizations for every social group in the ROC.\(^{225}\)

Despite their recognition that Buddhists could be useful allies in their campaign to gain support from other anti-communist Asian countries where Buddhism was an influential tradition, KMT officials nonetheless constrained the activities of clerical and lay Buddhists. Following the arrival of the defeated nationalist government, relations between Buddhists and the KMT went through a difficult phase. Out of an estimated one hundred monks coming from the continent,\(^{226}\) only a handful of prominent clergymen, such as Ven. Baisheng 白生 (1904-1989) and the Zhangjia 章嘉 Living Buddha [Huofo 活佛] (1891-1957), were well-connected enough to continue their activities after they took refuge in Taiwan. Most other Buddhists coming from the mainland fell victims to harassment by the authorities.\(^{227}\) The ruling party even criticized Yinshun, the most prominent disciple of Taixu to emigrate to Taiwan. One historian of Buddhism in Taiwan, Jiang Canteng, stated that

\(^{225}\) Tien Hung-mao noted that that campaign was primarily aimed at trade unions, farmers’ associations and chambers of commerce. Arguably, in the early fifties the party did not feel the urgency to control the BAROC because the association was weak and Buddhists were not numerous. Besides, the membership of the KMT until 1952 was also limited: Tien mentions that by December 1950, the ruling party had only 80,043 civilian members. See *The Great Transition*, 59, 66-68.


\(^{227}\) Many younger monks that would later become prominent in Taiwanese Buddhism, such as Ven. Cihang 慈
mentions that an important text written by Yinshun, “A Broad-ranging Discussion on the Dharma [Fofa Gailun 佛法概論],” was construed by the military authorities as proof that he was a fellow-traveler of the communist party [wei gongchandang pulu 爲共產黨鋪路].

These events, to be sure, have to be put in the context of the period. In the chaotic context of defeat on the continent, the KMT control of the island was tenuous, and there were reasons to believe that the CCP was sending some spies among refugees. The authorities were especially suspicious of homeless people lacking proper household registration on the mainland. Since many young refugee monks were in that situation, they were likely to be arrested according to the provision of a decree issued by General Chen Cheng 陳誠 on vagrants and homeless people. Tensions eventually disappeared, as the authorities came to realize that these Buddhists from the continent shared with them

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229 For a detailed account of this period, see Chapter Four of Charles Brewer Jones, “Buddhism in Taiwan.” See also Jiang Canteng, Taiwan Fojiao Bainianshi zhi Yanjiu, 249–250; 20 Shiji Taiwan Fojiao de Zhexue xinxi Fuzhan 台灣 20 世紀佛教的轉型與發展 [The Transformations and Development of Twentieth-Century Buddhism in Taiwan] (Kaohsiung: Jingxin Wenzhao Jijinhui 淨心文教基金會, 1995), 164–168.
their anti-communist leanings, and could be a useful instrument in their effort to eliminate
native Taiwanese separatist sentiments.

Taiwan under siege and Buddhism under control (1952 to 1966)

In 1952, the ruling party concluded its campaign of reorganization and set up
corporatist institutions. It decreed that every interest group on the island become a
transmission belt between its members and the government.\textsuperscript{230} That is, the role of all
interest groups was to “transmit messages, mobilize political support, and help implement
policies for the ruling party and government.”\textsuperscript{231} Buddhists did not escape these
restrictions, and in 1952 the only organization entitled to represent the Sangha in Taiwan
was the BAROC.\textsuperscript{232} The establishment of a corporatist structure served the ends of the


\textsuperscript{231} Tien Hung-mao, \textit{The Great Transition}, 45.

\textsuperscript{232} If there were resistance to this dependency from the state, it has yet to be documented. In the current climate of openness, research on the existence of such Buddhist dissidence can now be undertaken, but nothing as yet emerged and the consensus expressed above by Jiang Canteng about the conservative attitude
party, but as the next chapter will demonstrate, it also benefited the Sangha to a degree. In addition, suggests Tien Hung-mao, most religious organizations were not as tightly controlled as institutions involved in farming, labor and industry. Finally, as mentioned above, the Sangha was eager to demonstrate that it was not opposing the regime and therefore did not deserve to be persecuted.

In 1954-55, Taiwan was threatened militarily by the PRC, and in order to secure a mutual defense pact with the United States, Chiang had to promise the Americans secretly that he would not intervene on the mainland without prior consultation with them. Chiang went further after the Second Strait Crisis of 1958, declaring publicly that the restoration of freedom to the Chinese people could best be achieved by successfully implementing Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People in the area governed by the ROC. From then on, the emphasis of KMT policy shifted from the recovery of China through the use of force to recovery by political means, if possible. Simultaneously, the KMT would develop Taiwan as a model of economic growth to be emulated by Chinese on

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233 The Great Transition, 46, 52.
the mainland.\footnote{Ibid., 55.} Such initiatives on the policy of reunification provided the impetus for a continuation of the land reform, but also provided arguments for opposition activists, who started to take the KMT to task for not implementing the party’s promise to install constitutional government.

With respect to political dissidence, however, it was not until the 1970s that the KMT was ready to tolerate any opposition. Not only did the party suppress all political opposition, but it also repressed other challenges to its corporatist structure that were emerging in popular culture and religion. From 1962 to 1970, the Provincial Police Administration clamped down on the sects and cults that did not fit into officially sanctioned definitions of acceptable religiosity. These measures affected Buddhists themselves, and in particular the Nichiren sect in Taiwan.\footnote{For a documentary study of the police operations against the Nichiren, see Ho Fang-jiau, *Taiwan Sheng Jingwu Dang'an Huibian*, 359-478.} The Sangha and lay Buddhist institutions, however, never challenged the KMT authorities over these policies of suppression.\footnote{It is my speculation that since the Nichiren sect was Japanese and that these events happened less than two decades after Japanese colonial rule, antipathies based on nationalist feelings may have played a role in the indifference expressed by the BAROC. In addition, police reports show that security forces were aware of the connection between the Nichiren sect, the Soka Gakkai [*Chuangjia Xuehui 創價學會*], and the Komeito [*Gongming Zhengzhi Lianmeng 公明政治聯盟*]. It is inevitable that security forces would be alarmed once}
initially by the KMT later demonstrated their loyalty to the government. Their attitude was likely due to the institutional frailty of the Buddhist institutions on the island during the first decades of KMT rule in Taiwan. The Sangha and lay Buddhists were seemingly content with pursuing their religious activities under the guidance of the BAROC, and preferred to stay away from politics.

The ‘Taiwan miracle’ and the gradual expansion of Buddhism (1966 to 1979)

Transformations in the international context prompted an important change in the domestic politics of Taiwan that would shape the institutional environment of limited political liberalization in which Buddhist organizations operated from 1966 to 1979. The ROC lost its seat at the United Nations in 1971, and the United States started mending fences with the ROC’s rival after the historic trip of President Nixon to the PRC in 1972. These diplomatic setbacks, however, were offset by the increasingly favorable situation in Taiwan, compared to the chaos that was tearing China apart from 1966 to 1976. The mainland was then going through the Cultural Revolution, a period of complex infighting

they found out that the Komeito advocated in Japan a policy of Buddhist socialism. Ho Fang-jiau, *Taiwan Sheng Jingwu Dang’an Huibian*, 382.
during which the PRC did not represent a credible military or political threat to the ROC.

Meanwhile, the KMT leadership in Taiwan was more secure, the economy was growing at a spectacular rate, and, in contrast to the series of purges occurring on the Chinese mainland, the succession to Chiang Kai-shek in 1976 was achieved peacefully.

In response to the Cultural Revolution, the KMT inaugurated in 1967 the “Chinese Culture Renaissance” movement. Although this movement did not generate tremendous enthusiasm among the population, one of its positive consequences was that it provided favorable conditions for the emergence of organizations embodying traditional values, and in particular groups such as Foguangshan and Ciji.

From 1969 onwards, party leaders felt it necessary to encourage limited elections to find a solution to the problem of natural attrition among the old representatives from the Chinese mainland in the three main chambers of the central government. In this climate of limited openness, a degree of social pluralism started to emerge. Along with a “Taiwan miracle” in economic development, the seeds were sown for another “miracle” in political development as the emerging middle classes pushed demands for democratization.

238 The National Assembly [Guomin Dahui 國民大會], the Legislative Yuan [Lifayuan 立法院] and the Control Yuan [Jianchayuan 監察院]. Christopher Hugues, Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism, 33; Steven J.
Politicians “outside of the party [dangwai 黨外]” running in the elections of 1972 gained seats in local assemblies and became national representatives.\(^{239}\)

During that tumultuous decade, the Sangha did not get involved politically with the opposition, but tacitly stood behind the authorities when they sought to limit the activities of the incipient opposition. The BAROC did not react against the persecution of Yiguandao 一貫道 and other heterodox groups: as the next chapter discusses, it is likely that the orthodox Sangha had a vested interest in these measures. This much is clear when one considers the call by the Presbyterian Church for Taiwanese self-determination and recalls that the leadership of the BAROC comprised primarily monks from the Chinese mainland. The attitude of the laity during that period is less clear. The only certainty is that the number of lay Buddhists increased with economic growth and political liberalization. Lay Buddhists who may have been previously reluctant to join organizations outside of the legally sanctioned BAROC started to participate in the activities of other organizations such as Foguangshan and Ciji. These groups, set up by monks and nuns claiming a spiritual affiliation with Taixu and his successor Yinshun, were

\[^{239}\] They were referred as such by the KMT. Linda Chao and Ramon Myers, *The First Chinese Democracy*,
partly implementing some of the reforms envisioned by Taixu more than two decades before, by giving lay Buddhists a greater role in their organizations. These organizations, however, worked within the bounds of religious activity authorized by the government and did not embrace the more radical views of Taixu. They undertook charitable work and spread the faith through their writings and public lectures, but shied away from any intervention in politics.

Towards liberalization and the flourishing of Buddhism (1979 to 1987)

With the ascendancy of Deng Xiaoping as a paramount leader in the late 1970s, the PRC adopted a more conciliatory approach towards Taiwan. This favorable situation, however, coincided with a serious setback for Taiwan: the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and the PRC in 1979. That crisis, far from compromising the trends of the previous decade, however, simply added new urgency to the pursuit of limited democratization. Eager to retain at least the informal support of the United States through the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) and maintain its legitimacy at home,

the KMT leadership was becoming aware that the continuation of martial law represented
in the long run a serious predicament.²⁴¹ During the late 1980s, the governments of Chiang
Ching-kuo 蔣經國 and his successor Lee Teng-hui set in motion an incremental process of
democratization by gradually relaxing restrictions on organizational life. In the process,
the KMT adopted a completely new approach towards heterodox and syncretic religions
such as Yiguandao, and lifted the ban on the activities of the latter in 1987.²⁴²

Meanwhile, Buddhist monks enjoyed higher visibility, and the numbers of lay people
increased remarkably. During the sixties, official reports mentioned a membership of less
than 2,500 monks and nuns, and a total of 35,000 Buddhist devotees as members of the
BAROC.²⁴³ In 1984 an island-wide survey sponsored by the National Science Council of
the ROC suggested that as many as 11.2% of the population, that is about 2 million people,
were Buddhists.²⁴⁴ Other indicators, such as the number of temples built over the years,

²⁴¹ The willingness of the KMT leadership to contemplate democratization, to be sure, did not go unopposed
within the party, and the role of Dangwai politicians during that period proved decisive. On these issues, see
Steven J. Hood, The Kuomintang and the Democratization of Taiwan, 57-72; Linda Chao and Ramon H.
Myers, The First Chinese Democracy, 115-127.
²⁴² On the transition between the government ban and the legalization of Yiguandao, see Lin Benxuan, Taiwan
de Zhengjiao Chongtu 台灣的政教衝突 [The Conflict Between Politics and Religion in Taiwan](Panchiao,
Taipei County: Daoxiang Chubanshe 道鄉出版社, 1994), 47-63.
²⁴³ It is unlikely that all Buddhists were registered with BAROC, as the next chapter discusses. For the
figures presented here, see Republic of China, Ministry of Information, China Handbook, 1966-67 (Taipei:
²⁴⁴ The source does not mentioned how many Buddhists were members of the BAROC, but more recent data
also pointed to an increase in the number of lay devotees. Song Guanyu indicates that while there were 838 Buddhist places of worship in 1960, in 1989 there were 4011. This expansion in the number of devotees in the Buddhist community, however, did not lead to greater political involvement on the part of the most important figures in the Sangha.

**Summary of the period**

Taiwanese Buddhists did not engage in dissident politics during the period of martial law. The next chapter will document that when they criticized the government, it was only discreetly, and only when their most immediate interests appeared challenged. State repression certainly played a major role in their lack of political involvement, but two other factors were also prominent. Firstly, the Sangha and the laity agreed with the anti-communist policy of the KMT. Secondly, clerics and lay persons had their own reasons for supporting the repression of demands for Taiwanese self-determination. For the most

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on the membership of BAROC and the total number of Buddhists suggest that only a small proportion of them joined the BAROC. For 1984 figures, see ROC, GIO, *Republic of China Yearbook, 1989* (Hsintien, Taipei county: Kwang Hua Publishing, 1989), 562.

part, monks in the BAROC originated from the Chinese mainland, and many longed for an eventual return to their homeland. For them, Taiwanese separatism dashed hopes of such a return. Lay Buddhists had more complex motivations that were not different from those of their non-Buddhist compatriots. They subscribed to the KMT's avowed policy of implementing rapid economic growth with minimum income disparity in exchange for acceptance of one-party rule.

As a result of successful economic policies that favored the growth of the middle classes, and as liberalization progressed during the late 1980s, advocates of Taiwanese self-determination grew more self-confident. In this new climate, lay Buddhists, the majority of whom are bendiren, began to join organizations in which members of the Sangha originating on the Chinese mainland had less influence. The ensuing shift away from the BAROC, however, cannot be entirely explained by ethnicity. The attractiveness of organizations such as Foguangshan and Ciji is due in no small part to the fact that they encourage initiative on the part of lay people and embody the modern and socially active ideals previously advocated by Taixu.
Buddhists and politics after 1987

As discussed at the beginning of this study, Taiwan’s political system has changed considerably throughout the 1990s. The process of liberalization has been reaffirmed with the passing of the law on civic organizations [Renmin tuantifa 人民團體法] in 1989. Since then, independent parties and organizations have received legal protection and have asserted themselves. Along with the emergence of the pro-independence DPP, the KMT has undergone a thorough transformation and has dramatically increased the representation of Taiwanese at all levels within its ranks. Over the years, the ruling party has remained in power by adopting many of the policies that were advocated by the DPP. Meanwhile, changes in society have consolidated the progress made on the political front. The legalization of hitherto forbidden religions such as Yiguandao indicates that the government is more willing to respect the expression of heterodox views. Taken together, these

246 An account of the law, as it relates to religious organizations, is available in Wu Yaofeng, Zongjiao Fagui Shijiang, 480-494.
247 In 1992, last year for which the KMT maintains statistics about the ethnic composition of its leadership, 69.19% of the party membership was Taiwanese. The ethnic composition of the Central Standing Committee for the same year was 57.1% Taiwanese. Huang Teh –fu, “Elections and the Evolution of the Kuomintang,” in Taiwan’s Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition, 115, 119-120. The official census for 1990 notes that only 13% of the population have their origins in mainland provinces. Christopher Hughes, Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism, 96.
248 Ibid, 154.
249 Lin Benxuan, Taiwan de Zhengjiao Chongtu, 135-140.
developments offer the Buddhist community unprecedented opportunities to consolidate its position within contemporary society.

As freedom of the press expanded during the 1990s, individual Buddhists have been free to speak out on public affairs and to get involved politically. Ven. Zhaohui 昭慧 has stated that according to “This-worldly Buddhism,” the devotees must get involved politically.250 Lay people like Jiang Canteng have written critically about the attitude of the Sangha during the period of martial law and have emphasized the necessity of indigenizing Buddhism, thereby supporting the trend advocated by the opposition in favor of self-determination for the Taiwanese.251 Wu Boxiong 吳伯雄, another lay Buddhist, is a popular member of the KMT central committee and a former Minister of the Interior. Chen Lü’an, also a lay Buddhist, is on record for having opposed the policies of Lee. In sum, there are in Taiwan a number of prominent public figures who are known for their Buddhist beliefs or lifestyle, and whose dissident opinions are partly informed by their faith. This trend, however, does not translate into a comparable involvement on the part of

251 Jiang Canteng, 20 Shiji Taiwan Fojiao de Zhuanxing Yu Fazhan, 174-180.
Buddhist organizations. With the exception of Foguangshan, they have stayed clear from publicly stating their positions on public issues, even when their interests clash with those of the government.

As noted in the previous chapter, the institutionalization of Buddhism has led to the creation of over thirty registered organizations in Taiwan. In addition, statistics suggest an explosion in the number of lay people, and in particular the massive participation of women in the lay movement. While in the 1950s Taiwanese Buddhist organizations were primarily small monastic orders headed by males from the Chinese mainland, they are now larger groups in which lay women with roots in Taiwan are very active. The political attitudes of these groups are more diversified than before: on the one hand, Ciji preaches disengagement from politics; on the other hand, Foguangshan took a stand in 1995-1996 by supporting the presidential candidate Chen Lü’an. What explain these different forms of political behavior? The discussion so far suggests that external factors such as government policy towards religious organizations are not likely to explain these discrepancies.
Conclusion

The historical review in this chapter has noted that Chinese Buddhists on the continent and in Taiwan have responded in various ways to government policies. The differences in these responses could not have been determined by doctrinal schisms within the religion because the latter are irrelevant to the Buddhist tradition. Rebellious movements such as the White Lotus, for example, held beliefs in the Maitreya and Amitabha Buddhas that were shared by other, more orthodox sects and organizations. Confucian cultural resistance did not precipitate Buddhist political activism in any preordained way for at least two reasons. Firstly, Buddhists have integrated over centuries many aspects of Confucian ethics, in particular the deference to secular authority. Secondly, Confucian literati have in turn incorporated elements of Buddhist metaphysics and philosophy before ushering in the neo-Confucian revival.

The Sangha has been more closely associated than lay Buddhists with the secular authorities, no doubt out of self-interest as a group, but also out of concern for the
preservation of the religion. Orthodox monks were wary of heterodoxy lest it trigger the persecution of Buddhists by suspicious governments. In earlier times, the Sangha was successful in asserting its authority, but the spiritual decline of the ecclesiastical orders over centuries led to a lack of respect and influence and the concurrent growth of lay organizations of devotees. The members of the latter believed that their religious ideals of compassion, charity and altruism could be better served by their social welfare activities than by the practices of monks and nuns that were perceived as corrupt. The absence of a united leadership among Buddhists, however, has prevented these trends from generating any politically assertive organization unifying all devotees.

The section on Buddhism in Taiwan has shown that the quietism of Buddhists during the period of martial law was not only a result of repression by the regime, but also represented a convergence of interests between the Sangha and the KMT. It has also shown that the most remarkable development of Buddhism in Taiwan in the last three decades has been the reversal of the ecclesiastical decline noted above. Monks and nuns on the island now enjoy a high degree of respect from the public. Meanwhile, the gradual liberalization of politics since 1989 makes it possible for Buddhists to implement the bolder
aspects of Taixu’s reform. Buddhist organizations are free to proselytize independently of any restrictions from the government. Buddhist lay people can express themselves on any issue, get involved in public affairs, and even participate in politics. Increasing numbers of Taiwanese natives and women are replacing the previous generation of monks from the continent.

This demographic shift, however, does not point in any clear and definite direction, as the political strategies adopted by Taiwanese Buddhist organizations differ from each other. While Foguangshan and Ciji embody the ideal of Taixu for a more participatory laity, some Buddhist organizations prefer a more traditional approach. To what extent is this cleavage between traditionalist and reformist organizations due to the religious ideas of their respective leaders; to what extent is it due to the constraints they face within the organizations they head? The next chapter explores this issue by examining the BAROC, the most important of the traditionalist Taiwanese Buddhist organizations.
Chapter Three

THE BAROC

AND THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE RELIGION THROUGH LOBBYING

Introduction

The importance of the BAROC lies in the fact that, in theory, it was the official representative of the religion on the island until it lost that privilege in 1989 with the passing of the Law on Civic Organizations. Since then it has experienced a steady decline. When the lay Buddhist candidate Chen Lü'an ran for the ROC presidency in 1995-1996, the BAROC failed to support him, even though Xingyun, the founder of Faguangshan and spiritual mentor of Chen, is a member of the association. Instead, as a response to its diminution of standing, the BAROC has tried since the mid-1990s to pressure the
government into passing legislation that would help it reassert its authority over Taiwanese Buddhists, despite almost unanimous opposition from most other Buddhist organizations. Why did the BAROC not attempt to re-assert its spiritual supremacy by approving the candidacy of Chen? Why did it choose instead to adopt a strategy of lobbying the government in favor of state intervention on religious affairs against the wishes of most Buddhists?

To answer these questions, the chapter is organized as follows. The first section introduces the BAROC’s current status and discusses the reasons for its declining support. The following sections present its goals and describe its organizational structure. A fourth section documents the political behavior of the BAROC. Because the next chapter will discuss the campaign of Chen Lü’an in detail, that section focuses on the efforts of the BAROC to sway the government in its favor and notes the objections raised by other Taiwanese Buddhist organizations. Finally, the last section examines how the views of the association’s leaders determine the political behavior of the BAROC, and to what extent leaders are constrained by organizational factors. The factors examined are the
availability of resources and the degree of lay support and congruence between leaders and their followers on the dimensions of ethnicity and gender.

The Current Status of the BAROC

The BAROC was the only legal Buddhist organization in Taiwan during the first decades of KMT rule on the island and, therefore, it has a longer institutional history than any other Buddhist association in the ROC. It still claims to represent all Buddhists in Taiwan. Since the passing of the law on civic organizations in 1989, however, other groups can compete with the BAROC for that claim without facing any threat of punishment, as long as their goals are not entirely identical. For instance, there now exist in the ROC several functional organizations for the Sangha, such as the CBTA, the CBSA and the Chinese Buddhist Association for the Protection of the Sangha [Zhonghua

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252 Zhonghua Minguo, Neizhengbu, Quanguoxing Zongjiao Tuanti Minglu, 125.
253 Ibid., 105.
Two organizations, the Chinese Buddhist Lay Association [Zhonghua Fojiao Jüshihui 居士會] (CBLA)\(^{255}\) and the Chinese Buddhist Lay Proselytizing Society [Zhongguo Fojiao Zaijia Xiu Cujinhui 中國佛教在家修促進會] (CBLPS), represent Buddhist lay people.\(^{256}\) Finally, two organizations, the Young Men’s Buddhist Association International of the ROC [Zhongguo Fojiao Guoji Qingnianhui 國際青年會] (YMBA)\(^{257}\) and the Buddhist Youth Association of the ROC [Zhonghua Minguo Fojiao Qingnianhui 民國](BYA),\(^{258}\) represent young devotees.

While this list is non-exhaustive, three important points should be kept in mind. Firstly, competition is accelerating within the Buddhist community for the representation of its constituent elements. Only the CBLA was established prior to the passing of the law on civic organizations. The other organizations were established in 1989 or after.\(^{259}\) This proliferation of organizations suggests that it is becoming more difficult for Buddhists to speak with one voice for the promotion of their collective interests. Secondly, the

\(^{254}\) Ibid., 134.
\(^{255}\) Ibid., 77.
\(^{256}\) Ibid., 104.
\(^{257}\) Ibid., 123.
\(^{258}\) Ibid., 83.
\(^{259}\) The BYA has been registered in 1989, the CBLPS in 1991, and all other organizations mentioned above in 1992. See previous references for each organization.
BAROC tried to respond to this fragmentation by creating subordinate groups to compete with independent organizations. In the very year when the CBTA - an organization that is critical of the BAROC - was established, the BAROC founded the CBSA. Finally, and most importantly, these other organizations have been more successful than the official association mainly because their goals are more limited. In its charter, the BAROC has made broad claims that strain the credibility of the organization. The statement of purpose of the association, in particular, reveals that it has not only set for itself a religious mission, but has also prescribed for itself a political goal. Both goals are examined more closely below, but before we look into them, it is necessary to elaborate on the recent decline of the BAROC.

**Reasons for the declining support by Taiwanese Buddhists for the BAROC**

The support of the association for the ruling party is one of the two main reasons why many Taiwanese Buddhists reject the BAROC's claim to represent them. Many individual Buddhists privately despise the BAROC for having collaborated so closely with

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260 The CBSA connections are easy to retrace, the address of the association is exactly the same as the one for the BAROC. Zhonghua Minguo, Neizhengbu, Quanguoxing Zongjiao Tuanti Minglu, 68, 105.
the KMT in the past. Jiang Canteng, using the very words that the KMT used during martial law to criticize monk Yinshun, obliquely refers to members of the BAROC as “KMT fellow travelers [Zhongguo fojiao shi Guomindang de tongluren 中国梦佛教是国民党的同路人].” Yang Huinan 楊惠南, another noted scholar on Taiwanese Buddhism, has argued that the KMT has repeatedly interfered in the affairs of the BAROC, and has suggested that the association has always subscribed to the policies of the ruling party as a result.262 As discussed in the previous chapter, it is evident that the BAROC cooperated with the government since 1952. During the period of martial law the association was generally supportive of the government and categorically opposed to any form of political dissidence. In 1982, reports Jones, the delegates to the 10th National Congress of the BAROC passed a resolution which stated that calls for the lifting of martial law and the creation of new parties were “ridiculous.”263

The other reason is that many Buddhists believe that the association lacks the legitimacy and the resources to talk on their behalf. Few Buddhist adherents take

261 The author does not namely refer to the BAROC itself, as he writes about “Chinese Buddhism [Zhongguo Fojiao 中国梦佛教].” See Jiang Canteng, 20 Shiji Taiwan Fojiao de Zhuanxing yu Fazhan, 177.
263 Ibid., 334.
seriously the assertion that the BAROC represents the Buddhist community. The previous
status of the association as the exclusive representative of Buddhism in the ROC has been
undermined over the years, as competing organizations emerged, became legalized, and
developed close relations with members of the ruling party. Today, the BAROC no longer
ranks among the most influential players within the Buddhist community on the island:
Foguangshan, Ciji or Fagushan each control far more resources.\textsuperscript{264} The BAROC faces
obstacles within the Buddhist community itself, as an increasing number of devotees ignore
its views and as members of the Sangha pay only lip service to its directives.

The leadership of the association represents only a fraction of the ecclesiastical
community in Taiwan, and the unity within the BAROC does not mirror the diversity of
Taiwanese Buddhism as a whole. Theologically speaking, the association stands for only
one version of contemporary Buddhism in Taiwan, and members of the ecclesiastical

\textsuperscript{264} Works that offer a discussion of Buddhism in Taiwan would at best only make cursory remarks on the
BAROC. See, for example, Jiang Canteng, \textit{Taiwan Dangdai Fojiao; Taiwan Fojiao Bainianshi zhi Yanjiu, 1895-1995}; 20 Shiji Taiwan Fojiao de Zhuanxing yu Fazhan; Kang Le and Jian Huimei, \textit{Xinyang yu Shehui}. To my knowledge, at the time of writing, no published monograph has been dedicated to the association. It is however the central subject of the Master thesis written by Xiao Zijun and a substantial part of Charles B. Jones' Ph. D dissertation on Buddhism. See 蘇子著, \textit{Taiwan Zongjiao yu Zhengzhi Guanxi zhi Yanjiu: Qihao Gongyuan Guanyinxiang Qianyi Shijian Ge'an Fenxi} 台灣宗教與政治關係之研究:七號公園觀音像遷移事件個案分析 \textit{[A Research on the Relationship between Religion and Politics in Taiwan: A Case Study Analysis of the "Guanyin Statue Removal" Affair in Park No. 7]" (M.A. Thesis, National Taiwan University, 1995)); "Buddhism in Taiwan: A Historical Survey," Chapter V.
community who do not identify with the views of the BAROC have joined the other organizations that have emerged since 1989. To understand the importance of this problem, it is necessary to emphasize the precarious position of the BAROC within the Taiwanese Sangha and the lay Buddhist community.

From the beginning, the BAROC’s claim to the general representation of the Buddhist community has been problematic, because the Sangha and the laity do not constitute a hierarchical body which, like the Catholic Church, is headed by a central authority claiming to be infallible. Rather, informal affiliations between lay people and monasteries, waxing and waning according to circumstances, have been common throughout history.\textsuperscript{265} This is the case because the notion that Buddhism should have a unified leadership is alien to the Buddhist tradition, even in a state as centralized as China. As Holmes Welch explains:

\begin{quote}
During the Republican period, as throughout Chinese history, there was no single organization to which all Buddhist monks and devotees belonged. The various Buddhist groups were localized; or if they were national in scope, they had little effectiveness at the local level, so they were like a head without a body. What held Buddhists together was a series of networks of affiliation, superimposed haphazardly one upon the other.\textsuperscript{266}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{265} Holmes Welch, \textit{The Practice of Chinese Buddhism}, 407.
\textsuperscript{266} \textit{Ibid.}, 403.
In China, where most members of the BAROC Central Committee originate, these networks were based on religious kinship, loyalty to a charismatic monk, personal ties, or regionalism. Similar types of affiliations are found in Taiwan today, but they are not all relevant to the BAROC. Networks of religious kinship refer to followers who were ordained by the same monks, consider themselves as part of the same group, and relate to each other as schoolmates. Clerical and lay followers can also feel a special loyalty to a charismatic monk, and in that case, vertical bonds between master and disciples are stronger than horizontal ties among followers. Another source of cohesion within the Chinese Buddhist community stems from the personal ties between the heads of monasteries and lay people, which are forged through clubs and study groups, but also result from the reputation of temples. These ties are more relevant to the other organizations examined in this study, so they will be discussed in later chapters.

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267 Ibid., 403-404. This type of relationship, observable among those who join Ciji, is irrelevant to describe the interactions among members of the BAROC, because the latter come from different parts of China and have been ordained by different monks.
268 Ibid., 404-405. This type of affiliation corresponds to the relationship between Xingyun and his disciples within Foguangshan better than that between Ven. Jingxin – the current head of the BAROC - and the other members of the association, who are at similar levels within the monastic order.
269 Ibid., 406-407. Although individuals monks within the BAROC can nurture that kind of relationships within their own temples in Taiwan, the association itself does not attract lay devotees in any ways comparable to Ciji or Foguangshan.
Of the four types of affiliations identified by Welch, the most relevant to the BAROC in Taiwan are the bonds forged by regionalism, a factor that has been both a cohesive and divisive force. This phenomenon, notes Welch, was a result of the fact that monasteries in particular regions experienced similar problems and that the abbots often consulted with each other to solve common problems. In Taiwan, this tradition of regionalism is extremely relevant, although the issue is not rivalry among clerics from different regions within Taiwan, but rather competition between Taiwanese native clerics and those coming from the mainland, specifically East China. The ethnic competition within society will be discussed in the section on the socio-demographic characteristics of the BAROC. The point to note here is that the claim of the BAROC to represent all Buddhists in the first decades of KMT rule in Taiwan represented an exception to previous practices.

Taiwanese Buddhists initially accepted the claims of the BAROC because of the circumstances that prevailed in Taiwan when the KMT took over control of the island, but the evolution of their community in the last decades has modified their attitude. Most Taiwanese Buddhists accepted the exceptional circumstances of unified leadership in the

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Sangha during the 1950s, because the monks who came from the continent and rebuilt the BAROC in 1947 were then the only individuals with some measure of prestige among Buddhists. The adoption of the Law on Civic Organizations in 1989 represents a turning point, because it deprived the BAROC of its monopoly on ordination, the only effective instrument with which the association could control the Sangha. Until then, the BAROC could prevent monks from entering the Sangha if they did not meet its standards. After 1989, other organizations, such as Foguangshan and Zhongtaichan, could ordain monks and nuns.

The end of the BAROC’s monopoly over ordination has allowed individual monks the chance to build their own network of support independently, with the result that today the most popular members of the Sangha are active outside of the BAROC. Xingyun, the founder of the BLIA, Shengyan, the abbot of Fagushan, and Ven. Miaolian 妙蓮, head of the Lingyanshan 靈巖山 Temple,271 are each heading organizations that now surpass the BAROC in terms of membership. Although monks like Xingyun and Shengyan are in

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271 The Lingyanshan Temple was founded in 1986 in Nantou 南投 County in Central Taiwan. In 1997, it was already establishing the groundwork for branch temples in Hong Kong, the Unites States, Canada, Europe, and Japan. *Taiwan Lingyanshan Si Jianjie 台灣靈巖山寺簡介 [Introducing the Lingyanshan Temple]* (Puli, Natou County: Lingyanshan Si, 1996).
theory members of the BAROC, the latter cannot dictate how they must run their own temples. Xingyun underlined this fact when he stated that the BAROC is only a service organization for the Sangha. The leadership of the BAROC itself did not deny this assertion when it justified its non-intervention during a dispute on temple property on the grounds that its mandate was to help Buddhists, not settle disputes between them.

Two unresolved issues serve to reinforce the views of those that consider the association unable to represent the interests of Taiwanese Buddhists. Firstly, the association has yet to obtain a guarantee from the government that it will not try to limit the construction of new temples. In 1952, the Taiwanese Provincial Government sought to pass a law against folk worshipping festivals [baibai 拜拜] that included a clause forbidding the "erection of new temples or new icons of Buddha." The association successfully persuaded the government not to pass the law, but could not obtain guarantees that it would not be reconsidered in a different form.

Secondly, the BAROC has failed

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272 Xingyun said that the founding of his own BLIA, which competes directly with the BAROC, is to the latter "like the implementation of a courier service to the freeway system." Fu Chi-ying, *Handing Down the Light*, 384-385.
274 See Charles B. Jones, "Buddhism in Taiwan," 261. Ho Fang-jiau suggests that as late as 1967, the Police Administration of the Provincial Government tried again to limit such activities. See *Taiwan Sheng Jingwu Dang'an Huibian*, 32-33.
to recover all the Buddhist property confiscated by the Japanese during its colonial rule.

In theory, Japanese shrines and temples were to be taken over by local governments (meaning the Taiwan provincial government), which had then to decide on their future status according to their situation prior to Japanese occupation. Public properties could be taken over by the government; private properties had to be returned to their original owners.

As early as 1948, the BAROC petitioned the government to have temple property returned to the Sangha. Lobbying legislators who were both monks and lay members of the BAROC in the Legislative Yuan was as ineffective as petitions addressed to the Executive Yuan.275

The decline of the BAROC discussed in this section now needs to be put in the context of the ambitious goals that the association advertises in its charter.

The Goals of the BAROC

The BAROC is primarily a religious organization. However, under the KMT corporatist structure that prevailed in the ROC from 1952 to 1989, the performance of its duties served some of the political objectives of the ruling party. That is, the Buddhist association was expected to communicate to members of the Sangha and lay devotees instructions from the KMT, and was in return expected to aggregate, articulate and express the concerns of the whole Buddhist community to the ruling party. The political mission of the BAROC is discussed below. For the moment, it is important to focus on the performance by the association of its religious mission and the political consequences thereof.

Religious goals.

Among the religious missions the association seeks to accomplish, four stand out as most important: explaining and propagating the faith [xuanyang jiaoyi 宣揚教義], rallying Buddhists from all over the country [tuanjie quanguo fojiaotu 團結全國佛教徒].

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streamlining the doctrine [zhengli jiaogui 整理教規], and safeguarding the Sangha property [weihu jiaochan 維護教產].

In at least one area, explaining and propagating the faith, the BAROC can claim unmitigated success. Proselytizing and monastic education both fall within the BAROC mandate. Although the BAROC has not been directly involved in the propagation of the religion, it has let other organizations like Foguangshan and Ciji spread Buddhist doctrines. With respect to monastic education, the BAROC has more direct involvement and has successfully lobbied the Ministry of Education [Jiaoyubu 教育部] (MOE) to accredit diplomas granted from colleges run by Foguangshan and Ciji. However, although the association has been successful at achieving its goal of transmitting the faith, it no longer reaps the benefits of this endeavor.

The goal of rallying the Buddhists is becoming ever more difficult for the BAROC to achieve as Taiwanese society becomes more pluralist. In almost every respect the

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276 Zhonghua Minguo, Neizhengbu, Quanguoxing Zongjiao Tuanti Minglu, 68. Two other goals are also mentioned in the statement of purpose of the BAROC: the establishment of cultural, educational and charitable activities [xingban jiaoyu wenhua cishan shiye 興辦教育文化慈善事業] and the promotion of social welfare [fuli shehui 福利社會]. The achievement of these additional objectives, which is mandated by the existing law on the administration of temple that will be discussed below, is not a priority for BAROC, and not one of the strength of the association. In that respect, the BAROC differs enormously from Ciji.

277 This topic is discussed at great length in Charles B. Jones, “Buddhism in Taiwan,” Chapter VII.
association has had difficulty bringing together the adherents of the religion: individual members of the Sangha ignore its authority, and lay Buddhists are indifferent, if not hostile, to the association. The inability of the BAROC to instill loyalty in both the Sangha and the lay Buddhists, as well as in younger adherents of the religion, precludes the association from mobilizing them for political objectives. Currently, stemming the loss of influence within the Buddhist community represents a priority, and the proposal for the creation of a Buddhist Federation of Associations \([\text{Fojiao Zonghui 佛教總會}] \text{ (BFA)}\), as discussed below, was a maneuver designed to achieve this goal.

*Streamlining the doctrine* may represent a means of bringing the Sangha and the laity back under the fold of the BAROC. In particular, the controversies related to the excesses of zealous proselytizers and the emergence of new cults represent formidable threats to the positive public image of Buddhism in Taiwanese society. The leaders of the BAROC believe that they would gain much in their efforts to assert their authority within the Buddhist community if they could successfully weed out the heterodox groups that give the religion a bad name. To that end, members of the BAROC not only want to advocate Buddhism as a religion compatible with Confucian values, but they also seek to emphasize
its modernity by extirpating “superstition.” They justify their call for a law on Buddhism [Fojiaofa 佛教法] on the grounds that it could achieve that objective.

The BAROC also attempts to reassert its authority over the Buddhist community by claiming it has already done well in safeguarding Buddhist property. As mentioned in the previous chapter, one of the first mandates of the BAROC was to protect Sangha property from threats of expropriation launched by radicals in the KMT-led government during the 1920s and 1930s. The issue remained urgent well into the years following the relocation of the KMT to Taiwan in 1949, and current legislation does not offer adequate protection against threats of expropriation by government. As was discussed above, the BAROC has met with mixed results in trying to achieve this part of its mandate, and isolated threats of confiscation still linger for some temples. Jingxin, the current head of the BAROC, claims that the Draft Law on Religion Corporations [Zongjiao Farenfa Cao'an 宗教法人法草案] the association proposes is explicitly designed to redress the current regulations’ shortcomings in that regard.278

278 See the interview with Jingxin in Faguang 法光 [Dharma Light Monthly], “Zhongguo Fojiaohui Zai Xianjin Jiaojie suo Banyan de Jiaose 中國佛教會在現今教界所扮演的角色 [On the Role Played by the BAROC in the Current Religious Milieu],” (May 1996), 4.
For many Taiwanese Buddhists, the last three religious goals pursued by the BAROC appear to be a thinly disguised bid by the association to reassert its political authority. The following paragraphs do not attempt to adjudicate that issue but note that the BAROC does pursue explicitly some political goals.

**Political goals**

The BAROC is widely perceived as an unwavering supporter of the government, unsurprisingly given that its statement of purpose unambiguously asserts that it must "endorse state policy [yonghu guoce 擁護國策]." This support is evident in its agreement with the official position of opposition to Taiwanese self-determination, even as it remains a staunch opponent of the PRC because of the latter’s policies toward religion. Beyond this, however, the BAROC offers strong support for the KMT at the domestic level and in its attempt to increase Taiwan’s influence and support abroad.

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279 Zhonghua Minguo, Neizhengbu, Quanguoxing Zongjiao Tuanti Minglu, 68.
Support on the domestic front

The support of the BAROC for the government is usually expressed at a symbolic level by the enthusiastic championing of the KMT during highly visible public events.\(^{280}\)

For example, since 1950 the BAROC has lent legitimacy to the government through the performance of an annual ceremony, the Benevolent Kings Dharma Meeting for the Protection of the Nation and the Averting of Disaster [Huguo Renwang Xizai Fahui 仁王息災法會].\(^{281}\) High-ranking members of the executive Yuan, as well as cadres from the ruling party, usually attend this event. The association also benefits from that event because it represents a major fund-raising opportunity.\(^{282}\)

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\(^{280}\) If a DPP president was to be elected or if the opposition was to form a majority in the Legislative Yuan, it is likely that the BAROC would nonetheless perform that ceremony for the government, lest it would appear as a declaration of hostility from which it could not gain much. As to whether that ritual would be performed with enthusiasm, the issue remains purely a matter for speculation at the time of writing.

\(^{281}\) Charles B. Jones, “Buddhism in Taiwan,” 264.

\(^{282}\) The 1993 Fahui was attended by important members of the Cabinet, including the then Taipei mayor Huang Dazhou 黃大洲, and other KMT cadres. Zhongfohui Kan 中佛會刊 [BAROC Newsletter] 112 (15 March 1993), 1. In 1994, along with Chen Lu’an, then President of the Control Yuan and KMT member, guests to the Fahui of that year included the director of the KMT Commission for Social Affairs [Shehui Gongzuo Weiyuanhui 社會工作委員會] (CSA). Zhongfohui Kan 121 (31 March 1994), 1. In 1995, three months after Chen Shuibian 陳水扁, from the opposition DPP, was elected Mayor of Taipei, the city was represented at the Fahui of that year by KMT cadres instead of members of the new municipal government. The ceremony was also attended by the KMT secretary-general Xu Shuide 許水德. Zhongfohui Kan 130 (20 February 1995), 1. The following year, the Fahui greeted President Lee, then campaigning for the presidential election. No guest representing the non-parliamentary wing of the party was, however, present that time. Zhongfohui Kan 139 (10 March 1996), 1. The 1997 Fahui was a more low-key event since none of the members in government attended the ceremony. Zhongfohui Kan 148 (10 March 1997), 3. This may indicate government indifference rather than enmity toward the BAROC since the latter would a month later help prepare the visit of the Dalai Lama in Taiwan.
The BAROC also tacitly supports the government by carefully avoiding participation in controversial issues that could either embarrass the ruling party, or be construed as opposition to the KMT. Characteristic of the BAROC's prudent attitude was its refusal in 1994 to intervene in a dispute generated by the attempts of the Taipei city administration to remove a statue of the Buddhist deity Guanyin, the Goddess of Mercy, from an area designated as a public park. By refusing to take a stand on that issue, the BAROC sought to enhance its image as an impartial organization that had acted responsibly and refrained from stoking the fires of religious division.

In 1996, the BAROC again clearly demonstrated its support for the government by refusing to sponsor the candidacy of Chen Lü’an, a former KMT member who ran for the ROC Presidency against the incumbent Lee Teng-hui. The refusal to support Chen Lü’an was all the more remarkable, because this candidate was a famous lay Buddhist,

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283 When that incident happened, the municipal government was still controlled by the KMT. While the BAROC remained silent on the issue, Xingyun, the founder of Fooguangshan, and the radical nun Zhaohui, encouraged devotees to fast in protest of the removal of the statue. The dissidents won their point in the end and the statue remains in the park. According to its critics, the BAROC was clearly overtaken by events and demonstrated its powerlessness. “Buddhist Master Encourages Strikers Starving for Statue,” *China News* 21 March 1994, 2. For a detailed account of that issue, see Xiao Zijun, “Taiwan Zongjiao yu Zhengzhi Guanxi zhi Yanjiu.”

284 Chen Lü’an had resigned from the KMT and his position as head of the Control Yuan before announcing his candidacy. Meanwhile, the BAROC did not endorse officially any other candidate for the ROC presidency either and when President Lee visited the association for its Fahui in 1996, the latter could claim he was acting as the head of state. However, it should be noted that President Lee did not go to previous or
enjoying a good reputation of probity among the public, and had received the endorsement of Xingyun, himself a member of the BAROC. Considering the relatively poor showing by the defeated candidate Chen, the association must have felt vindicated for adopting its stand. Adopting this attitude, understandably, did nothing to dispel the impression that the BAROC is either pro-KMT or simply an opportunistic organization that sides with those who are in position of power.

*Support of ROC foreign policy*

In the realm of external affairs, both the BAROC and the KMT agree on the need for the ROC and its institutions to find allies in the international arena. The BAROC support for that goal of KMT foreign policy, however, sometimes puts the association in embarrassing situations. On balance, however, the participation of the BAROC in international Buddhist organizations has enhanced the reputation of the association

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285 In particular, the admission of the BAROC, an ostensibly peaceful religious organization, as a corporate member of an international organization such as the Asian anti-Communist League [Yazhou Renmin Fangong Tongmeng 亞洲人民反共盟 (AACL)] (renamed Asian Pacific Anti-Communist League in 1984), was bound to be problematic. That organization was identified with the infamous Asian authoritarian rulers of the Philippines, the ROK and the ROC, until these countries initiated their respective democratization processes. Charles B. Jones, “Buddhism in Taiwan,” 265-266.
overseas, enabling it to promote KMT policies in international fora. This was especially important after the ROC lost its seat in the United Nations in 1971, as the KMT became more dependent than ever on non-governmental organizations to propagate its views.

The BAROC proved useful to the KMT in 1980 when it took the initiative of revitalizing the World Buddhist Sangha Council [*Shijie Fojiao Sengqie Dahui* 世界佛教僧伽大會] (WBSC), an organization which moved its headquarters from Sri Lanka to Taiwan. That move offered KMT government officials the opportunity to address an international audience and compare the ROC’s respect for freedom of religion with the PRC’s avowed atheist policy. More recently, the visit of the Dalai Lama to Taiwan in 1997 presented the BAROC with another opportunity to raise its profile in the eyes of the government. The Presidential Office took pains to portray the event as a religious occasion, in order to ensure its success. For this purpose, it enlisted the help of the BAROC, which dutifully obliged.

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286 For a detailed account of the meeting’s proceedings, see Shi Miaoran, *Minguo Fojiao Dashinianji*, 508-513.
288 The Dalai Lama visit to Taiwan in 1997 has been staged as a demonstration that the Taiwanese and the Tibetan leaders share a common goal of political reform in China, in order to placate the criticism from the PRC that both advocate independence for their respective constituencies. However, the visit also served other purposes: in particular, it came at an opportune moment for the KMT, which had then launched a campaign of spiritual reform in response to its decline in the polls. See “Li Zongtong Wu Dala: Changtan
An examination of the BAROC’s structure in the following section illustrates how far the association was willing over the years to cooperate with the government, if not unreservedly support its policies.

The Structure of the BAROC

The BAROC’s leaders have valued their relations with the government so much that, from all appearances, they have designed their association to serve as a transmission belt for the KMT. Until 1989, the association’s mandate was to relay instructions from the government to Buddhists and, in return, advise the party on matters relevant to the religion.\textsuperscript{289} The KMT’s CSA, the party’s Central Committee organ responsible for social affairs, used to monitor the activities of the BAROC via two agencies in the MOI.\textsuperscript{290}

\textsuperscript{289} Charles B. Jones, “Buddhism in Taiwan,” 258.

\textsuperscript{290} In its latest statements of purpose, the KMT defines the role of the Commission differently and stresses instead its function as an agency informing groups in civil society about the policies of the party. See the web site of the party, http://www.kmtdpr.org.tw/.
The Bureau for Social Affairs [Shehuisi 社會司] (BSA), which now administers social welfare programs, used to oversee the organization of meetings involving civic associations.\(^{291}\) The Bureau for Civil Affairs [Minzhengsi 民政司] (BCA), which currently administers the preservation of temples,\(^{292}\) was responsible for religious affairs.\(^{293}\)

Like the KMT and the state, the association consists of three provincial-level branches [fenhui 分會] under the jurisdiction of a central authority, plus a number of local chapters [zhihui 支會] under the jurisdiction of the Taiwan Provincial Buddhist Branch Association [Taiwan Sheng Fojiao Fenhuì 台灣省佛教分會].\(^{294}\) Both lay devotees and clerics can join the association and can vote for delegates to the National Congress [Quanguo Huiyuan Daibiao Dahui 全國會員代表大會], which represents the highest authority within the association. Temples, lecture halls [jiangtang 講堂], and other Buddhist organizations

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\(^{291}\) In order to provide relief for those in need, the bureau for social affairs relies mostly on charity and volunteer work of civic organizations, including religious associations such as the BAROC.

\(^{292}\) This mandate covers temples that are designated for their historical value.

\(^{293}\) Charles Jones mentions that the BAROC looks for the government’s BCA when it organizes its Fahui, but recently it has been representatives of the party’s CSA and the government’s BSA that have attended the event. Zhongfohui Kan 130 (10 February 1995), 1.

\(^{294}\) Over the years, the BAROC has encountered difficulties similar to those faced by the ruling party in the implementation of its mandate. As time went by and the recovery of the mainland by the KMT appeared increasingly improbable, it became more and more difficult for the association to uphold its claim to represent all its constituencies on the Chinese mainland. In 1990, therefore, the BAROC administrative organization took as a model the government structure and abandoned its claim to represent all provinces in the continent but keeps the label “National.” Since then, there have only been three branches in the BAROC: the Taiwan Provincial Buddhist Branch Association, and the Branch Associations of Taipei and Kaohsiung, at the same level of organization. Charles B. Jones, “Buddhism in Taiwan,” 257.
join the BAROC as corporate members, but have no right to vote. The delegates to the National Congress represent the three branches of the BAROC and the local chapters.

The National Congress elects a board of directors, which in turn elects from within its ranks a Standing Committee. The latter elects a President, who nominates a secretary-general to supervise the staff, ad hoc committees, as well as three departments for general affairs [zongwu 總務], membership [huiji 會籍] and activities [huiwu 會務]. This replication of the ruling party's structure may have been adequate as long as the KMT was the only actor that mattered in the ROC political system, and as long as the association did not have to be concerned about rival organizations.

However, since the passing of the Law on Civic Organizations in 1989 the situation has changed dramatically in at least three respects. Firstly, the ruling party has had to cultivate relations with a greater number of organizations if it wants to reach out to the entire Buddhist community. Secondly, as a result, the BAROC can no longer take for granted the willingness of party cadres to address its concerns. Finally, the association,

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295 The KMT also has a national representative body, the Party Congress, which elects an organ comparable to the BAROC board of director, the Central Committee. The latter, in turn, also elects a Central Standing Committee.

having relied exclusively on the KMT to achieve its goals in the past, has failed to establish
links with other opposition parties. Therefore it is disadvantaged compared to other
organizations not tainted by collaboration with the ruling party during the period of martial
law. To sum up, the current structure of the BAROC reflects a *modus operandi*
appropriate to conditions prevailing before 1989, but which is unsuited to the present
competitive situation. The next section turns to this issue and elaborates on the political
strategies adopted by the BAROC over the years.

**The Political Behavior of the BAROC**

Over the years, the BAROC has relied on its good relations with members of
government to implement many of its goals. Since the early years of KMT rule in Taiwan,
the BAROC has lobbied the government to protect its interests. Often successful between
1951 and 1992 at securing through lobbying what it sought from the government, the
BAROC found it increasingly difficult during the 1990s to obtain what it wants from state officials.

**Lobbying for the protection of Buddhist interests: achievements**

Quoting from a report written by the BAROC secretary-general Ven. Nanting 南亭 in 1954, Charles Jones notes three areas where the association was successful in the first years of KMT rule in Taiwan. After interceding with the MOI and the Ministry of National Defense [Guofangbu 國防部](MND) in 1951, the BAROC received assurance that temples would not be used to house soldiers. In that same year, the association convinced the MOI that temple lands were non-productive and therefore should not be subjected to taxation. Also in 1951, worried that the Land Reform Laws would compel Buddhist clergy and laity to sell their land to the government for resale to farmers, the BAROC successfully petitioned the Taiwanese Provincial Government to amend the regulation. 297

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Another goal for which cooperation between the BAROC and the KMT has proven useful is the repeal of a regulation called “Procedure for Handling of Funds Raised by the Public Work and Charity Undertakings of Temples in Taiwan [Taiwan Sheng Simiao Jizi Banli Gongyi Cishan Shiye Banfa 台灣省寺廟集資辦理公益慈善事業辦法].” Issued by the provincial government in 1969, the proposed law was criticized by the BAROC as insulting to both Buddhist and Taoist clergy. It required the administration of temple finances to be supervised by local governments, thus implicitly questioning the honesty of the clergy. The BAROC used its connections with the KMT to ask members of the party at the central level to organize a meeting where the BAROC could argue its case against the law to party leaders from both central and provincial levels. After hearing the arguments of the BAROC at that meeting, representatives of the central government instructed provincial authorities to abandon the law.

298 Under its provisions, the government ordered temples to give 20% of the revenue raised by the sale of religious paraphernalia to charity organizations. For the particulars of that law, see Shi Miaoran, Minguo Fojiao Dashinianji, 419.
299 Smaller temples were often unable to meet the obligations imposed on them by this regulation, because they were facing dire financial conditions. See the interview with Jing Xin, current secretary-general of the BAROC, in Faguang (Dharma Light Monthly), “Zhongguo Fojiaohui Zai Xianjin Jiaojie suo Banyan de Jiaose.”
Finally, between 1982 and 1992, the BAROC set up a working group of five members to lobby the MOE. It successfully obtained modifications in the legislation regarding higher education, paving the way for government accreditation of graduate schools set up by Buddhist organizations. The new measures affect schools and colleges such as the Nan Hua Management College [Nanhua Guanli Xueyuan 南華管理學院] set up by Fokuangshan, and the Tzu Chi University. Like the Catholic University of Furen 輔仁, they offer a regular curriculum with religious education.

In summary, the connections between clerics and members of the KMT in the Executive Yuan [Xinzhengyuan 行政院], the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly have certainly proven fruitful. But on other issues of importance to the BAROC, the government has refused to yield to the entreaties of the association. Even though the BAROC shares many concerns with the KMT regarding the PRC and the survival of the ROC, the association clearly has an agenda of its own, which can clash with that of the government. One such example is the BAROC’s failed attempt to have the KMT pass a

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new law on religion which would have maintained substantial government involvement in religious affairs.

The BAROC and the law on religion

In 1996 and 1997, Taiwan experienced a series of controversies related to religious organizations that embarrassed Buddhists and prompted the government to launch a review of the current legislation on religion in the ROC. The BAROC took this opportunity to reassert its authority and pushed its own proposals for a law on religious organizations, but met with serious opposition from other groups. This episode provides an opportunity to explore the BAROC’s method of political participation at a moment when its interests were not being well-served by existing laws and government policies. As background, it is necessary to discuss the nature of the religious controversies that triggered the government review of its policies towards religion; the existing laws relevant to religion; and the changes that the BAROC proposed.
Religious controversies

Two issues tarnished Buddhism and religion in general during the fall of 1996. The first involved 132 young people who decided in September to take the vows to become nuns and monks in the central Taiwan temple of Zhongtaichan.\(^{301}\) Most of the novices had been members of a summer camp organized by the abbot of that temple, Ven. Weijue 惟覺, and at the conclusion of their work as volunteers at the temple, they decided to be ordained. Many anguished parents objected to the decisions of their sons and daughters and demonstrated to prevent their children from joining the monastic order.\(^{302}\) The abbot of Zhongtaichan initially hid the new converts in his temple, but after parents came to take back their children by force, he changed his mind and promised that in the future, aspirants to the monastic life must first secure permission from their parents.\(^{303}\) Officials from the MOI issued a statement saying that the temple had not acted against the law, because no existing legislation allowed law enforcement agencies to take any action in the matter. As

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\(^{302}\) They may have had a point. According to Buddhist rules, no one should join the Sangha without his/her parents' consent. Parents can even bring the master of a temple to court on charge of abduction if the novice has not yet reached majority. Holmes Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 269.

a result, the government decided to consider the enactment of a law on religion.\footnote{At a Symposium on the Reform of Buddhism [\textit{Fojiao Xingge Yantaohui 佛教興革研討會}] convened shortly after this controversy, Weijue promised delegates that he would in the future abide more carefully by monastic laws [\textit{sengni tidu guize 僧尼剃度規則}].} Nevertheless, the whole episode was a public relations disaster for Buddhists in general, since it left the public with the impression that many monks and nuns were irresponsible individuals escaping from their familial duties.\footnote{The second controversy occurred in October 1996, when numerous instances of fraud were uncovered. The most spectacular of these cases was the scam devised by Song Qili 宋七力,\footnote{Song sold pictures of himself surrounded by a supernatural halo, supporting his claim to possess some healing power, for a value ranging between C$1,000 to C$2,500. The followers of the cult were told they would “become a Buddha” by worshipping the picture. “Cult leader admits to money swindling,” \textit{China Post}, 14 October 1996, 1. For a complete coverage of the affair, see \textit{Xinxinwen}, 20-26 October 1996, 25-41; \textit{Xin Taiwan Xinwen Zhoukan 新台灣新聞周刊} [New Taiwan Weekly], 27 October-2 November 1996, 14-23.} an individual cult leader with no relation to Buddhism, whose activities led the public authorities to launch more investigations into religious organizations. In a matter

\footnote{\textit{Tidu, Neizhengbu: Xu Fumuqing Tongyi}, \textit{Ziyou Shibao}, 6 September 1996, 3.}

\footnote{\textit{Fojiaoqjie Jue Chengli Xingge Zhiweihui 佛教界決成立興革委會 [The Buddhist Milieu Decides to Set up a Reform Committee]}, \textit{Zhongyang 中央 [Central]}, 17 September 1996, 5.}

\footnote{\textit{Jiating de Fandui Liliang Shi Chuijaren de Yizhong ‘Mokao’ 家庭的反對力量是出家人的一種‘魔考’ [The Potential Opposition of the Family: One of the Main ‘Evils’ for Clerics]}, \textit{Xinxinwen}, 8-14 September 1996, 37.}
of days, several cult leaders were found guilty of deceit and fraud.\footnote{308 “Prosecutors raid yet another cult,” \textit{China News}, 20 October 1996, 1.} An individual calling himself Zen Master Miaotian 妙天, who headed a cult called the Sky Buddha Temple \cite{Tianfosi 天佛寺} in Taipei county, was charged for having tricked some of its followers into purchasing religious paraphernalia at prices ranging from CDN$ 7,000 to 10,000.\footnote{309 “More accusations against Miao Tien; new probe starts,” \textit{China Post}, 21 October 1996, 1, 19.} Meanwhile, questions were raised about another cult headed by a nun who called herself Master Qinghai Wushang 淸海無上, and who was accused of pressuring devotees to pay large sums to her organization.\footnote{310 \textit{Ibid.}, 19. “Qing Hai Wushangshi Tiaowuzhong ye Neng Duren 清海無上師跳舞中也能說人[While She Dances, Master Suma Qing Hai can also Save People – Duren: literally, to Cross the River], \textit{Xinxinwen} 20-26 October 1996, 48.}

The revelations about the impropriety of these cults led to more investigations by journalists, who revealed the existence of a number of bizarre organizations,\footnote{311 International cults having branches in Taiwan, such as the Raelians, were included in that survey. “Taiwan Gezhong Qite Zongjiao Zongqingcha 台灣各種奇特宗教總清查 [An Investigation on Strange Religious Cults in Taiwan],” \textit{Xinxinwen} 20-26 October 1996, 42-47.} and who uncovered close relations between the cults and some high-ranking members of the KMT and the DPP.\footnote{312 Xie Changting 謝長廷, DPP candidate for the ROC vice-presidency in 1996 and mayor of Kaohsiung after the election of 1998, has been working as legal advisor for Song Qili and his groups, and there were rumors that Xie had received illegal political contributions from the sect. “Miracle cult linked to politicians,”} Although these instances of fraud did not involve orthodox Buddhists, the use by cult leaders of titles identifying members of the Sangha, such as “Master [\textit{Fashi} 法师].”

311 International cults having branches in Taiwan, such as the Raelians, were included in that survey. “Taiwan Gezhong Qite Zongjiao Zongqingcha 台灣各種奇特宗教總清查 [An Investigation on Strange Religious Cults in Taiwan],” \textit{Xinxinwen} 20-26 October 1996, 42-47.
312 Xie Changting 謝長廷, DPP candidate for the ROC vice-presidency in 1996 and mayor of Kaohsiung after the election of 1998, has been working as legal advisor for Song Qili and his groups, and there were rumors that Xie had received illegal political contributions from the sect. “Miracle cult linked to politicians,”
created confusion and damaged the reputation of the Buddhist community. A consensus emerged in November among religious leaders that something had to be done with respect to the existing laws on religion, so that the public would not confuse "legitimate" religions with "cults." The task was daunting.

*The law and religion in the ROC*

There is currently no law on religion in the ROC. There are instead a bewildering maze of decrees, regulations and articles of law at the central, provincial and local levels that affect the practice of religion in Taiwan. Although the constitution of the ROC ensures freedom of religion, as pointed out in the previous chapter’s discussion of Taiwan under martial law, this may not mean much. In the 1960s, under the provision of the emergency decrees, the provincial government clamped down on heterodox organizations.

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313 Also rendered in English as “Venerable,” or “Reverend.”
315 Chen Qimai 陳其邁, a DPP legislator, pointed out that that legislation would merely add up to over 330 articles of law that can be used by the authorities against religious organizations. “Xinli 'Zongjiaofa:' Huashe Tianzu 新立‘宗教法’:畫蛇添足 [Drafting a ‘Law on Religion:' An Undesirable Addition (literally: Like Adding Feet to a Snake While Painting it)], *Taiwan Ribao* 台灣日報 [Taiwan Daily] 29 October 1996. The Ministry of Interior has published the particulars for 78 of these regulations. See Zhonghua Minguo, Neizhengbu, *Zongjiao Faling Huibian 宗教法令彙編 [Compilation of Regulations on Religion],* vol. 2 (Taipei: Neizhengbu, 1996).
that were labeled “superstitious,”

316 groups that it suspected of sympathizing with foreign countries,

317 and churches that it considered subversive because of their pacifist ideals.

318 During the 1980s, most of the measures taken against religious organizations were based on the principle of separation of religion and politics [zhengjiao fenli 政教 分離].

319 In the 1990s, however, the government’s attitude shifted, and it avoided intervening in religious affairs.

As the Song Qili affair erupted in the fall of 1996, however, there were signs that the attitude of the authorities might change again. During a televised address commemorating the 51st anniversary of Taiwan’s return to the ROC, President Lee launched a campaign for a “spiritual reform [xinling gaige 心靈 改革].”

320 In November, the government convened a seminar attended by over 80 religious leaders to discuss the quandary they faced: how to

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316 Ho Fang-jiau noted that this affected mostly popular religions for their wasteful practices. See *Taiwan Sheng Jingwu Dang’an Huibian*, 1-42.

317 The Nichiren sect was the target of this accusation. See Ho Fang-jiau, *Taiwan Sheng Jingwu Dang’an Huibian*, 359-478.

318 The groups singled out for their pacifist views in the late 60s were the B’ahais, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, and the Mormons. Ho Fang-jiau, *Taiwan Sheng Jingwu Dang’an Huibian*, 479-504, 550-579.

319 The principle of separation between religion and politics differs from the principle of separation between Church and State advocated in American constitutional theory. While the American doctrine emphasizes the independence of religion and state in order to ensure their respective freedom, it does not reject political participation of religious organizations, but instead sets a series of rule and principles ensuring that political participation of religious organizations does not limit the freedom of others. The interpretation of the ROC authorities has long been to reject political participation of religious organizations, unless they support government policy. For a discussion of this issue, see Lin Benxuan, *Taiwan de Zhengjiao Chongtu*, 157-158.

act against crimes committed in the name of religion while safeguarding freedom of religious belief. Faced with the inability of religious leaders to agree on the matter, then-Premier Lian Zhan affirmed the government's reluctance to legislate on religion.321

Buddhist leaders are amongst the most ardent in promoting new legislation on religion, because they feel that the current laws are unfair to their community. Although all religious organizations must comply with existing laws on taxation, public order, civic organizations, education, etc., Buddhists and Taoists are subject to additional regulations on temple property, finance, and administration. Known as the Rules for the Supervision of Temples [Jiandu Simiao Tiaoli 監督寺廟條例], these regulations were devised in 1929,322 when some members of the government, as mentioned before, had a strong anti-religious bias. Some of these rules on temple property contradicted the constitutional provisions protecting freedom of religion, and it was their implementation that provided one of the incentives for the founding of the BAROC. In addition, the Rules for the Supervision of

321 "Lien vows crackdown on religious swindlers," China Post, 9 November 1996, 1, 16.
322 For a thorough discussion of these rules see the study done by Academia Sinica researcher Qu Haiyuan for the MOI. Qu mentions that the law was inconsistent with other regulations. Therefore the government of that time could selectively and arbitrarily resort to those laws that best served its purposes if it wished to sanction or punish organizations. See Zongjiao fa yanjiu 宗教法研究 [Research on the Legislation Pertaining to Religion] (Taipei: Neizhengbu Weituo Yanjiu 內政部委託研究 [MOI Research Commission], 1989), 39-41.
Temples discriminate against Buddhists, because, as the secretary-general of the BAROC Jingxin points out, Christians do not have to face such interference from the state in their own affairs.323

Efforts to reform the Rules for the Supervision of Temples have so far been unsuccessful. A first effort was made in 1969 when the Provincial Government proposed Procedures for the Administration of Temples [Taiwan Sheng Simiao Guanli Banfa 台灣省寺廟管理辦法] but these were promptly criticized by the BAROC for giving too much power to the laity in running the affairs of temples.324 Ten years later, the MOI proposed a draft Law for Temples and Churches [Simiao Jiaotang Tiaoli 寺廟教堂條例], but it was opposed by most religious organizations because they were critical of the spirit of the law and its attempt to impose an arbitrary definition of religion. As a result of pressures from various religious organizations, the legislative assembly did not adopt the proposal.325

323 "Zhongguo Fojiaohui Zai Xianjin Jiaojie suo Banyan de Jiaose." The argument of Jingxin needs to be qualified. It is true that the KMT never dared to legislate the affairs of the Christian Churches, as it was concerned with public opinion in the United States and the preservation of diplomatic relations with the Vatican. These concerns, however, did not prevent the government from clamping down on the Presbyterian Church when the ruling party felt that the latter openly challenged its authority. See Marc J. Cohen, Taiwan at the Crossroads: Human Rights, Political Development and Social Change in the Beautiful Island (Washington, DC: Asia Resource Center, 1988), 185-215.

324 Qu Haiyuan, Zongjiaofa Yanjiu, 51-53.

325 Ibid., 53-58.
draft Law for the Protection of Religion [Zongjiao Baohufa 宗教保護法] proposed by the MOI in 1983 fared no better, because too many problems of interpretation remained.326

In 1989, as political conditions changed significantly with the adoption of the new Law on Civic Organizations, many religious leaders were joined by scholars who came forward with their own proposals for a reform of the regulations concerning religion. The latter proposed several solutions to the issues raised by Buddhists and Taoists, including the suggestion that the state should not legislate religion at all.327 These discussions provided the basis for another legal proposal submitted in 1993 by the MOI’s BCA, the organ in charge of civil affairs: the Law on Religious Corporations [Zongjiao Farenfa 宗教法人法].328 By that time, however, most religious organizations had adopted the view that the state should not intervene in religious affairs. At that point, the MOI started to dither on the issue, and it eventually backed down in the face of opposition from various religious organizations as well as from civil right activists.329 However, the BAROC stood apart

326 Ibid., 58-62.
327 Ibid., 68-75. Scholars close to Buddhist organizations also proposed in 1991 their own draft Law on Religious Organizations [Zongjiao Tuantifa 宗教團體法]. See Wu Yaofeng, Zongjiao Fagui Shijiang, 563-577.
328 Zhongfohui Kan 122 (13 April 1994), 2.
329 This was in particular the position of Christians Churches. See Luo Guang, “Zongjiaofa 宗教法[Law on Religion],” Yishi Pinglun 益世評論 [Commentary] 115 (16 April 1994), 1. Some Buddhist organizations also opposed the law proposal. Hence, Lin Rongzhi 林蓉芝, Secretary-general of the CBTA,
from other organizations during these negotiations between the government and religious organizations because it advocated legislation on religion.

The BAROC's demand for the legislation of religion and Buddhism

In the past, the BAROC has made appeals to individual politicians to abolish or annul regulations threatening its interests, but it is only in the 1990s that it has started pushing for the adoption of a law on religion. While many religious organizations appeared satisfied because the government seemed to have renounced legislating on religion in 1994, the BAROC drafted in the same year its own amended version of the Law on Religious Corporations. Although the BAROC gave up on the advocacy of a Law on Religion in the following year, its behavior during this episode is quite typical of its usual political strategy.

The concerns of the BAROC have been succinctly expressed by none other than Xingyun, the founder of Foguangshan, who has complained about the shortcomings of the

pointed out that no country has legislation on religion and that the law proposal in itself is an overreaction to the problems of fraud then emerging. See “Banding ‘Zongjiaofa:' Fanying Guodu 順應宗教法: 反應過度 [Promulgating ‘Law on Religion’ and Excessive Response],” *Taiwan Ribao*, 29 October 1996.

330 *Zhongfohui Kan* 122 (13 April 1994), 3-4.
current law in order to bolster his own attempt to unify Buddhism in Taiwan. Firstly, the current legislation allows monks and nuns with scant knowledge of the religion to “round up a bunch of devotees, put up their temples, conduct Dharma functions, take their own disciples, confer precepts, and enjoy their share of sustenance.” Secondly, the Procedures of 1929 give too much power to the laity in the administration of temples, a situation that is blamed for the decline of standards within the monastic community. Thirdly, the absence of well-defined terms of abbotship leads to individual monopolies over monasteries.\textsuperscript{331}

The solutions proposed by Xingyun to this last problem will be discussed in the next chapter, as part of his own bid to unify the Sangha. For the moment, the point to note is that many clerics and lay Buddhists agree with the necessity to reform the law, but they disagree among themselves on the best solutions to correct its shortcomings.

In the summer of 1996, the BAROC came forward with a draft Law on Buddhism \textit{[Fojiaofa Cao'an 佛教法草案]}\textsuperscript{332} As delegates to a symposium joined by different Buddhist organizations were discussing the proposed law, the Zhongtaichan affair discussed

\textsuperscript{331} Fu Chi-ying, \textit{Handing Down the Light}, 454-455.

\textsuperscript{332} \textit{Zhongfohui Kan} 141 (10 May 1996), 2; 142 (10 June, 1996), 2. “Zhongguo Fojiaohui Tiyi She Zhonghui 中國佛教會提議設總會 [The BAROC Proposes to Establish a Federation of Organizations],” \textit{Taiwan Shibao 台灣時報} [Taiwan Times], 24 September 1996.
above erupted, and the necessity for self-discipline within the Sangha became apparent.

The Law on Buddhism proposed by the BAROC advocated the creation of the BFA, an umbrella organization that would be under the control of the MOI’s BCA. At the time of writing, the BAROC has been unable to sway the government to its side. It is remarkable, however, to find a Buddhist organization actually advocating greater government control of religion. In doing so, the BAROC gave the impression that it prefers a relationship with the KMT more like that which it enjoyed in the earlier corporatist period. The reaction of other Buddhist organizations to the law reinforces this impression. For example, the draft law was sharply criticized by another Buddhist organization, the CBTA, which argued that even if there were problems within the Buddhist community, it was best to leave the Sangha to deal with them. The CBTA saw the BAROC proposal as giving the government the ability to “sweep away Buddhism

333 See pp. 158-159 above.
335 These proposals were made during a symposium during the fall of 1996 in the National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei. For a look at the issues raised during the meeting, see the handbook for the Zhongguo Fojiaohui, Bashiwunian Fojiao Xingge Yantaohui 八十五年佛教興革研討會 [1996 Symposium on the Reform of Buddhism] (Taipei: 16-17 September 1996).
336 “Zhonghua Foxiehui Fandui Chengli Fojiao Zonghui 中華佛寺協會成立佛教總會 [The CBTA Opposes the Establishment of the BFA],” Ziyou Shibao, 24 September 1996.
337 “Zhiding Fojiaofa: Shi Zhaohui Fandui 制定佛教法:釋昭慧反對 [Master Zhaohui Opposes the Establishment of Legislation on Buddhism],” Zhongyang Ribao 中央日報 [Central Daily], 24 September
and severely criticized the BAROC for proposing a move that was reminiscent of the patterns that prevailed during the period of martial law.339

Explaining the Political Behavior of the BAROC

It is understandable that the BAROC would try to lobby the government into adopting a law that could restore its vanishing authority. What is more puzzling, however, is the persistence of the association in pursuing that goal despite a less than enthusiastic response from the government and opposition from most other Buddhist organizations. What explains the behavior of the BAROC? Why would the association prefer to seek cooperation with the KMT and avoid supporting a Buddhist candidate for the presidency who could have been more sympathetic to its interests? This section considers the

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association leaders’ views and then looks into the constraints that could have determined their choices. But first, it considers some other plausible explanations.

**Grounds for agreement with the KMT**

Given their religious convictions, it seems natural that the association’s monks and nuns would agree with the KMT’s rejection of communism. However, this motivation does not suffice in explaining collaboration with the ruling party because many other opponents of the CCP have not been supportive of the KMT. The BAROC could have joined other groups without renouncing its religious ideals. The proponents of Taiwanese independence, for instance, were equally opposed to the KMT and its communist adversary on the mainland, as both represented for them oppressors from China. Other aspects of the theology adopted by the members of the BAROC, however, made them more likely to approve KMT policies.

Given that most BAROC leaders originated from the Chinese mainland, it is very unlikely that they would join organizations advocating Taiwanese sovereignty. However, the rejection of independence for Taiwan does not represent a sufficient explanation for
cooperating with the KMT. The monastic organization had other options than the KMT that were neither communists nor advocates of independence. In the 1960s, some of the main critics of the ruling party were liberal politicians and intellectuals from the mainland - such as Lei Zhen 雷震 and Hu Shi 胡適 - who had been on record for their opposition to any forms of dictatorship. More to the point, the candidate Chen Lü’ an who ran as an independent for the ROC presidency was not only a mainlander opposed to communism, but also a lay Buddhist.

A third, equally plausible motive for cooperation with the government is the prudential calculation that by showing its loyalty to the regime the Sangha will protect itself against official repression. This argument makes sense in light of what has been said in previous chapters about the experience of most Taiwanese during the martial law period. However, there are two problems with this view. Firstly, as noted before, other religious organizations did oppose the KMT during the period of martial law. Secondly, the context has changed so dramatically during the 1990s that government repression is most unlikely, and the BAROC does not need to demonstrate its loyalty to the ruling party. Why, then, does the association persist in its efforts to lobby the government?
The views of BAROC leaders

The first chapter asserted that the leaders of religious organizations can interpret theology, mediate the influence of the culture around them and articulate specific views on policy that would in turn lead them to adopt specific policies. How does the leadership of the BAROC perform these functions? The central determinant of the BAROC leaders’ views is their collective experience relating to the KMT, which was discussed in the previous chapter. The leaders of the association agree among themselves about the best way both to transmit the theology of which they see themselves as custodians and to mediate between the Buddhist tradition and its environment. Their religious views are orthodox and in tune with the Confucian tradition of deference to the secular leader. The experience of their interactions with the government has convinced them that, despite the few setbacks discussed above, cooperation with the government, on balance, represents the best means to preserve the religious tradition they uphold. This view sets the BAROC’s leaders apart from the other members of the Taiwanese Sangha.
Upholding the theology of Yuanying

The current differences between the BAROC and rival organizations in mainstream Taiwanese Buddhism are similar to disagreements that were present within the association until the 1950s. As discussed in the previous chapter, members of the Chinese Sangha at the beginning of the century held two different views about the best way for Buddhists to tackle the challenges they faced. Although all clerics agreed about the necessity to protect their property, they differed on the best method to ensure the vitality of the tradition. A majority of clerics simply wanted to preserve Buddhism as it was then, that is, as a loosely knit body comprising independent monastic orders led by clerics. Headed by the monk Yuanying, they were usually labeled as conservatives. However, a vocal minority within the Sangha opposed their views. Headed by Taixu, this group urged the establishment of an association uniting lay Buddhists and monks, and giving the former more say in the affairs of the monasteries. Conservative clerics were reluctant to consider

340 Holmes Welch, Jiang Canteng, and Charles B. Jones all make that distinction. Kenneth Ch’en, who centers his narrative of Buddhism in China and notes its development in the People’s Republic, does not and notes instead the early attempts by the Communist Party to impose Marxian dialectics on Buddhist teachings. See Buddhism in China, 463-470.
a greater role for the laity in the supervision of Buddhist affairs, because they feared that in
the process the religion would lose its identity.  

The divisions between the disciples of Taixu and those of Yuanying transferred to
Taiwan. Initially, the reformers had the upper hand. According to Jiang Canteng, from
1952 to 1957, the factional disagreements reached a stalemate, and the Zhangjia Living
Buddha, a neutral figure, was chosen to head the organization.  

After 1957, the traditionalists’ main figure, Baisheng, led the association for almost three decades. He
was succeeded by two of his disciples, Ven. Wuming and Jingxin. The control of
the association by a small group of traditionalist monks, argues Charles B. Jones, explains
why more energetic clerics and lay people identified with the disciples of Taixu preferred to
operate outside of the BAROC.

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341 Holmes Welch, The Buddhist Revival in China, 71.
342 See Jiang Canteng, Taiwan Fojiao yu Xiandai Shehui [Taiwanese Buddhism and
Contemporary Society] (Taipei: Dongda Chubanshe 東大出版社, 1992), quoted by Charles B. Jones,
“Buddhism in Taiwan,” 253.
343 From 1963 to 1967, Ven. Daoyuan, a disciple of Baisheng, was elected President. Baisheng was
reelected BAROC President in 1967 and 1971, remained a member of the Standing Committee after the
abolition of that post in 1974, and was asked to fill the Presidency again when the BAROC resume the post in
344 Ibid., 290.
345 Ibid., 324.
The BAROC suffers from the fact that its leadership does not reflect the current dynamic of Taiwanese Buddhism, which embraces the reforms proposed by the late Chinese monk Taixu that the association has rejected for the last four decades. As mentioned above, Xingyun, Shengyan and Zhengyan are all on record for having adopted the this-worldly approach advocated by the reformist monk. His most important disciple, the monk Yinshun, has elaborated Taixu’s ideas and encouraged his disciples to assume an active role in society, arguing that the focus on spiritual practice and individual salvation represents escapist attitudes, and that salvation is better reached through involvement in this world. Yinshun is a well-known and respected figure in Taiwan, and some of his disciples, like Zhengyan, the head of Ciji, have become famous in their own right for implementing his views. Over the years, Xingyun, Shengyan, and others have explicitly stated their intention to carry out the ideals of Taixu. As a result, the views of the reformist monk are extremely popular among lay Buddhists and active members of the Sangha outside of the BAROC. Its ideological position, therefore, prevents the BAROC from developing the mass Buddhist support that might allow it to take a position of greater

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346 The views of Yinshun have been translated in English. See The Way to Buddhahood: Instructions from a Modern Chinese Master, translation by Wing H. Yeung (Boston: Wisdom Publication, 1998).
independence from or opposition to the government. Were the leaders of the BAROC constrained by the material and human resources of their organization to adopt such a strategy?

**Constraints on BAROC leaders**

The resources of the BAROC pale next to those of the other organizations studied in this dissertation and, compounding this difficulty, three characteristics of the BAROC leadership are at odds with current trends in Taiwanese Buddhism. Firstly, the leadership of the BAROC is under the control of ecclesiastics, even though the dynamism and the influence of the religion on the island are increasingly a function of lay people's activism. Secondly, men continue to govern the BAROC despite the fact that women significantly outnumber men among Taiwanese Buddhists. Thirdly, the leadership of the association remains the preserve of people from the Chinese mainland, even though a majority of Buddhists in Taiwan, like most other inhabitants of the island, do not identify with China. This last aspect of the BAROC leadership is especially important. Most leaders of the BAROC remain attached to the ultimate goal of restoring their influence in China, a project
that is at best received with indifference by most Taiwanese Buddhists or at worst openly criticized. Although efforts to alter these characteristics of the association could change its future, it is unlikely its leaders would do so lest that would imply unacceptable compromises with their theological beliefs.

*The limited resources of the BAROC*

The efforts of the association to fulfill its objectives are hampered by its inability to gather enough resources for the pursuit of its activities. As early as 1979, Shengyan, who would later become the abbot of Fagushan, complained that the BAROC was ineffective in recruiting new adherents and advertising its activities to the population. These failures were caused by a lack of personnel and a huge financial burden, which was in turn aggravated by the fact that many members had not paid their dues to the organization for years.347 One consequence of this lack of resources is that the heads of subordinated temples and organizations have become, over the years, inactive members of the BAROC who focus their energies on their own temples or monastic orders. After the Law of 1989

was adopted, these individuals could legally split from the association and restructure their
organizations in ways that enabled them to challenge the association in matters such as
ordination. Some of them have been so successful in their ventures that their own
organizations are now better known and hold more resources than the BAROC itself.
Xingyun, the founder of Foguangshan, and Shengyan, mentioned above, are two well-
known figures illustrating that trend.

This discrepancy between the limited resources of the BAROC and the wealth of
certain other organizations is evident in their respective real estate holdings. The
headquarters of the BAROC in Taipei in the run-down Shandao 善道 temple and the
modest adjoining office on Shaoxing 紹興 Street pale in comparison to the monumental
complexes of Foguangshan, Fagushan, or Lingyanshan, some of which have emerged in
recent years as major tourist attractions in their own rights.\(^{348}\) The current financial
difficulties of the association, however, do not determine its political behavior. In the
mid-1960s, when the BAROC held a monopoly of representation for Taiwanese Buddhists,

\(^{348}\) This was true with Foguangshan until its Committee for Religious Affairs decided in 1997 to return the
complex in Kaohsiung County to its initial purpose of fostering monastic life. Before that year, the temple
was a major stopover for foreign tourists and dignitaries. The next chapter elaborates on some of these
prestigious visitors.
it consisted of 40,000 individuals and 1,900 organizations, but it was not more politically
assertive.\textsuperscript{349} The poverty of the BAROC certainly limits its ability to mobilize politically
its constituency. In order to conclude whether this is a key factor determining the strategy
of the leaders of the association, however, it is necessary to look at the political behavior of
other organizations that control more resources, such as Foguangshan and Ciji.

\textit{The absence of lay support}

The current control of the BAROC by clerics goes to the heart of the feeling of
alienation expressed by many lay Buddhists working outside of the association. The
charter of the BAROC allows for no more than a third of leadership positions, whether in
the National Congress and at higher levels, or in local branches, to be occupied by lay
people.\textsuperscript{350} This dominance of the association by monks, in turn, is a function of the
conservative views held by the faction currently controlling the BAROC, which, as
previously discussed, believes that control of the affairs of temples by lay Buddhists would

\textsuperscript{349} "Organizations" refer here to individual temples. ROC, Ministry of Information, \textit{China Yearbook 1965-66} (Taipei: China Publishing, 1966), 82. In the 1980s, government publications stopped giving numbers for BAROC membership but still gave figures for the total number of Buddhists.

\textsuperscript{350} BAROC Charter, Section 4, Article 23. See Charles B. Jones, "Buddhism in Taiwan," 331.
signal the decline of the religion. This belief may be unpopular among Buddhists and may compel many to join rival organizations, but for the monks currently heading the association and their predecessors, this is the price that must be paid to ensure that the tradition they represent maintains its integrity. That is, the leadership of the BAROC prefers to preserve the principle of laity deference to the ecclesiastical order, even if the enforcement of that standard weakens its authority over lay devotees.

The absence of lay support certainly constrains the ability of the BAROC to conduct large-scale campaigns to mobilize Buddhist adherents and might dictate the choice for more modest forms of political intervention, if there were any indication that the BAROC leadership were willing to mobilize lay Buddhists to act politically. But as our prior discussion shows, the BAROC leadership’s theological beliefs and past experience both ensure that the BAROC leaders would not seek such lay mobilization.

The lack of congruence on the dimension of ethnicity

The BAROC appears as a throwback to the past, when waishengren politicians controlled the ROC and the KMT, because the ethnic composition of its leadership remains
dominated by *waishengren*, despite the fact that a majority of Buddhists currently identify themselves as Taiwanese *bendiren*. Many lay Buddhists and scholars have noted the indigenization [{*bentuhua* 本土化}] of Buddhism on the island in the last few years, despite the efforts of the association to promote the ideal of Buddhism as it was practiced in China. This trend mirrors the evolution of Taiwanese society, which pays greater attention to local culture, history and geography, and tends often to consider China as a foreign country. Considering that a majority within the leadership of the BAROC has its roots on the Chinese mainland, it is natural to speculate that the decline of the association is related to this lack of ethnic congruence.

However, our prior discussion has made clear that the BAROC leadership has never believed in the importance of reaching out to the overall Buddhist community. Therefore, it appears that the BAROC’s failure to indigenize its organization is the effect of its leaders’

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351 Although the inhabitants of Taiwan often emphasize the difference between the *bendiren* and the *waishengren*, all of them are ethnic Chinese [*Hanzu* 漢族], and distinct from the aboriginal Taiwanese [*yuanzhumin* 原住民, “the original inhabitants”]. Setting that semantic digression aside, however, the reader needs to keep in mind that the provincial cleavages have all the characteristics of other ethnic cleavages. On this issue and how it plays itself out in Taiwanese politics, see André Laliberté, *Taiwan: Between two Nationalisms*, Working Paper 12 (Vancouver: Institute of International Relations, 1996).

theological beliefs, not the ultimate cause of its elitist behavior. A similar argument can be made with respect to the lack of gender congruence.

The lack of congruence on the dimension of gender

The traditional monastic Buddhist principle of hierarchy and deference that places men above women also explains why the BAROC has failed to gain the support of most female devotees. Most students of Buddhism in Taiwan agree that among the adherents of the religion, women exceed men several times in number, and in recent years, an increasing number of nuns have emerged as spiritual leaders and lay activists. A look at the main figures of the membership of the Standing Central Committee over the years indicates that the BAROC has never espoused that trend. Herein lies one of the other sources of attrition in the membership of the association: women who answer the call for a monastic life, or who want to become active lay Buddhists, would rather join other organizations than become involved in the BAROC. As the next two chapters discuss,

353 It should be kept in mind that the argument according to which Buddhism prescribes the subordination of women to men among lay people and within the ecclesiastical order is contested within Taiwanese Buddhism itself.

354 It is very difficult to find agreement on precise figures about the ratio of women to men in Taiwanese Buddhism because of the fluidity in the notion of membership. This topic is discussed in greater detail in the
Foguangshan and Ciji are making great strides in representing women in their administrative structure. In letting women take positions of leadership, they are making their associations more attractive for lay women and nuns. While the BAROC's inability to recruit women helps to explain the decrease in membership, does it also affect the organization's choice of strategy of lobbying? To answer this question, we need to examine our two other organizations, Foguangshan and Ciji.

**Conclusion**

The BAROC has reacted to the decline of its standing among Buddhists by attempting to influence the government in its favor, despite the opposition of other organizations, and did not support Chen Lü'an. The members of the Sangha heading the association have adopted their strategy of lobbying because they believe that there is no alternative to cooperation with the ruling KMT. This belief is reinforced by the experience of relative following chapters on Foguangshan and Ciji, where women are more visible and influential.
success achieved in the past by the BAROC when it cooperated with the government. The expected benefits of cooperation, including the hope for the passing of a law germane to the interests of the association, were compelling enough to prevent it from supporting Chen. These calculations, in turn, were shaped by the conservative theology adopted by the BAROC leaders, according to which Buddhists should avoid intervention in politics. In sum, the conservative theology adopted by the association’s leaders has shaped strategic political choices that have exacerbated its lack of popularity within its constituency, making it difficult to obtain material resources and lay support. Rather than the organizational characteristics of the BAROC determining the views of its leaders, it appears that the leaders’ theology and choices create or at least reinforce the organizational characteristics that might preclude mobilization against the government. Even if it remains deprived of its previously privileged status, the association is likely to continue with the same strategy because most Buddhist devotees and members of the Sangha that hold different views, and hence could have been more interested in revitalizing the BAROC, have preferred to join other institutions. Some of these organizations are already more popular and more
influential than the BAROC, and have made different political choices. The next chapter
turns to one of these organizations, Foguangshan.
Chapter Four

FOGUANGSHAN'S HUMANISTIC BUDDHISM

AND THE DUTY OF REMONSTRANCE

Introduction

The Foguangshan monastic order, in particular its founder Xingyun, has worked closely with the KMT for many years, but in 1996, it demonstrated its opposition to the government of Lee Teng-hui by supporting a rival candidate, Chen Lü’an, for the ROC presidency. Media that were usually critical of the government called Xingyun a “political monk” and denounced the intervention of a religious leader in politics, arguing that it represented a dangerous precedent.355 Why did Xingyun, who had been an active member

355 “Yesu Jidu Shijijamoni Dazhan 耶穌基督釋迦牟尼大戰 [The Jesus-Sakyamuni war], Xinxinwen 3 September 1995, 10-18; “Linglei Zongjiao Zhanzheng 另類宗教戰爭 [The other religious war],” Minzong
of the BAROC for decades, pursue a strategy so different from that of the BAROC leadership? Does the Buddha Light International Association (BLIA), the lay organization he has founded, represent a Taiwanese version of the Japanese Soka Gakkai and will it eventually become a political party akin to the Komeito? In trying to answer these questions, the present case study looks into the ideas of Xingyun and his colleagues, and tries to assess whether the constraints and opportunities present in the monastic order and its affiliates influence the choice of strategies they make. The chapter is organized as follows: the first section introduces Xingyun and Foguangshan; the following two sections explore the goals and the structure of Foguangshan; and a fourth section discusses the political activities of Xingyun, especially during the 1996 presidential election. The final section examines the ideas of Xingyun and explores whether the material and human resources at his disposal shape his decisions.

Ribao 民眾日報 [People’s Daily], 4 march 1996, 5.
Xingyun and the Development of Fonguangshan

Xingyun was born in Southern Jiangsu, and as a young monk in China, he briefly studied under the guidance of Taixu.\(^{356}\) After the CCP took over the former nationalist capital Nanjing, Xingyun moved to Taiwan as the head of a relief group.\(^{357}\) Settling in the remote and poor county of Ilan \([Yilan 宜蘭]\) in 1952, he established the Leiyin 雷音 Temple and a series of other institutions, including a radio station for the propagation of Buddhist doctrines.\(^{358}\) During those years, he was known as an energetic member of the BAROC, and in 1958 he even conducted a Dharma Meeting for the Protection of the Nation and the Averting of Disaster. In 1962, he moved to Kaohsiung County and established the Shoushan 壽山 Temple, integrating into one single organization the two temples, as well as other institutions, for the propagation of Buddhism.\(^{359}\) In 1967, \(^{356}\) Over the years, Xingyun has consistently identified himself with the Taixu faction within the BAROC and has developed further the theological innovations of the latter. Among his many writings, see for example Xingyun, *Foguang Yuan: Renjian Fojiao* 佛光榮:人間佛教 [The Purpose of the Buddha Light: This-Worldly Buddhism], ed. Ceng Fengling 曾鳳玲 (Kaohsiung: Foguang Chubanshe 佛光出版社 [Fo Kuang Publishing House], 1994).

\(^{357}\) Fu Chi-ying, *Handing Down the Light*, 59.


Xingyun formally founded the Fuguangshan Monastery, which went through two phases of expansion before the organization as we know it today was established.\textsuperscript{360} Over the next two decades, Xingyun either founded new branch establishments throughout the island and abroad, or incorporated smaller temples that were experiencing financial difficulties, the absence of a successor to the position of leadership, or internal strife.\textsuperscript{361} Then, in accordance with the rule that he himself set for his succession, he resigned from his position as the abbot of Fuguangshan in 1985.

Xingyun and his organizations were by then increasingly pursuing activities outside of the BAROC framework, a trend reinforced by the founding of branch temples abroad, outside of the jurisdiction of the official association. One of the most notable achievements of Xingyun in that regard was the founding of the Xilai Temple near Los Angeles in 1986, under the auspices of the International Buddhist Progress Society \textit{[Guoji Fojiao Cujinhui 國際佛教促進會]} (IBPS).\textsuperscript{362} This branch of the organization would later achieve considerable, albeit unsought, notoriety in the United States as the center of a

\textsuperscript{360} \textit{Ibid.}, 33-34.
\textsuperscript{361} Fu Chi-ying, \textit{Handing Down the Light}, 199.
\textsuperscript{362} \textit{Ibid.}, 341-361.
squabble over financial contributions to the Democratic Party.\footnote{In 1991, the \textit{de facto} autonomy incrementally achieved by the Foguangshan monastic order became \textit{de jure}, when Xingyun established the BLIA and decided to devote his energies to the development of a lay organization on which monks and nuns could rely.\footnote{Along with his activities as an institution-builder, Xingyun has written books and penned articles in the many periodicals published by his organization. He has also given speeches, traveled abroad to preach, greeted visitors in Foguangshan or other temples, ordained new monks and trained new generations of abbots and abbesses.\footnote{Xingyun has also sought a rapprochement between the Mahayana, Theravada and Tibetan Buddhist traditions and to that end, has traveled extensively from Japan to Southeast Asia to India. In 1984 and 1989, he went to the Xilai Temple near Los Angeles to greet the Dalai Lama, who reciprocated by going to Foguangshan during his historic visit in 1997. Xingyun has also been active in inter-religious dialogue with Christians and Muslims. His}}

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organizations have sponsored events such as the international symposium on the

Through the various activities described above, Xingyun has sought over the years to achieve several objectives, which are encapsulated in the credo of Foguangshan:

“promoting humanistic Buddhism and establishing a Pure Land on Earth.” The next section introduces these aims.

The Goals of Foguangshan

The Foguangshan monastic order is an international organization primarily devoted to the proselytizing of the particular form of Buddhism taught by Xingyun. The literature

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from the monastic order states as a motto that its two goals are the promotion of humanistic Buddhism [*tichang rensheng fojiao* 提倡人生佛教] and the building of a Pure Land on Earth [*jianli Renjian Jingtu* 建立人間淨土]. These two goals are to be achieved by the pursuit of four main activities: propagating the Dharma [*hongyang Fofa* 弘揚佛法], fostering talent through education [*yi jiaoyu peiyang rencai* 以教育培養人才], benefitting society through charitable activities [*yi cishan fuli shehui* 以慈善福利社會] and purifying minds through Buddhist practice [*yi gongxiu jinghua renxin* 以共修淨化人心].

Foguangshan may be barely more than thirty years old, but it already ranks as one of the most widely known associations in the ROC. Its reputation is such that it is advertised as one of the main attractions of the island, and until the mid-1990s it was a major stopover for many foreign dignitaries visiting Taiwan.

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370 Unfortunately, by the time of writing, the annals of Foguangshan commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the monastic order were not available.
371 The GIO claims it is a center of Buddhist scholarship in Taiwan. Republic of China Yearbook, 1997, 396.
372 Since 1997, the monastery of Foguangshan has been closed to outsiders and has reverted to its original vocation as a retreat for monks and devotees to practice their religion. See “Foguang Fengshan: Jingxin Xiuxing 佛光封山: 靜心修行 [The Buddha Light Closes the Mountain to Quietly Practice Buddhism],” Lingyan Xinwen 另眼新聞 [New Eyes Magazine], 9-22 March 1997, 48.
373 Among the personalities that visited the temple over the years were: the Dalai Lama, who attended a
Foguangshan has played a prominent role in the revival of Buddhism on the island, and accounts of the remarkable growth of the Buddhist tradition in Taiwan during the last three decades almost always mention its contribution. Moreover, the efforts of Foguangshan to spread the Dharma have not been limited to Taiwan: the monastic order has branches on all continents. To sustain the growth of the organization and maintain links with society outside of the monastery, the support of lay Buddhists has been essential. In 1990, Xingyun decided to provide them an organizational framework by founding the BLIA. The organization was chartered in Taipei in the following year and inaugurated in 1992 in Los Angeles, where it established its headquarters. As a result of this move, the BLIA helped Foguangshan increase the profile of Buddhism - and Taiwan – among overseas Chinese and non-Chinese communities. If Foguangshan seeks to intervene in

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374 See Jiang Canteng, Taiwan Dangdai Fojiao, 13-27; Kang Le and Jian Huimei, Xinyang yu Shehui, 107-184; Chen Zailai, Zongjiao yu Guanli, 5-11.

375 The bulletin published by the BLIA, Foguang Shiji 佛光世紀 [Buddha Light Newsletter], often presents evidence that some non-Chinese join the organization as lay volunteers and clerics. A measure of the success achieved by the BLIA abroad can be found in the attendance at the fifth BLIA conference in Paris: 4,000 representatives from over one hundred countries joined the event. Foguang Jikan 佛光季刊 [IBPS Quarterly], Winter 1996, 1.
politics and needs to mobilize the followers of Xingyun, the BLIA represents its most important asset.

The BLIA was established in order to attain four objectives related to the spread of the Dharma: internationalization [guojihua 國際化], “actualization [renjianhua 人間化],” preparation for the future [weilaihua 未來化], and standardization [tongyihua 統一化].

The goal of internationalization is self-evident: the BLIA stakes a claim to be a universal religion reaching out to everyone.

With its objective of actualization, the association asserts that Buddhism should not be limited to monastic practice and that the Pure Land paradise can be built on earth. In the words of Xingyun, the achievement of that goal requires “the practice of asceticism, commitment to society and aggressive engagement in activities of Buddhist culture, education, charity and Dharma preaching.”

The goal of “catering for the future” demands spreading a “truth-based religion [zhengli de zongjiao 真理的宗教],” striving to “humanize [...] economic lives [fohua de

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376 The quotes are form translations provided by the editor of the Guoji Fuguanghui Zhonghua Zonghui, Yijiujiuwu Nian Tekan, 52-54. The original Chinese text is in Ibid., 4-5.
enriching the minds through “public services and selfless devotion,” and cultivating “good merits for a better future [fiu de yinyuan 福德因緣].”

The goal of standardization, finally, refers to the achievement of uniformity in monastic attires [sengzhuang 僧裝], titles [chenghu 稱呼], and rituals [yili 儀禮]. In pursuing these ambitious goals, the BLIA seeks to transform Buddhism from a tradition of monasticism into a congregational religion that is active in society.

The attainment of such ideals requires the performance of several practical activities that produce considerable economic benefits: sale of religious paraphernalia, books and tapes; provision of health care and education; and organization of public lectures and conferences. The wealth generated by these activities, however, has generated heated controversies on the island and elsewhere.378 In Taiwan, numerous lay Buddhists criticize the monastic order for putting too much emphasis on the pursuit of wealth and

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377 Note that in Chinese, “to Humanize” was instead to “Buddha-ize.”
378 The criticisms found in some Taiwanese web sites run by expatriates supporting Taiwanese independence amount to slanderous comments. They vehemently criticize the monastic order for its close relations with the nominally pro-reunification KMT. In 1995, Foguangshan was also the target of terrorist threats whose authors were never identified. “Foguangshan Shaofang zhi ‘Zha’ Dan Xujing Yiyang 佛光山遭放置 <詐> 炸彈虛驚一場 [Foguangshan Victim of a False Bomb Threat],” Zhongyang, 21 September 1995, 7.
accuse its founder of commercializing Buddhism. More important for our purposes, however, many Taiwanese condemn Xingyun for his relations with the KMT old guard during the period of martial law and have labeled him a "political monk." To discuss this issue, it is necessary to begin with a look into the structure of Foguangshan. Far more complex than that of the BAROC, it allows the monastic order the opportunity to conduct a great range of activities besides proselytizing.

The Structure of Foguangshan

Xingyun and his associates have established over the years a structure that differs from that of the BAROC in two respects. Firstly, it is not intended to meet the demands of

379 These criticisms have been conveyed to me in the context of the many informal conversations I had during my stay in Taiwan with people in academia and in the media, as well as with lay Buddhists. The criticism of Buddhists about the fact that Foguangshan disposes of too much wealth, however, does not imply that it was acquired by fraud, but simply that it represents too much. Critical media reports however suggest that the wealth acquired by Foguangshan and many similar organizations almost amounts to extortion. See "Foguangshan de Haohua Lingwei: Kaijia Zai Sanshiwan Yuan Yishang (The Starting Price for Funerary Tablets in Foguangshan: 30,000 New Taiwan Dollars)," Xinxinwen 27 October 1996, 47-49.

380 Besides the slander mentioned above, I do not dispose of sources illustrating the reproach that Xingyun was too close to the KMT during martial law. However, these criticisms have been expresse often enough to generate a forceful response from Xingyun himself. See Infra.
the KMT and respond to government directives. Secondly, it is designed so as to ensure
that the organization will continue to prosper and expand abroad, even after its founders
pass away or retire from the scene. The monastic order does not rely on the charismatic
authority of its creator: it uses its own constitution [zhangcheng 章程], which determines
the procedures by which the abbot [zhuchi 住持] and the highest authority within the
Foguangshan monastic order, the Committee for Religious Affairs [Zongwu Weiyuanhui 宗
務委員會], are to be selected.\footnote{For details, see Foguangshan Zongwu Weiyuanhui, Foguangxue 佛光學 [Studies on Buddha Light] (Nd.: Foguangshan Zongwu Weiyuanhui, 1997), 81-127.}
Since the last organizational change in 1995, the Committee, headed by an abbot selected from within its ranks, now oversees five councils [yuan 院]. The councils look after veteran [changlao 長老] affairs;\footnote{This is the translation used by Foguangshan for elderly monks who are retiring from active duties. For a look at the Chinese terminology for these units, see Foguangshan Zongwu Weiyuanhui, Women de Baogao, 84ff.} temple supervision [doujian 都監] in Taiwan, supervision of temples abroad, education, and cultural affairs respectively.\footnote{The council for cultural affairs publishes books and magazines, runs bookstores, and libraries and broadcast programs on TV and radio. For a complete list of these activities, see Fokuangshan Buddhist Order, Our Report, 8-11, 16.} In addition, the Committee administers the affairs of the IBPS, Fokuang TV, two cultural and educational foundations [wenjiao jijinhui 文教基金會], three

\footnote{Both foundations are fund-raising associations that sponsor cultural and scholarly activities such as conferences, seminars, etc. Fokuangshan Buddhist Order, Our Report, 5-7.}
committees for the organization of university education, the development of BLIA, and the advancement of religious affairs, as well as four other less important units.

Like the BAROC, the leadership of Foguangshan is highly institutionalized, but not in ways that parallel the structure of the KMT. The monastic order strives to function according to a set of fixed rules rather than following a charismatic style of leadership. In order to prevent any person from gaining too much influence, members of the Committee for Religious Affairs are limited to a maximum of two six-year terms. As a result of this administrative practice, the succession to Xingyun in 1985 proceeded smoothly and a new generation of leaders has already taken over the management of the whole organization.

Some of the successors to the founder of Foguangshan are remarkable spiritual leaders and capable administrators who have established good reputations of their own.

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385 The university educational activities of Foguangshan are oriented towards secular education and distinct from the monastic education.

386 According to the charter, the abbot can be re-elected a second time if two-thirds of the majority among the eleven members of the Committee for Religious Affairs decides so through secret ballot. Xingyun, under that provision, was abbot of Foguangshan from 1967 to 1985. See Foguangshan Buddhist Order, Our Report, 44.

387 For an introduction to the biographies of some of the successors to Xingyun, see Fu Zhiying, Xinhua: Foguangshan Chengxianqihou de Gushi 薪火:佛光山承先啓後的故事 [The story of Foguangshan founders’ spiritual heirs] (Taipei: Tianxia Wenhua Chuban 天下文化出版 [Commonwealth Publishing], 1997).
A few have been educated abroad, possess advanced degrees and have a cosmopolitan outlook. However, with perhaps the exception of Ven. Xinding, the current abbot of Foguangshan, no monk or nun has yet emerged who possesses the charisma and the popularity enjoyed by the founder of Foguangshan.

The organizational structure and the resources of Foguangshan are such that the monastic order could adopt a strategy of remonstrance towards the government if it decided to do so. The administration of the monastic order is thoroughly institutionalized and inspired by a clear sense of purpose, and could rapidly mobilize lay Buddhists. Its affairs, up to and including the supreme leadership, are conducted in accordance with a charter and follow a series of bureaucratic, routinized procedures within a well-defined hierarchy. Such institutionalization of Foguangshan makes the monastic order as capable as the BAROC to adopt political strategies serving its interests. The following section looks into the achievements of Foguangshan in that regard.

388 Ven. Yikong, a member of the religious affairs committee and the BLIA board of directors, is the first nun to hold a PhD, which she obtained in Chinese Studies at the National Taiwan Normal University of Kaohsiung. Ven. Yifa is the first nun to receive a PhD from Yale. On the career of Yigong and Yifa, see Fu Zhiying, *Xinhuo*, 245-264, 289-310.

389 Ibid., 113-134.

390 This may be a function of deference to the authority of Xingyun, and it is difficult to imagine that a monk or a nun within the organization would relish being seen as too ambitious by his co-disciples.
The Political Behavior of Foguangshan

As we stated in the introduction, much of Foguangshan’s political activity has involved cooperation with the KMT government and has served the interests of that government well. For example, the religious activities of Xingyun have served the interests of the ROC government very well as a form of informal diplomacy, and as a possible channel of communication with the PRC. The numerous encounters between Xingyun and his counterparts in South Korea, Thailand, Sri Lanka or India must be seen in light of the diminishing international presence of the ROC. In some of his international ventures, Xingyun continues to present an image of Taiwan as a progressive country. Recently, he has been instrumental in restarting the ordination of women in countries belonging to the Hinayana tradition. In 1986 Zhao Puchu, head of the Buddhist Association of China (BAC), invited Xingyun to visit the PRC, and in the spring of 1989 a

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391 Fu Chi-ying, *Handing Down the Light*, 363.
392 "Daughters of the Buddha," *Sinorama* December 1997 (online edition: 200
delegation of 200 headed by Xingyun and the IBPS traveled to Dunhuang, Beijing and Chengdu, and met with such high-level party and government officials as Li Xiannian 李先念 and Yang Shangkun 楊尚昆. The religious meetings between Xingyun and the Dalai Lama also served a political purpose for the ROC: the mutual understanding between the Sangha of the Taiwanese monastic order and the exiled Tibetan leader invites a contrast with the lack of flexibility displayed by Chinese authorities. The informal diplomacy conducted by the Foguangshan and the BLIA, however, can sometimes backfire. In 1997, for instance, the good relations cultivated by Xingyun with U.S. Vice-President Al Gore after he visited Foguangshan in 1989 ultimately and inadvertently cast his organization in unfavorable light. The American press criticized Gore’s lunch at the Xilai Temple as an illegal fund-raiser for the Democratic National Committee.394

Along with his role as an informal ambassador for Taiwanese Buddhism and the ROC abroad, Xingyun also works closely with the government at home and is involved with the domestic affairs of his country. Since 1986, he has served as a member of the ruling

393 Fu Chi-ying, Handing Down the Light, 310-318.
party’s Central Committee and as an advisor on party affairs. In 1997, he accepted an appointment by the cabinet-level Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission (Qiaowu Weiyuanhui) to a commissioner’s post, becoming the first monk to assume a government position in Taiwan. All these activities on the part of Xingyun have won the attention of KMT officials, who have lavished praise on his good deeds and the organizations he has established.

As we have seen, much of Foguangshan’s political activity involves close cooperation with the KMT. However, Foguangshan’s political strategies are not limited to such cooperation. In several cases, Xingyun has chosen a strategy which we have labelled “remonstrance.” The best example of this is his decision in 1996 to support the candidate Chen Lü’an for the ROC presidency against the incumbent President Lee Teng-hui. This episode will be more fully described in the next section.

395 The Central Committee (CC) is distinct from the Central Standing Committee (CSC). In 1993, the former counted 210 members, and the latter 31. CC members meet only three days each year and elect members of the CSC. Membership in the CC is thus a rather honorary title, and as pointed by his biographer, Xingyun himself does not know for sure what the party expects from him in that capacity. See Fu Chi-ying, Handing Down the Light, 245.
398 This was not the only instance where Xingyun supported an opposition candidate. In the Legislative
The presidential campaign of 1996

Seven months before the Taiwanese went to the polls to elect the ROC President, Xingyun publicly endorsed the candidacy of Chen Lü’an, a respected politician, and triggered a controversy about the separation of religion and politics that lasted throughout the campaign. Xingyun’s move came as a surprise, given the many years of his cooperation with the KMT. What was even more surprising, however, was the rather lukewarm response of organizations such as the BAROC and Ciji. The previous chapter on the BAROC has suggested that the association did not want to encourage lay involvement and therefore that it could not encourage Chen Lü’an’s bid. Ciji, which has a large lay following, like Foguangshan, has abstained from supporting Chen. Clearly, most other Buddhist organizations have preferred to continue supporting the KMT or to avoid political participation altogether. Why did Xingyun break ranks with other Taiwanese

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* footnotes: 


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Buddhist leaders and decided to act politically against the KMT? It is necessary to provide some background information about the 1996 presidential campaign and Chen Lü’an in order to answer this question.

The presidential campaign of 1996 was launched in the context of divisive struggles for power within the ruling party. Members of the KMT opposing a perceived drift towards support for Taiwanese independence had been calling for the formation of a “Third Force” ever since President Lee, a bendiren, came to power. The most disgruntled among these politicians founded the NP in 1992, while others vowed to effect changes within the party, as members of what the media soon labeled the non-mainstream coalition [feizhuliupai 非主流派].400 Members of the DPP, criticizing the KMT on the grounds of corruption and authoritarianism, rejected the claim of the NP and the non-mainstream KMT to represent a democratic alternative.401 The so-called “Third Force,” they argued, was merely an attempt by waishengren to cling to their vanishing privileges. Support for this

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400 Supporters of Lee within the KMT, naturally, were members of the zhuliupai 主流派, mainstream faction.
assertion is found by looking at the constituencies that the “Third Force” politicians were courting.  

During the 1996 presidential campaign, the “Third Force” found its standard-bearers in Lin Yanggang and Hao Bocun, two dissident figures from the KMT who were both vice-chairmen of the party. Lin had long been a rival of President Lee within the KMT, and Hao, a former general and premier from 1990 to 1993, was one of the last holdouts of the previous authoritarian regime. Although Lin and Hao were identified with the KMT, their views did not differ much from those of popular NP candidates such as the colorful Zhu Gaozheng. During the legislative elections of 1995, therefore, Lin and Hao supported the NP candidates (a move that led to their expulsion from the KMT), and in return, the NP dropped its own bid for the presidency in 1997 and supported the Lin-Hao ticket. Politics was thus polarized over the Tongdu 統

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403 The title was purely honorific and represented a demotion in the power structure of the party.


405 Both Lin and Hao appealed the decision but they were unsuccessful. Their campaign literature claimed they represented the true values of the KMT.

issue, that is, the clash between advocates of reunification with mainland China [Zhongguo tongyi 中國統一] and proponents of Taiwanese independence [Taiwan duli 台灣獨立].\textsuperscript{407} The participation of Chen Lü’an in the presidential election signaled an attempt to move beyond this issue.

\textit{Chen Lü’an}

When Chen Lü’an early on declared his intention to run for the presidency, he seemed for the moment to present the country with a choice transcending traditional political divisions.\textsuperscript{408} Chen’s political program on the issue of national unity was not very different from that of other members of the “Third Force,” insofar as he also opposed independence and advocated reunification with the continent if the Chinese government abandons Marxism-Leninism. However, by arguing that his moral values, influenced by his links

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{407} "Xuezhe Kan Lin-Hao Pei Youxin Jihua Tongdu Zhizhan 學者看林郝配憂心激化統獨之戰 [Scholars note the Lin-Hao ticket likely to intensify reunification-independence controversy]," \textit{Ziyou Shibao}, 16 November 1995, 8.
\end{enumerate}
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with the Foguangshan monastic order, constituted the foundations of his political action, Chen stood apart from the other candidates for the ROC presidency.409

The career of Chen has been remarkable both for its achievements and for the ways in which his political activities have been guided by his moral values. Chen is one of the sons of former governor Chen Cheng, a controversial figure blamed for the repression of native Taiwanese, but also credited for the land reform that paved the way for economic development.410 A professor at Taiwan University after his return from the United States in 1970, Chen became Education Vice-Minister in 1977.411 Two years later, he served on the KMT Organization Working Committee (Zuzhi Gongzuo Weiyuanhui 組織工作委員會) (OWC). In 1980, after the United States severed diplomatic relations with the ROC, he became KMT Vice-Secretary General and responsible for the party’s foreign relations. In 1984, he was put in charge of the National Commission on Science and Education (Guojia Kexue Weiyuanhui 國家科學委員會) (NCSE), and four years later was promoted to

409 Chen Lù’ān’s brother, Chen Lùbèi 陳履培, is an eminent Buddhist scholar working for the Foguangshan Foundation for Buddhist Culture and Education [Wenjiao Jijinhui 文教基金會].
410 On the influence of Chen Cheng on his son, see Xie Jianping 謝建平, Chen Lù’ān Zhenhan 陳履安震撼 [The Chen Lù’ān Effect] (Taipei: Yüxiá 亞細亞, 1995), 59-72.
Economy Minister. In 1990, Lee Teng-hui made him the first civilian Defense Minister of the ROC, and two years later, he was named President of the Control Yuan [Jianchayuanzhang 監察院長], a watchdog body where he made his mark as an incorruptible politician. When he announced his intention to run for the presidency in 1995, he resigned from his positions in government and in the KMT.

What did Chen propose to the voters? The first element of Chen Lü’an’s electoral platform, the idea of a president above the parties [zongtong yingchao dangpai 總統應超黨派], was very popular at the beginning of the campaign. His most notable proposals were to transform Taiwan into a service economy [fuwuxing guojia 服務性國家] and to “humanize society [renxinghua shehui 人性化社會].” To implement these goals, Chen advocated such general principles as clean government, a less confrontational stance in cross-strait relations, social welfare, environmental protection, a fair judiciary, and gender equality, under the slogan “peace will save Taiwan [heping jiu Taiwan 和平救台灣].” The management of his campaign by well-qualified strategists conveyed an image of Chen and his running mate Wang Qingfeng 王青峰 as modern-looking rather than traditional.

412 The source for this paragraphs is from campaign material used by Chen Lü’an and Wang Qingfeng.
politicians. The main faults of his campaign, however, were in the vagueness of his proposals and his excessive use of moralistic language. As time went on, Chen Lü’an increasingly focused his attacks on President Lee and supporters of Taiwanese independence, whom he blamed for triggering the PLA missile tests of March 1996, rather than against the candidate Lin Yanggang.\textsuperscript{413} Chen Lü’an could not rely on the support of any political party, so he had to count on the assistance of civic organizations, and to that end, asked Wang Qingfeng, a noted social activist and fellow Control Yuan member, to be his running mate. Wang had been a lawyer and had headed the Women Rescue Foundation \textit{[Funu Jiuyuan Jijinhui 婦女救援基金會]}. In accordance with the election laws of the ROC, Chen and Wang had to launch a signature campaign in order to have the right to run, because no political party had nominated them. Chen and Wang managed to get enough support to legally establish a campaign committee. Both financial support and campaigners came from various religious organizations,\textsuperscript{414} and the campaign was managed by a cultural and educational foundation, the \textit{Huayu Wenjiao Jijinhui  化育文教基金會},

\textsuperscript{413}“Chen Lü’an: Li Denghui Haoyong Douhen, Zhonggong Ni Shangdangle 陳履安:李登輝好勇鬥狠,中共你上當了 [Chen Lü’an: President Lee’s provocations may bring the communists in],” \textit{Lianhebao}, 10 March 1996, 6.

\textsuperscript{414}“Sense and Sensibility,” 5.
and an affiliated Buddhist publishing house [Zongsheng Wenhua 眾生文化].\textsuperscript{415} Although Chen and Wang competed with Lin Yanggang and Hao Bocun for the support of voters who disapproved of the DPP candidate or the incumbent President, they benefited from the endorsement of religious groups hoping to influence politics. It is in this context that Xingyun’s support of Chen must be considered.

\textit{Xingyun’s support of Chen Lü’an’s campaign}

Xingyun’s support for Chen’s candidacy initially triggered reactions in the media ranging from enthusiastic support\textsuperscript{416} to criticism, ridicule, and the denunciation of alleged Machiavellian plots. Several journalists argued that Xingyun was setting a dangerous precedent by supporting a politician. There were hysterical editorials and somber

\textsuperscript{415} The foundation published a monthly, \textit{Shanyou Shanbao} 善有善報 [literally, “kind deeds pay rich dividends to the doer] whose editor is Chen himself, as well as a glossy quarterly that was entirely devoted to his campaign, \textit{The Great Vow [Dayuan 大願].}

warnings pointing to an upcoming war of religions. These interpretations, however, were more often sensational schemes to attract readers than they were serious analyses.

Cynics also derided Xingyun’s support for a candidate who was not endorsed by the ruling party and therefore stood little chance of winning. Finally, some other commentators speculated that Chen’s presidential bid was actually a ploy to steal votes from President Lee’s opponents and that Xingyun supported this goal.

The consequences of Xingyun’s actions turned out to be less drastic than initially feared. As any observer of the campaign could testify, religion never became a contentious issue. To be sure, the Presbyterian Church provided help to the DPP candidate and the Yiguandao supported President Lee, and most candidates made a point to


418 The more serious criticisms censured Xingyun for violating the principle that religion ought to be separated from politics. See for example the editorial written by Academia Sinica scholar Qu Haiyuan “Zunzhong Zhengjiao Fenli Yuanze 尊重政教分離原則 [Respect the principle of separation between politics and religion],” Zhongguo Shibao, 30 August 1995, 11.

419 “Xingyun Neng Huchi Chu Zongtong Tudi ma 星雲能護持出總統徒弟嗎 [Can Xingyun protect his pupil when he is President?]?” Shangye Zhoukan 商業周刊 [Business Weekly] 25 December 1995, 39-40; “Chen Lü-an Xuan Fojiao Jiaohuang 陳履安選佛教教皇 [Will Chen Lü’an choose the next supreme spiritual master of Buddhism?]” Minzong Ribao, 14 November 1995, 5.

420 “VP choice will show if Chen’s for real,” China Post, 12 September 1995, 4.
pay their respects to religious leaders. But this kind of behavior was not unusual in Taiwanese politics. The pattern of the vote did not follow religious cleavages. While many Buddhist voted for Chen Lü’an, there was an even greater number of self-described Buddhists who did not: out of the 4.9 million Buddhists in Taiwan, less than 1.4 million voted for Chen. That said, it is interesting to note that this figure comes close to the claimed membership of the BLIA.

The support provided by Xingyun to Chen Lü’an was also not as considerable as some in the media had claimed. During his campaign, Chen repeatedly sought to downplay his Buddhist beliefs. Although many BLIA members may have supported him, they likely did so because they agreed with his ideas and those of his spiritual mentor, and not as a result of mobilization by the BLIA or Foguangshan. The bulletin and periodicals of the organizations were not used to promote the campaign of Chen, and, as we have seen above, an outside publisher with no relation to Foguangshan produced Chen’s


422 “Chen Lü’an: Xue Fo, Can Xuan fei Denghao 陳履安: 學佛, 參選非等號 [Chen Lü’an: to study Buddhism and to participate in elections are two different things],” Ziyou Shibao, 11 September 1995, 2; “Qiangdiao bu Yunzuo Fojiao Tuanti Zhichi Canxuan 強調不運作佛教團體支持參選 [Emphasizing Buddhist groups are not used to support candidates],” Zhongyang, 4 September 1995.
campaign literature. That is, although Xingyun publicly supported Chen in the early stages of the campaign, his organization avoided appearing too involved in Chen’s campaign, and Chen, in turn, emphasized that he was not the “Buddhist candidate.”

Although Chen finished last, it would be wrong to consider his bid as a failure. The participation of Chen certainly demonstrated that many lay Buddhists ignore the BAROC’s views, disagree with Ciji’s approach and do not shy away from involvement in politics. The votes received by Chen demonstrated that a substantial number of Buddhists represent a constituency that matters in the ROC, but it also revealed that Buddhists do not vote as a bloc. One has also to measure the achievement of the candidate in light of the obstacles he faced. Chen did not have the support of any political party, while the three other candidates benefited from party resources. Lee Teng-hui and Lian Zhan were supported by the mainstream faction of the KMT and moderate supporters of the DPP; Peng Mingmin and Xie Changting received the endorsement of the DPP members that favored Taiwanese independence; Lin and Hao were helped by the NP grass-roots organization. This lack of support from any political party, furthermore, made it difficult for Chen and Wang to

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423 By the end of his campaign, Chen rejected the idea that he was the “Buddhists’ candidate,” but had problems in convincing the medias. “Chen still wooing Buddhist votes,” China Post, 21 November 1995,
receive supportive coverage in the press.\textsuperscript{424} As mentioned above, press commentary was often critical, if not derisive, of Chen's religious background.

Chen also failed to receive the support of all Buddhists. The leaders of other Buddhist organizations, such as Zhengyan, were careful not to give the impression that they were supporting Chen,\textsuperscript{425} and it is likely that many Buddhists affiliated with other organizations found that two of the other candidates could best represent their interests.

Lin Yanggang's daughter is a noted member of Ciji, and, although the latter did not endorse the non-mainstream KMT candidate, the refusal of this charity organization to endorse Chen was a setback for him.\textsuperscript{426} Although neither Lee nor Lian were Buddhists, many adherents of the religion may have preferred to support the incumbent President, keeping in mind that one of his close collaborators, Wu Boxiong, is also close to Xingyun.\textsuperscript{427}

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\textsuperscript{424} Most newspapers were supporting Lee and Lian, but the Lianhebao, the third daily in importance in the country, was supportive of Lin and Hao. The Lee-Lian ticket received until the last day of the campaign more air time on TV than the other three pair of candidates combined. “Sense and Sensibility,” 7.

\textsuperscript{425} The day Chen announced his candidacy, Zhengyan, the head of Ciji, declined to express any opinion on the matter to journalists. “Zhengyan Fashi: Ciji Guanxin dan bu Jieru Zhengzhi [Dharma Master Zhengyan explains: Ciji cares about but does not get involved into politics],” Lianhebao, 21 August 1995, 3.

\textsuperscript{426} In addition, his teacher in Buddhist philosophy was Wuming, a BAROC figure mentioned in the previous chapter.

\textsuperscript{427} In fact, Wu is a lay devotee who has been elected as head of the BLIA, ROC, and it is after consultations with Xingyun that he decided not to run as KMT candidate for the position of Governor in the Provincial election of 1994. “Xingyun Weihe Quantui Wu Quanjin Chen [How Can Xingyun Exhort Wu to Desist while Exhorting Chen to Run?]?” Ziyou Shibao 19 August 1995, 12.
significant, however, is the fact that neither Foguangshan nor the BLIA mobilized their members to support Chen.

Xingyun was willing to bless the campaign of Chen on the basis of shared values and the track record of the former President of the Control Yuan. It is dubious that fear of conflict with the ruling party prevented the founder of Foguangshan from mobilizing his organization on behalf of Chen. After the presidential campaign of 1996, Xingyun became more politically assertive, not less. Clearly, other considerations came into play. Xingyun may have preferred not to jeopardize his reputation or waste the resources of Foguangshan and the BLIA for a candidate that stood few chances of winning. Concerns about the separation between politics and religion may have come into play as well. This issue remains pervasive in the ROC, as the criticism of Xingyun mentioned above has indicated, and the leader of the BLIA may have wanted to avoid the fate of the Soka Gakkai, which has been submitted to intense criticism in Japan for its intervention in politics. The most likely explanation, though, of Xingyun's decision personally to support Chen, is his theological belief discussed below: Xingyun believes that Buddhists have a responsibility to participate as individuals in politics.
The aftermath of the campaign

Although Chen Lü'an was not punished for his participation in the presidential campaign, he has no future in Taiwanese politics. After the campaign, he spent most of his time travelling abroad, including three times to the PRC. The purposes of his trips were to help the poor, contribute to the repair of temples and pursue charitable activities. Chen alleges that he was kept under surveillance by secret agents, and there have been rumors, which he has denied, that he wanted to emigrate to Macau.\(^\text{428}\) Besides making proposals on cross-strait relations that he made during a non-official visit to Beijing in 1998,\(^\text{429}\) Chen has been politically inactive and not supported by any party, and he has gradually withdrawn from politics.

The charge that Xingyun was helping the candidate Lee Teng-hui by sponsoring Chen Lü'an has been largely discredited by the fact that the monastic order has apparently been punished for supporting Chen. Although members of the monastic order refrain from

\(^{428}\) Chen Lü'an did express that view during an interview in Taipei, 11 June 1997. “Former President has no Plans to Emigrate,” FBIS-CHI-98-033, source: Taiwan Central News Agency WWW.

\(^{429}\) “Chen Li-an Recommends EU Model of Chinese Unification,” FBIS-CHI-98-118, source: Taiwan Central News Agency WWW.
saying that they have suffered any overt government punishment, they point to the
problems that the organization has been experiencing with the Kaohsiung county
government.\textsuperscript{430} Newspapers reported at the end of 1995 that the local administration
“suddenly” found out that most of the structures at Foguangshan are illegal. According to
the chief of Tashu [Dashu 大樹] township [xiang 鄉], where Foguangshan is established,
the mountain area in which the monastery was built was initially designated for the
preservation of water resources. In most cases, argued local authorities, Foguangshan has
failed to file the necessary applications for the construction of buildings. Although the
department of building standards admitted that the monastery supported its case with
relevant documents in the last phase of its construction on the site of Foguangshan, existing
zoning laws still compelled the local government to proceed with demolishing the illegal
buildings. The only reason they were still standing was attributed to a shortage of
manpower in the demolition crew.\textsuperscript{431}

\textsuperscript{430} Private communication from Manhua, 31 May 1997.
\textsuperscript{431} “Foguangshan Weijian: Gaoxianfu Tongzhi Jinsu Tinggong 佛光山違建:高縣府通知速停工
[Foguangshan’s illegal structure: the Kaohsiung county government orders work to stop immediately],”
Lianhebao, 21 December 1995, 6; “Buddhist Center may have to be demolished,” China Post, 21 December
1995, 14.
Considering the stream of government officials who have visited Foguangshan over the last thirty years without ever having mentioned zoning regulations, the attitude of the local government was, at best, disingenuous. A member of the IBPS pointed out to me that a regulation issued by the Ministry of Interior on March 26, 1997 stated that according to regulations for hillside land development, Foguangshan is a recreation zone. Therefore, it is not subjected to water preservation restrictions and does not need to apply for construction permits.\(^{432}\) The timing of the whole affair speaks volumes: concerns about compliance or non-compliance with zoning regulations suddenly emerged only after Xingyun came out publicly in support of Chen Lû’ân. The dispute between the local KMT government and Foguangshan, however, was not indicative of a fundamental rift between the party and the religious organization because the incident has not deterred Xingyun from accepting in that same year a government appointment as head of the OCAC. Although Xingyun’s adoption of both cooperative and defiant attitudes may appear inconsistent, an underlying logic motivates his behavior.

\(^{432}\) Private communication from Manhua, 2 May 1997.
Explaining the Political Behavior of Fo Guang Shan

A single thread runs through the antithetical decisions of Xingyun to support the candidate Chen against Lee in 1996 and then to join Lee's cabinet barely one year after: his deeply held belief that Buddhists should get involved as individuals in public affairs. As Xingyun’s support of Chen in 1996 illustrates so well, his beliefs set limits to the manner in which his organizations affect Taiwanese political developments. To clarify this issue, it is important to consider the theological justification for political participation offered by Xingyun, as well as the limits on that participation imposed by the resources, structure and membership of his organizations.

The theological rationale of Xingyun for Buddhist political participation

The political beliefs and actions of Xingyun are subordinated to his central objectives of “promoting humanistic Buddhism” and “building a Pure Land on Earth.” Couched in a language that is rich in aphorisms and pithy sayings, his political ideas are not organized into a systematic body of thought, and he has no articulate plan of action to propose. The
founder of Faguangshan usually writes on the meaning of humanistic Buddhism, i.e., the realization of a Pure Land, and seldom writes about social affairs, much less on politics.\textsuperscript{433}

It is nonetheless possible to discern theological foundations that shape Xingyun’s approach to politics. To this end, it is useful to consider first his definition of humanistic Buddhism and Pure Land, and then to look at the ways in which these religious concepts are transformed into justifications for political behavior.

\textit{The religious ideals of Xingyun}

The theology of Xingyun, for the most part, represents the continuation and actualization of doctrinal changes advocated by Taixu in China before 1947 and further elaborated by Yinshun in Taiwan over the past few decades. Their views are encapsulated in the two expressions “this-worldly [rensheng 人生]” or “humanistic [renjian 人間]” Buddhism.\textsuperscript{434} They represent the response of reformist Buddhists to the individual

\textsuperscript{433} \textit{Fojiao de Zhengzhiguan} 佛教的政治觀 \textit{[Buddhist Views on Politics]} (Kaohsiung: Fuguang Chubanshe, 1984).

\textsuperscript{434} \textit{Rensheng}: human life, or life; \textit{Renjian}: the world of mortals. The recent usage of these concepts is confirmed by their absence in the William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous dictionary, compiled in 1934. See \textit{A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms}, revised by Shih Sheng-kang, Lii Wu-jong and Tseng Lai-teng, 1962 (Kaohsiung, Fokuangshan Press, 1994).
salvationist practices of traditionalists.\textsuperscript{435} Simply stated, reformist Buddhists believe that salvation is not obtained in a next life, but can be attained by any lay devotees in this world, through the performance of good deeds. As explained in the previous chapter, this opinion contrasts sharply with the traditional doctrines which state that the clergy is responsible for ferrying the souls of others through their own individual ascetic practices.

Taixu, Yinshun and Xingyun all agree that monks and nuns must involve themselves in society. This engagement can take many forms. As we will see, for the leader of Ciji, Zhengyan, it is limited to the pursuit of charity work. For the nun Zhaohui, it implies political participation in order to effect social change.\textsuperscript{436} For Xingyun, it implies political participation, but within certain limits.

In a speech in 1984 at the Sun Yat-sen memorial hall in Taipei, Xingyun explained what form Buddhist political participation should take. His political philosophy is rudimentary: his description of the Buddhist political attitude amounted to less than four

\textsuperscript{435} Although the teachings of Yin Shun expand those of Taixu, there is no need in this discussion to go into the exegesis of both writers. The curious reader who wants to know more about this-worldly Buddhism can consult the exposition of Xingyun himself, in \textit{Foguang Yuan}, 3-42.

\textsuperscript{436} “Ciji Beihou you Minyi Bukao Zhengke Laiqinglai 慈濟背後有民意不靠政客來青睞 [Beyond Ciji’s popularity: the public perception that politicians cannot be relied upon to deliver],” \textit{Heibai Xinwen} 31 October 1993, 21-22.
hundred characters. He outlined the contributions of Buddhists through the ages to the maintenance of good government, and then commented on the appropriate attitude that Buddhists must adopt towards the state. He explained that the faithful must abide by four principles. Firstly, Buddhists must prioritize good moral ethics as the foundation of their politics, an injunction he calls “ethical democracy [minzhu daode de zhengzhi 民主道德的政治].” Secondly, Buddhists should “foster a social climate where everyone respects each other [xianghe hujing de shehui 謹和互敬的社會].” Thirdly, they should “strive for a rational economy [qushe heli de jingji 取捨合理的經濟],” that is, an economy without too many inequities. Finally, Buddhists should seek to lead optimistic and industrious lives [leguan qinfen de shenghuo 樂觀勤奮的生活].”

Apart from the openly political principles enunciated above, Xingyun also propagates religious principles that have conservative political implications. Despite his avowed intent to implement a modern, humanistic and this-worldly Buddhism, the practices he encourages are in fact traditional. The founder of Foguangshan reasserts the importance of conventional and orthodox beliefs and practices in the religion when he includes the

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437 Xingyun, Fojiao de Zhengzhiguan, 29-30.
438 The speech, taped in Mandarin and Minnanhua 閩南話, is also written down. Xingyun, Fojiao de
"purification of minds [xinling jinghua 心靈淨化]" among the four goals of Fuguangshan and the BLIA. This "purification" is to be achieved through purely religious practices such as meditation [Chan zuo 禪坐], sutra recitation [nian Fo 念佛], retreats [jingjin Fo qi 精進佛七, baguan zhaijie 八關齋戒], and pilgrimages [chaoshan 朝山].

Although the goal of "purification" is purely religious in its essence, some of its political implications can be surmised. Xingyun clearly believes that Taiwanese society is currently corrupt, and therefore in need of reform. According to him, the source of the violence, "unreasonable pursuits [wangqiu 安求]," and other sufferings of modern society, is to be found in "self-attachment [wozhi 我執]," ignorance [wuming 無明] and other individual human failings. The political implications of these beliefs were displayed in a 1997 campaign dubbed the "Caravan of Love and Mercy [Cibe Aixin Lieche 慈悲愛心列車]," which coincided with a grass-roots movement of protest leading to the resignation of Premier Lian Zhan. The latter movement was sparked by the kidnapping and sordid murder of Bai Xiaoyan 白曉燕, the daughter of the famous Taiwanese Television actress Zhengzhiguan. An abridged version is also available in Xingyun, Fuguang Yuan, 175-178.

440 Fokuangshan Buddhist Order, Our Report, 35-42; Fuguangshan Zongwu Weiyuanhui, Women de Baogao, 72-80.
441 Guoji Fuguanghui Zhonghua Zonghui, Yijiujiuwu Nian Tekan, 53-54.
Bai Bingbing 白冰冰.\textsuperscript{442} The feelings of anxiety generated by the inability of the police forces to capture the kidnappers, and the lack of professional ethics on the part of many journalists filled the population with disgust, and demonstrations demanding the resignation of Premier Lian Zhan spread throughout the country. The BLIA joined the movement, and during the official launch of its Caravan in Taipei, then-Minister of Justice, Liao Zhenghao 廖正豪 had to listen to Xingyun’s views. The founder of Fokuangshan then argued that the best answer to the ills of “insatiable desire, anger, ignorance and violence,” was “wisdom, morality, virtue and conscience.”\textsuperscript{443}

A major limitation in Xingyun’s theological system is the idea that criticism is just another source of disharmony in society and cannot represent a step towards social reform. In his speeches, Xingyun is careful not to antagonize any particular person or organization when he tries to single out the sources of suffering in human society. The inevitable conclusion reached by Xingyun - that the reform of individual behavior is the key to the betterment of society - leads to the development of a political vision with complex ramifications. On the one hand, it suggests that a Buddhist political program would not be

\textsuperscript{442} Faguang Shiji, 16 June 1999, 1.
\textsuperscript{443} Ibid., 4.
limited to changing a few policies, but would aim at more far-reaching transformations.

Implicit in the views of Xingyun is the idea that without the inspiration of Buddhist values, politics devoid of the moral principles upheld by his religion are not likely to solve social problems. This has resulted in considerable ambiguities. Xingyun has had to answer many critics in the past, because while his doctrine denigrates current policies as the source of moral decline, social malaise and crime, his organizations must cooperate with the politicians that he blames for these problems.

*The political implications of Xingyun's religious ideals*

Representatives of Foguangshan have had a hard time countering the criticism that Xingyun is a "political monk" who has simultaneously supported Chen Lü-an and cooperated with the regime that Chen opposed. Xingyun’s sponsorship of Chen Lü-an certainly makes sense in light of the ideas that both men share within the tradition of humanistic Buddhism. The calls for "clean government [qinglian zhengfu 清廉政府],” “rectification of the national morale [duanzheng renxin 端正人心],” and “talent nourishment [peiyu rencai 培育人才],” by Chen Lü’an during his campaign, were not far
removed in essence from the mottos of Foguangshan about “purifying minds” and “fostering talent.” Because of his views on the future of the ROC and his past record as a politician with moral integrity, Chen was the most qualified leader for the country in Xingyun’s opinion.\textsuperscript{444} Finally, Xingyun’s sponsorship of Chen was perhaps inevitable given the fact that the former President of the Control Yuan had once been a disciple in the Dharma of Xingyun.\textsuperscript{445} While it makes sense that Xingyun would support Chen, however, it is more difficult to explain the collaboration between the founder of Foguangshan and a government that does not share his values. To do so, one must consider the implications of the ideal of humanistic Buddhism.

Xingyun has justified both his support for Chen and his continuing collaboration with the government on the same grounds: since the government has the power either to perpetuate or alleviate suffering among the people, Buddhists, who are concerned with the welfare of all, must get involved in politics.\textsuperscript{446} One representative of the monastic order pointed out to me that the behavior of Xingyun conforms to an old tradition that dates back

\textsuperscript{444} From a written correspondence with Manhua, 2 May 1997.

\textsuperscript{445} “Chen Lü’an Shi Wode Tudi, Yiding Yao Zhichide 陳履安是我的徒弟,一定要支持的 [“Chen Lü’an is my disciple, of course I support him.”],” Lianhebao, 16 September 1995, 6.

\textsuperscript{446} The material for this paragraph is from correspondence with Manhua, 2 and 31 May 1997.
to the Tang dynasty, when emperors sought spiritual counseling from Buddhist monks.

Traditionally monks have been obliged to advise, as part of their duty to serve and benefit society, but they are not to be lawmakers themselves. Although supporting the candidate Chen Lü’an for the ROC presidency was the most principled attitude to adopt for the founder of Foguangshan, it was inevitable that the organization would accept the verdict of the people and continue collaborating with the government even if Chen lost. Underlying these pragmatic considerations stands the theology advocated by Xingyun, which seeks harmony within society rather than confrontation.

The pragmatic theology advocated by Xingyun owes much to his personal experience. Three times the authorities have arrested him. He was incarcerated once by the CCP and once by the KMT on the mainland, suspected of espionage by each camp. He was also sent to jail for three weeks after the ROC government relocated to Taiwan because, like other monks seeking refuge on the island, he was affected by a rumor alleging that 300 monks came to Taiwan for spying and lacked proper identification papers. It was after these episodes, recalls one of his biographers, that Xingyun reached the conclusion that the
Sangha and lay Buddhists would fare better if they communicated with those in power. Disciples of Xingyun whom I have interviewed in the Fóguāngshàn monastery took this last episode as a rebuttal to the accusation that Xingyun only befriended politicians in power and supported KMT conservative politicians during the period of martial law. His close disciples argued that he had no choice but to collaborate with the authorities for the benefit of Buddhists and the people in general during that period. What has emerged clearly from these conversations is that over the years the attitude of the Committee for Religious Affairs, the ruling body of Fóguāngshàn, has changed. The strategy of remonstrance is more likely to be adopted in the future because some of the leaders likely to succeed Xingyun disagree with many KMT policies. This raises the issue about the extent to which Xingyun and other leaders below him, in making their choices of strategies, are free from constraints inherent to the organization.

447 Fu Chi-ying, *Handing Down the Light*, 82-84.
448 Interview with Yikong in Fóguāngshàn Monastery, 1 November 1996.
Organizational resources and constraints

To what extent has the strategy of remonstrance adopted by Xingyun in the 1990s been determined by the resources it controls, lay support and congruence between leaders and members of the organizations? Before exploring this issue, it is important to note that although this chapter has used the term "members," there is no lay membership per se in Foguangshan. The term "members" refers to the devotees offering alms and donations to Foguangshan, those who join pilgrimages and retreats in temples owned by the monastic order, and those subscribing to some of its publications. Although there are no comprehensive data available on the social background of the followers of Foguangshan, some preliminary observations can be made on the basis of participant observations and the research of other scholars.¹⁴⁹

Abundance of resources

Foguangshan attracts enough resources to convince many Buddhists that it is capable of spreading the Dharma, but its considerable wealth, symbolized by the huge temple

¹⁴⁹ The research done by Kang Le and Jian Huimei holds data about the age, educational, geographic and ethnic background of those who belong to the Sangha, and some figures about the attendance of lay followers
complex built in Kaohsiung County, has also generated suspicion about the real nature of
the organization and has put its leadership on the defensive. The Foguangshan Monastery,
where the headquarters of the whole organization are located, is the primus inter pares
among three main branch temples,\textsuperscript{450} 54 smaller Taiwanese branch temples, and the 94
affiliated institutions established abroad.\textsuperscript{451} On the island alone, Foguangshan possesses,
among its network of temples, 16 Buddhist colleges and seminaries, 3 public universities,
26 libraries and 9 art galleries.\textsuperscript{452} With an estimated value of US$ six billion\textsuperscript{453} in assets,
Foguangshan claims to be self-sufficient. It relies on donations from devotees,\textsuperscript{454} and
finances its own expenses through the sale of its books and magazines, memorabilia and
souvenirs, and tuition charges for its kindergarten and schools.\textsuperscript{455}

Whatever the real amount, the assets owned by Foguangshan are conspicuous enough
to raise criticism about the nature of the monastic order by outsiders who believe that

\textsuperscript{450} The Taipei Temple, the Universal Gate Temple [\textit{Pumen Si} 普門寺], also in Taipei city, and the Universal
Virtue Temple [\textit{Puxien Si} 普賢寺], in Kaohsiung city.
\textsuperscript{451} These figures have been provided by the liaison representative of Foguangshan through personal
correspondence in the spring of 1997.
\textsuperscript{452} From a personal communication sent by Manhua, 2 May 1977.
\textsuperscript{453} Still far behind the top ten list of the wealthiest religious corporations in the island. Fu Chi-ying,
\textit{Handing Down the Light}, 212.
\textsuperscript{454} Like traditional temples, Foguangshan conducts repentance ceremonies and services for the death.
\textsuperscript{455} Fu Chi-ying, \textit{Handing Down the Light}, 208.
monks should make a vow of poverty.\textsuperscript{456} Xingyun is aware of the apparent contradiction between the enormous wealth of his organizations and traditional Buddhist practices, and has responded to that issue in his lectures. According to his own interpretation of the religion, Buddhism is an affirmation of the value of worldly life, and therefore, wealth should be rated positively: “...[it] is a blessing [and]; knowing how to expand wealth is wisdom.”\textsuperscript{457} Xingyun also points out that he distinguishes between his own wealth and that of the monastic order, that he does not maintain his own temple and that he does not raise funds for his own use. Finally, he wonders why Buddhist organizations should be faulted for being prosperous while Catholic and Protestant Churches are acclaimed for their business-oriented approach to medical and educational work.\textsuperscript{458}

\textit{Sangha initiative and lay support}

The achievement of religious goals by Foguangshan is unlikely to have much political consequence as long as the organization remains centered on its monastic community, and


\textsuperscript{457} “Qian, Yongle Caishi Cijide 錢,用了才是自己的 [Once it is used, money still belongs to oneself],” Yuanjian Zazhi 遠見雜誌, [Global Views], 15 April 1993, 50-53.

\textsuperscript{458} Fu Chi-ying, Handing Down the Light, 205, 459.
as long as its lay affiliate, the BLIA, does not consolidate its own institutions. According

to its founder Xingyun, the BLIA was not only supposed to offer monks and nuns an
organization that would help them, but was also intended to give lay people the chance to
take the initiative in spreading the Dharma. Despite this intention, the lay organization
has yet to reach that goal seven years after its establishment. While its founder may have
advertised it initially as an attempt by Buddhists to move from the confines of their
monasteries to lay society,\(^{459}\) the MOI nevertheless registered the BLIA as a religious
organization in 1994.\(^{460}\) The association also claims to offer lay Buddhists an institutional
framework for the propagation of their faith, but the BLIA remains subordinated to
members of the Sangha that are ordained in Foguangshan and its associated temples.\(^{461}\)

Members of lay organizations, not being bound to monastic life, are less likely than
members of the Sangha to intervene in politics strictly within the confines of a Buddhist
organization. Unlike monks, lay people have many concerns that go beyond those of the

\(^{459}\) Guoji Foguanghui Zhonghua Zonghui, Yijiujiuwu Nian Tekan, 54.

\(^{460}\) Zhonghua Minguo, Neizhengbu, Quanguoxing Zongjiao Tuanti Minglu, 114-115. It could be argued that
once the monastic order established by Xingyun is nominally under the supervision of a lay organization, it
becomes possible for the whole structure of Foguangshan to avoid falling under the authority of the BAROC.

\(^{461}\) The purpose of the organization is to rely on lay devotees, but the composition of the current leadership
may be a measure of the efforts that remain to be done. The organization is headed by Xingyun, who acts as
President [Lishichang 理事長, Chairman of the Board of Director], and by a nun, Ven. Cirong 慈容, who is
Secretary-General [Mishuchang 秘書長]. On Cirong, see Fu Zhiying, Xinhua, 89-112.

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Buddhist community. For many of them the KMT is a far more efficient means to propagate some of their ideas, especially when some of these lay Buddhists, such as Wu Boxiong, are in positions of power within the party.

The large number of lay people adhering to the precepts of the Foguangshan monastic order nonetheless indicates that the organization could achieve considerable political influence if its leaders decided to mobilize them. In 1994, the Foguangshan monastic community numbered about 1,100 monks and nuns.462 This relatively small number contrasts with the figures for lay devotees in the BLIA. Barely three years after its founding, sources from that organization boasted that its membership had reached about one million devotees,463 and already ranked as the world’s fourth largest private non-governmental organization after the Rotary Club, Lion’s International, and Kiwanis.464

Although the headquarters of the BLIA are located in the California-based temple of Xilai, and although the organization now has a hundred branches in 30 countries,465 the most

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462 Figures for 1994 indicate in addition that 937 of the clergy was female, a majority was aged between 21 and 40 years, 70% had post-secondary education, 35 had a M.A. and three a PhD. Fu Chi-ying, *Handing Down the Light*, 179. Kang Le and Jian Huimei further note that 56% of the monastic community is involved in administrative duties. See *Xinyang yu Shehui*, 144.
464 Ibid., 279.
465 Unlike the BAROC, the Foguangshan monastic order is not organizationally linked with the government and therefore has felt free to expand across the shores of the ROC in the nineties.
dynamic components of the association remain in the ROC headquarters [Zhonghua Zonghui], with 342 sub-chapters in Taiwan alone.\textsuperscript{466} The reader must keep in mind, however, that the number of lay followers is difficult to ascertain, because the BLIA is not a congregation meeting on a regular basis. Thus the figures above are only suggestive and tentative.

Despite the absence of specific figures for membership, evidence suggests that the lay community affiliated with Fo Guang Shan and the BLIA is quite large. The biographer of Xingyun indicated that in 1995 a total of one million people had “taken refuge” \textsuperscript{467} that is, one out of five Buddhists in Taiwan has been converted in one of the temples belonging to the network of Fo Guang Shan since its founding in 1966. In the first half of 1994, notes the same source, more than 10,000 devotees “took refuge” in various temples in Taiwan and abroad. During the same year, more than 200,000 people offered alms to finance the expansion of the site in Kaohsiung county.\textsuperscript{467} In 1997, over 400,000 free subscriptions of the magazine “Awakening the World” were distributed.\textsuperscript{468} Statistics from

\textsuperscript{466} Fu Chi-ying, \textit{Handing Down the Light}, 373; Guoji Foguanghui Zhonghua Zonghui, \textit{Yijiujiuwu Nian Tekan}, 45.
\textsuperscript{467} Fu Chi-ying, \textit{Handing Down the Light}, 244-245.
\textsuperscript{468} This is the claim made on the cover of the magazine.
the monastic order also point out that in the year 1995 alone, 1,200,000 visitors came to the site. However, sociologists Kang Le and Jian Huimei, in discussing the attendance of devotees at a Repentance Dharma function [dabeichan fahui 大悲懺法會] and other events in the Taipei Temple [Daochang 道場] during the same year, suggest more modest figures. They indicate that attendance numbered around 35,000 people during a period of 49 days.

The numbers of those who participated in the “Caravan of Love and Mercy” campaign organized in May 1997 and who attended the rally in Taipei in October of the same year, however, are more significant, because they relate to a political event sponsored by the BLIA. As discussed above, the Caravan was launched in the wake of recurring public protests in front of the Presidential Office building against the administration of Premier Lian Zhan, some of which drew as many as 50,000 people. Attendance at the launch of the Caravan did not reach that figure, even though the popular actress Bai Bingbing and the Minister of Justice were present. The Caravan, which was divided into two groups departing on May 25th from Taipei and Kaohsiung respectively, was concluded...
in Hualien [Hualian 花蓮] on June 15\textsuperscript{th} in front of a crowd that numbered six thousand people. In its second stage, which consisted of volunteers delivering speeches on the Dharma, the campaign numbered about two thousand participants.\textsuperscript{471}

The rally organized in October by the BLIA and presided over by Xingyun planned to draw 80,000 people to the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in Taipei.\textsuperscript{472} The meeting clearly demonstrated to the government that the founder of the Fokuangshan monastic order has the ability to mobilize lay Buddhists. The guests sitting next to Xingyun were Vice-President Lian Zhan, the new Premier Xiao Wanchang 蕭萬長, BLIA Vice-President and KMT Secretary-General Wu Boxiong, as well as foreign dignitaries.\textsuperscript{473} Waving banners with slogans such as “purification of the minds,” and “peaceful society [anding shehui 安定社會]” that echoed the government’s campaign of “spiritual reform” launched a few months before by President Lee, the gathering was not advertised as an anti-government rally. However, the presence of Wu, as both a high-ranking BLIA member and a high-ranking KMT official,\textsuperscript{474} underlined that the influence of Hsing Yun reaches far.

\textsuperscript{471} Fokuang Shiji, 16 July 1997, 4.
\textsuperscript{472} Press release from Foguangshan, 5 October 1997.
\textsuperscript{474} Wu sat at the right of Xingyun, wearing on his shoulders the sash bearing the BLIA insignia. Jueshi 1377, 20 October 1997, 21.
Near congruence on the dimension of ethnicity

Perhaps due to his theology of harmony, Xingyun, despite being a waishengren himself, has adopted over the years many practical measures to recruit, train, and promote into the hierarchy disciples from the local population. Among the thirteen permanent members of the Foguangshan monastic order’s Committee for Religious Affairs, the majority are natives of small localities in Taiwan. The same approach has been applied to the lay organization. Wu Boxiong, who was elected in January 1998 as the president of the most important section of the BLIA, the ROC headquarters, is a popular KMT politician with a Taiwanese Hakka background.

Xingyun has not only avoided favoring disciples with mainland backgrounds, but he has also set up his headquarters far from the centers of political and economic power in

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475 At least five members of the Committee on Religious Affairs are from Ilan county, in Northeast Taiwan, and two are from Yunlin 雲林, in Central Taiwan. The immediate successor to Xingyun as abbot of Foguangshan, Ven. Xinping 心平, was also from Ilan, and the current abbot, Xinding, is from Yunlin. See Fu Zhiying. Xinhuo.
477 The Bendiren population comprises Taiwanese whose ancestors hail from the province of Fujian and who speak Southern Fukienese [Hokkien, or Minnanhua], and other Taiwanese whose ancestors came from Guangdong and speak Hakka, [Kejiahua 客家話]. The latter group represents less than 15 percent of the Bendiren population but constitutes a majority in the city of Hsinchu. See John F. Cooper, Taiwan: Nation-State or Province? 10-13.
Taipei and Kaohsiung. The distribution of temples affiliated with Foguangshan throughout the island supports the claim that the monastic order represents a cross-section of Taiwanese society.\textsuperscript{478} Finally, Foguangshan started to proselytize in Minnanhua, the native language of most Taiwanese bendiren, at a time when it was still forbidden by the government to teach it in schools.\textsuperscript{479}

Despite the promotion of native Taiwanese Buddhists into the leadership ranks of Foguangshan, however, we cannot say that the organization is entirely ethnically congruent. The background of Xingyun on the mainland influences his ideals, and, for many Taiwanese Buddhists, his professed affinity with his hometown Nanjing demonstrates to them that he cannot be a credible representative of their values and interests.

\textsuperscript{478} In 1996, there was at least a temple [si 寺, daochang 道場], a lecture hall [jiangtang 講堂] or a Pureland Center [Chanjing Zhongxin 禪淨中心] in every county on the island, with the exception of Nantou county in Central Taiwan. See Fu Zhiying, Zhuan Deng: Xing Yun Dashi Zhuan 手傳:星雲大師傳 [Handing Down the Light: The Biography of Venerable Master Hsing Yun] (Taipei: Tianxia Wenhua Chuban, 1995), 363; Fu Chi-ying, Handing Down the Light, 496.

\textsuperscript{479} A 1987 catalogue of speeches made by Xingyun and recorded on tape indicate that all of them were already made available in Mandarin and Minnanhua. Speeches in Minnanhua were usually recorded by others. The lecture on the political thinking of Buddhists, for instance, was read by Ven. Cihui 慈惠, one of
Near congruence on the dimension of gender

Over the years, Xingyun has placed many women in positions of responsibility, and they now form a majority at all levels within the monastic order. Faguangshan comprises 1000 nuns and only 300 monks, and all five heads of departments within the order are women. The importance of women in the monastic order has been a characteristic of the organization since its beginning. Four of the thirteen members of the Committee for Religious affairs are women who belonged to the first generation of Xingyun’s disciples and worked with him while he was a monk in I-lan. In 1978 a nun whom Xingyun sent to California spearheaded the internationalization of Faguangshan through the IPBS. In 1988 women headed most branch temples of Faguangshan in Taiwan. The same seems to hold true for BLIA members. For example, sociologists Kang Le and Jian Huimei find

the most important figures within the Committee for Religious Affairs.

Fokuangshan Buddhist Order, *The Fo Kuang Shan* (Chunghe [Zhonghe 中和], Taipei County: Cosmos Publishing House, N.D.). The only exception to the greater role played by women in Faguangshan is the position of paramount leader for the abbotship of Faguangshan. Spokespersons for the organization argue that although no rules preclude that possibility, it is unlikely that an abbess could head the monastic order because women who decide to join the monastic orders do not like to be too visible. This argument, however, does not apply to Ciji, which is headed by a woman, and does not depict the more flamboyant behavior of a few individuals such as Zhaohui. *Sinorama* December 1997 (online edition: http://www.gio.tw/info/sinorama/en/8612/612082e7.html).

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that among lay devotees attending various events in Taipei, women outnumbered men by nearly two to one.481

There is no doubt that women in the monastic order enjoy the respect of their male peers and lay devotees. For instance, the organization has abandoned the traditional Buddhist etiquette of female deference to male colleagues,482 and as participant observation has confirmed, nuns do not bow when they see monks of the same ranking. Female members of Foguangshan are not only caretakers of the monastery, but are also involved in public relations with outsiders, and act as scholars. The cliché that women who join the monastic life either have a shadowy past or are uneducated does not fit any of the individuals I met in Foguangshan and in the Taipei Temple.483 Some have even pursued higher education abroad. In sum, the situation of gender congruence within Foguangshan is much like that of ethnic congruence. Xingyun himself is male, but he has promoted

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481 Xinyang Yu Shehui, 169. The comments below on the orientation of women in Foguangshan are limited to the members of the Sangha because data on the social background and ideas of lay Buddhists were unavailable at the time of writing. The only things that are worth mentioning is that lay Buddhist women are active in charity work, enthusiastically join events organized by the BLIA, but they have yet to reach a level of visibility comparable to men like Chen Lü'an or Wu Boxiong. Women influence lay Buddhists within the BLIA only to the extent that it is nuns that manage the latter.


483 During the Qing dynasty, according to the words of one folk song, out of every ten nuns, nine were former prostitutes and the tenth was mad. Ibid., http://www.gio.tw/info/sinorama/en/8612/612082e3.html

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large numbers of women into the leadership of the organization, who represent well the predominantly female Buddhist laity in Taiwan.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, we have seen that Foguangshan, under the leadership of Xingyun, has adopted a different political strategy than that of the BAROC. Rather than lobbying the KMT in order to achieve his objectives, Xingyun has used his own authority and his organization’s resources for the purpose of creating a more morally pure government. Although often willing to cooperate with the KMT, the Foguangshan’s strategy of “remonstrance” was demonstrated by Xingyun’s support for the non-KMT candidate Chen Lü’an during the 1996 presidential campaign, as well as in Foguangshan’s participation in the 1997 campaign for the resignation of then-Premier Lian Zhan.

An examination of Xingyun’s theological beliefs has provided strong support to the hypothesis that leadership beliefs can shape an organization’s choice of political strategy.
Xingyun’s adherence to the “this-worldly” or “humanistic” Buddhism of Taixu, in contrast with the BAROC leadership’s rejection of such interpretations, has led him to the conclusion that Buddhists must participate in politics, although within limits. This set of beliefs explains well Foguangshan’s mixed strategies of cooperation and remonstrance with the KMT.

When we turned to examine the constraints and opportunities presented by the organizational characteristics of Foguangshan, we found the hypotheses set forth earlier about the influence of resources, lay support, and ethnic and gender congruence also apparently confirmed by the data. Foguangshan has greater resources, more lay support, and a higher degree of ethnic and gender congruence than does the BAROC, and it also follows a more politically activist strategy. This is what we would expect.

In sum, the contrasting behaviors of the BAROC and Foguangshan appear to confirm the importance of both leadership views and organizational characteristics in shaping the choice of political strategy. In the next chapter we will explore whether the third organization, Ciji, also provides support for the importance of both these sets of variables.
Chapter Five

CIJI'S HUMANISTIC BUDDHISM
AND THE AVOIDANCE OF POLITICS

Introduction

The Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Association (Ciji) is the largest Taiwanese Buddhist organization in the ROC, and its leader Zhengyan is one of the most prominent public figures on the island. Ciji’s resources and its membership give it the potential to be a major player in politics. However, its leader affirms she is not, and does not want, to become involved in its “complexities.” Although the presidential candidate Chen Lü’an represented the values that Ciji upholds, she refused to endorse his campaign. This is surprising in view of the fact that Zhengyan also subscribes to the theology of Taixu’s
humanistic Buddhism, which inspired Xingyun, the founder of Foguangshan, to adopt a very different political attitude. How is it that a shared theology has led these two leaders to adopt such strikingly different forms of political behavior? Why would humanistic Buddhism inspire a strategy of remonstrance on the part of Foguangshan and a strategy of avoiding intervention in politics on the part of Ciji? Does the apoliticism of the latter derive from Zhengyan's own philosophy and interpretation of Taixu's theology, or is it the result of some constraints imposed by the resources of the organization she has built over the years? To what extent do lay support and congruence between Ciji's leaders and followers affect her decisions? To examine these issues, this chapter is divided into four parts. The first section looks into the religious goals of Ciji, the second one examines the structure of the organization, and the third section explores the political behavior of Ciji. The last section introduces the specific beliefs held by Zhengyan, and examines to what extent Ciji's resources, lay support and congruence on the dimension of ethnicity and gender have influenced its choice of strategy.
The Goals of Ciji

Ciji is officially registered as a charitable foundation and a lay organization, but it is in fact a religious organization under the authority of a charismatic leader. Its activities in the provision of relief and free health care to poor people, vocational education for nurses and its campaign for a bone marrow registry have made it the largest of its kind in Taiwan. The label *Fojiao* [Buddhism] in the official name of the foundation and in its main constituent units, such as the Buddhist Compassion Relief Ciji Association [*Fojiao Kenan Ciji Gongdehui* 佛教克難慈濟功德會] or the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation [*Fojiao Ciji Cishan Shiye Jijinhui* 佛教慈濟慈善事業基金會], reminds us of the Buddhist identity of the organization. In addition, the founder and current leader of the foundation, Zhengyan, is a Buddhist nun who is well-known for her numerous speeches on the Dharma. She never tires of explaining that she draws her inspiration from the

[^484]: Ciji is not listed in the official registry of religious organizations in Taiwan compiled by the MOI, *Quanguoxing Zongjiao Tuanti Minglu*. 

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teachings of the Buddha. The available literature on the activities of the organization always emphasizes that when members perform their duties, they become bodhisattvas.

Visitors to the Taipei branch building of the foundation in Chungshiao [Zhongxiao 忠孝] East Road or to its spiritual center at the Abode of Still Thoughts [Jingsi Jingshe 靜思精舍] in Hualien County are also reminded of the Buddhist nature of the foundation by the Swastikas that adorn both buildings. Attendants at seminars introducing the organization are taught not only about the missions of Ciji, but also about the proper way to worship the Buddha. Finally, the foundation’s publishing house offers titles introducing Buddhism to children, as well as sayings by Buddhist masters.

The religious goals of Ciji

Zhengyan originally established Ciji to perform a mission of “helping the poor and educating the rich [jipin jiaofu 濟貧教富].” Since 1997, the organization has advertised

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487 The Swastika has been used for centuries by Buddhist organizations and sectarian religions in India and China to represent the movement of the Dharma wheel. Most people in Asia look at the Swastika as a religious symbol and they are often unaware of its negative meaning in the West.
488 The contribution of Ciji to Foxue is however modest when compared to Foguangshan’s.
its goals under the motto of the “eight footprints [bada jiaoyin 八大 脚印]” left by Ciji.\footnote{For a detailed presentation, see the website of Ciji at “http://www.tzuchi.org.tw/”.}

The first of these “footprints” is the charity work undertaken by the organization: long-term aid, disaster relief, medical assistance, and even funeral assistance for those who cannot afford it.\footnote{Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu-Chi Foundation, Foreign Language Publications Department, \textit{All Loving & All Merciful} (Taipei: Tzu Chi Buddhist Cultural Center, date N/A).} The second one, which the brochures of Ciji describe as a “mission of culture,” is better described as proselytizing: publishing materials on Buddhists ethics and the teachings of Zhengyan, as well as organizing outreach activities. The third “footprint,” medicine, follows the stance of Zhengyan that sickness stands as one of the major causes of poverty and, accordingly, the curing of illness is the most meritorious of the good deeds.\footnote{Douglas Shaw, ed., \textit{Still Thoughts}, 167.} The “footprint” of education is closely related to medical relief. Its primary objective is to train nurses and doctors who exercise compassion in their relationship with patients, and to foster moral and civic education among the population at large. The provision of international relief, the campaign on behalf of a bone marrow donor registry in Taiwan established in 1993 in collaboration with eleven hospitals

\footnote{For a detailed presentation, see the website of Ciji at “http://www.tzuchi.org.tw/”.}

\footnote{Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu-Chi Foundation, Foreign Language Publications Department, \textit{All Loving & All Merciful} (Taipei: Tzu Chi Buddhist Cultural Center, date N/A).}

\footnote{Douglas Shaw, ed., \textit{Still Thoughts}, 167.}
throughout the country, community work, and environmental protection are the other intended “footprints” of the organization.

The religious dimension of Ciji’s social work is evident in its educational activities. Ciji is developing its own university, comprising colleges of liberal arts, management, religion and fine arts along with its medical college. The founders of the Ciji Colleges, which represent the first steps towards the achievement of that goal, have described the curriculum they offer as an opportunity to teach students who are not only technically capable, but also morally good. Besides activities primarily aimed at the training of medical personnel to staff its own hospitals, Ciji also seeks to offer civic and moral education to the population in general. In its effort to reach out beyond its own school system and encourage the propagation of Buddhism in society, Ciji has, since 1986, granted scholarships to meritorious students at the junior high level and above in the fields of

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492 For details on the campaign’s goal, see Tzu Chi Taiwan Marrow Donor Registry, My Brother Couldn’t Wait for Me to Grow Up, (Taipei: Tzu Chi Buddhist Cultural Center, date N/A).
493 The data on the community outreach activities and the activities of environmental protection undertaken by the Foundation were part of the Ciji Web page they published until November 1997. After that date, however, the organization entirely changed its set up and went back to a definition of its activities as “four missions.” Its charity operations are divided between domestic, overseas and Chinese mainland operations. The Ciji Web page can be consulted at the following site: “http://www.tzuchi.org.tw/.”
494 The first steps in that endeavor were the establishment of the Tzu Chi College of Nursing [Ciji Huli Zhuanke Xueyuan 济護理專科學校] in 1989, and the opening of the Tzu Chi College of Medicine [Ciji Yixueyuan 济醫學院] in 1994.
medicine, nursing, Buddhism, and fine arts. Typical of the way in which Ciji has grown from grass-root initiatives, some elementary school teachers use texts from Zhengyan to teach their students good manners, patriotism, tolerance, and other values. Besides encouraging a moral education that favors the political status quo, other activities of Ciji have positive consequences for the government.

The realization of Ciji’s religious goals in the social-political arena

The members of Ciji enthusiastically perform their charitable activities because they believe it brings them spiritual merit. The provision of emergency relief after natural disasters is a typical example of the organization members’ beliefs put into practice. After modest beginnings in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the number of people receiving Ciji’s assistance increased dramatically in the following decades. In 1995 alone, 3,823

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497 “Love in the Classroom: Teaching with the Aphorisms of a Buddhist Master,” Sinorama (June 1996), 33-41.
498 Between 1966 and 1972, the number of people to whom Ciji offered its assistance increased more than ten times, from 31 to 361.
499 Kang Le and Jian Huimei, Xinyang yu Shehui, 92-93.
island households (representing 12,043 people) received support from Ciji\(^{500}\) and in that same year, the organization provided medical assistance to 1,840 individuals.\(^{501}\) Detailed figures on a county by county basis suggest that Ciji was helping to resolve problems in every region of the country.\(^{502}\) Between 1966 and 1992, Ciji became increasingly skilled at fund-raising. In 1966, it managed to raise a mere NT$17,000. In 1973, for the first time, it collected over a million NT$, a figure multiplied ten times in 1979, and a hundred times by 1987.\(^{503}\) In 1995, Ciji received contributions totaling NT$4,647 millions.\(^{504}\)

These numbers are indicative of the rapid growth of Ciji and the quantitative increase in the number of households it reaches.

The enthusiasm of Ciji members for charity work is not limited to the ROC. The provision of international relief started in 1991, when the American branch of Ciji in Los

\(^{500}\) The most numerous instances of household helped being found in the area comprising Taipei County and Taipei City, Kaohsiung City and County, Taichung and Hualien, respectively. Shi Zhengyan, ed., *Ciji Nianjian, 1995* [Ciji Yearbook, 1995] (Taipei: Ciji Wenhua Chubanshe, 1996), 23.

\(^{501}\) It also solved 1117 cases of emergency relief, offered help for 565 cases of funeral arrangements, and contributed to 14 instances of home reconstruction. Shi Zhengyan, ed., *Ciji Nianjian 1995*, 25.


\(^{503}\) Kang Le and Jian Huimei, *Xinyang yu Shehui*, 92-93.

\(^{504}\) By the time these figures were compiled, US$1 was worth NT$25, Canadian$1 was worth NT$20. NT$2,185 millions was spent for the completion of the Tzu Chi Junior College of Nursing, as well as the College of Medicine. NT$1,461 millions was distributed for domestic and overseas relief and emergency aid. NT$398 millions was disbursed to subsidize medical treatments and several projects. Finally, NT$142 millions was used for publishing and other cultural affairs. “Ciji Ruhe Mukuan, Yong Qian 慈濟如何募款, 用錢 [How does Ciji gains contributions and uses its money],” *Shangye Zhoukan*, 26 August 1996, 60-62.
Angeles helped victims of a cyclone in Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{505} In 1993, the Taiwan headquarters sponsored projects undertaken by the organization Médecins du Monde (MDM) to restore the water supply, renovate clinics, run medical stations and provide care in Ethiopia.\textsuperscript{506}

The foreign policy of the ROC and its China policy also benefit from the activities of Ciji. The relief effort abroad helps the ROC to score points in the international arena: without official recognition at the United Nations since 1971, Taipei cannot use foreign aid to cultivate friends. Viewed from that perspective, Ciji’s relief efforts on behalf of refugees in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Ethiopia provide the KMT government with an important public relations service. In particular, the provision of emergency relief to countries afflicted by natural disaster or wars contributes to the improvement of the standing of Taiwan abroad.

Some of the missions of Ciji abroad were not reactions to pleas for help by international NGOs, but responses to requests from the government of the ROC to aid Overseas Chinese. In 1994, for example, the Cabinet-level OCAC asked Ciji to help

\textsuperscript{505} Other branches of Ciji abroad have taken a series of initiatives. They have offered relief to victims of floods in Vietnam, Malaysia and the United States, victims of earthquakes in Japan and Indonesia, and victims of Typhoon in the Philippines, and provided shelters to people in South Africa, Argentina and the United States. Shi Zhengyan, ed., \textit{Ciji Nianjian}, 1995, 332-333.

\textsuperscript{506} The foundation also collaborated with MDM in the refugee camps of Rwanda, and offered help to victims of drought in Cambodia. In 1995, it continued its projects in Nepal, Thailand and Cambodia, and gave assistance to the civilian population of Chechyna. Fojiao Ciji Cishan Shiye Jijinhui, \textit{Xinlian Wanrui: Ciji Yingxiang Sanshi Nian} 心蓮萬蕊:慈濟影像三十年 [Ten Thousand Lotus Blossoms of the Heart: Thirty
ethnic Chinese refugees in North Thailand.\textsuperscript{507} Some other ventures abroad have been consistent with the official claim that the ROC represents the government of China, and that Tibet and Mongolia remain under its jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{508} In 1992, at the request of the Red Cross Society in Taiwan, the foundation delivered food and clothing to children and the elderly in Mongolia. At the request of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission [\textit{Mengzang Weiyuanhui} 蒙藏委員會] (MTAC), Ciji sent a fact-finding mission and provided relief to victims of a deluge in Nepal the same year.\textsuperscript{509}

When Ciji volunteers provide relief in Mongolia, help Overseas Chinese in Asia or North America, or assist flood victims in the PRC, they seek to demonstrate in a very tangible way to Chinese all over the world that humanistic Buddhism is more than just a matter of religious practice. They also believe it is the way of the future for China.

Members of the organization in Taipei and Hualien hope that their organization will be

\textsuperscript{507}“Guanhuai Hebei Shuihuan, Cijizu Tuanbo Aixin 關懷河北水患,慈濟組團播愛心 [Concerned for victims of flood in Hebei, the organization Ciji propagates love],” \textit{Zhongyang}, 3 September 1996, 9.
\textsuperscript{508} Since 1991, however, the ROC has abandoned the claim that it represents the legitimate authority of China. The official policy since then is to acknowledge the existence of two governments in China: the PRC and the ROC. The claim to Outer Mongolia has been abandoned in 1997.
\textsuperscript{509} Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation, \textit{Love Responding to International Disaster Relief} (Taipei: Tzu Chi Buddhist Cultural Center, date N/A).
called upon to serve as a mediator between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. However, other Taiwanese see the role of Ciji differently. Pro-KMT media use the activities of the organization to demonstrate that Taiwan, under KMT rule, is both a prosperous and caring society. Some other Taiwanese have criticized Ciji for doing too much in China but not enough in Taiwan. To be sure, the operations of Ciji in China constitute a sensitive issue. The Foundation acts carefully to ensure it does not contradict the official policy of the ROC and it is careful to suggest neither that the ROC is part of the PRC nor that Taiwan and China are two different countries.

Even if the many activities undertaken by Ciji have the side effect of favoring the political status quo, however, the following section on the structure of the organization documents that Ciji - unlike the BAROC and in ways comparable to Foguangshan - is not a KMT transmission belt.

510 From discussions with members of Ciji in Taipei and Hualien.
512 Although members of Ciji have answered most of my questions on a variety of subjects with remarkable candor, they stonewalled when I started discussing the issue of Ciji providing relief in the PRC.
The Structure of Ciji

Ciji and Foguangshan were both established when the BAROC was granted its monopoly of interest representation of Buddhism, but their strategies of growth have differed. Unlike Foguangshan, Ciji was not registered as a religious association, but as a charity, and therefore was not nominally competing with the BAROC. Ciji was from the start entirely independent of the "official" Buddhist organization because of its mandate, a fact that remains true today. While its inception depended on the will of Zhengyan, its continued growth has resulted from the efforts of a large number of volunteers.\textsuperscript{514} The founder herself often emphasizes that the achievements of Ciji result from the collective efforts of individuals within the foundation, as well as from outsiders' goodwill, and shies away from taking much of the credit for the growth of the organization. Members of Ciji,

\textsuperscript{514} For an introduction to Ciji via an account of its founder's career, see Qiu Xiuzhi 丘秀芝, \textit{Da ai: Zhengyan Fashi yu Ciji Shijie 大愛: 譚嚴法師與慈濟世界} [Universal Love: Master Zhengyan and the world of Ciji] (Taipei: Tianxia Wenhua Chuban, 1966). See also Jiang Canteng, \textit{Taiwan Dangdai Fojiao, 28-35; Taiwan Fojiao Bainianshi zhi Yanjiu, 1895-1995, 457-474; 20 Shiji Taiwan Fojiao de Zhanxing yu Fazhan, 447-470; Kang Le and Jian Huimei, Xinyang yu Shehui, 53-106.}
in return, while acknowledging Zhengyan’s humility, nevertheless praise her as the founding spirit and the driving force of the foundation.

Despite the assertion that everyone within the organization is equal in status, however, it is clear that the functioning of Ciji rests entirely on the authority of its charismatic leader, whose decisions are not questioned. Although people both inside and outside Ciji are reluctant to call Zhengyan “leader,” there is no question as to the source of authority within the foundation.\(^\text{515}\) In the publications produced by Ciji, she is respectfully referred to as \textit{Shangren} 上人, that is, a title reserved to Buddhist masters with a high level of wisdom.\(^\text{516}\) In the words of sociologist Wu Zhenghuang 吳正煌, she is the irreplaceable leader under whose sanction the decision-making élites can further their initiatives.\(^\text{517}\) She presides over the first meeting of the commissioners every week, and no matter what is discussed, she has the final say on the decisions.\(^\text{518}\) Her awe-inspiring authority is sustained by

\(^{515}\) I could observe myself that even though the head of the organization may herself feel uncomfortable about her position of prominence, her authority sanctions decisions, and members of Ciji do not question her words.

\(^{516}\) This is the fifth highest degree in a scale of seven.


\(^{518}\) Feng Wenrao 冯文饶, “Zhiyuan Fuli Fuwu Zuzhi Xingcheng ji Yunzuo zhi Tantao: yi Ciji Gongdehui wei Lie 志願福利服務組織形成及運作之探討:以慈濟功德會為例 [An Inquiry into the Formation and the Achievements of Voluntary Welfare Provider Organizations: Using Ciji as an Example],” (M.A. Thesis,
devotion to her within the organization and admiration from the Taiwanese media, which
dub her as the “Mother Teresa of Taiwan.” Devotion to Zhengyan is encouraged by the
publication of her thoughts in about thirty titles, hagiographies in Chinese and English
languages, recordings of her speeches, daily broadcasts on cable TV and radio stations all
over Taiwan, numerous public lectures, and high-profile meetings with members of the
government.

Zhengyan heads the Ciji Foundation, the Compassion Relief Ciji Association, sits on
the Board of Directors [Dongshihui 董事會] and oversees the mission of charity. She

National Taiwan Chungcheng 中正 University, Chiayi [Jiayi 嘉義] County, 1993) 144.
519 “Taiwan Jingyangzhong Zui Dongren de Yizhang 台灣經驗中最動人的一章 [The most moving
personality in the “Taiwan experience”],” Yazhou Zhoukan 亞洲周刊 [Asia Week ], 9 May 1996, 22-24;
520 Numbers taken from the catalogue of the Tzu Chi Cultural Center’s publications in Taipei during the
summer of 1996 indicated 28 titles in Chinese and two English language translations.
521 Not all of these works are published by the organization itself. See Qiu Xiuzhi, Da ai; or Yun Jin, Qian
Shou Foxin.
522 For a complete and detailed list, see Fojiao Ciji Cishan Shiye Jijinhui, Ciji ZhiyeXunli 慈濟志業巡禮
[An Overview of Ciji’s Purpose] (Taipei: Ciji Wenhua Chubanshe, date N/A.), 128.
523 Between June 1990 and October 1992 alone, she delivered twenty-five speeches in various auditoriums
524 In 1992, for example, she granted audience to over a hundred forty politicians, media personalities,
academics, and businessmen. For a detailed list of the visitors, see Shi Zhengyan, ed., Ciji Nianjian, 1966-
525 After 1992, Ciji went through a structural reorganization. Its Board of Directors is assisted by four
policy-making committees [Juece Weiyuanhui 決策委員會] for its four missions, as well as a general
administrative center [Zongguanli Zhongxin 總管理中心] subdivided into eight functional bureaus [Shi 室].
For ten years, the Board of Directors has included a special unit, the Honorary Board [Rongyu Dongshi 榮譽
董會], comprised of generous contributors who offered more than NT$1 million to Ciji. For the motivations
behind the decision of wealthy businessmen to join Ciji, see “Hou Bowen Yu Ciji de Xin Gushi 侯博文與慈
濟的故事 [The Story Hou Puo-wen and Ciji],” Tongling Zazhi 統領雜誌 [Leader Magazine] (December
1994), 28. In 1993, two thirds of its 3,780 members were from the Greater Taipei area. Kang Le and Jian
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is assisted by three Vice Chief Executive Officers [Fuzong Zhixingchang 副總執行長],
each one in charge of the other three missions of medicine, education, and culture.
Zhengyan also supervises the commissioners,\(^{526}\) who are subdivided into two groups.

“Soliciting commissioners [Quanmu Weiyuan 募募委員],” ask the public for contributions,
while members of the second group [Muhou Weiyuan 募後委員] perform diverse functions
such as accounting for funds received.\(^{527}\) Although Zhengyan cannot oversee the work of
every volunteer or members of the paid staff working for Ciji,\(^{528}\) she regularly visits the
branches of the organization throughout Taiwan. She employs a paid staff in accounting,
publishing, and broadcasting at the Ciji cultural center in Taipei, doctors and nurses for the
General Hospital, and teachers at the College of Nursing and the Medical College.

Besides the commissioners, who represent the backbone of the organization,
Zhengyan supervises with the Board of Directors another important unit of volunteers: the
male-only Faith Corps [Cichengdui 慈誠隊], also known as “perfect husbands and

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\(^{527}\) The role of the soliciting commissioners is to collect on a monthly basis the donations pledged by
contributors, and visit the poor families receiving assistance. The activities undertaken by the other
commissioners require recruiting qualified personnel in the areas of accounting, management and

\(^{528}\) The staff’s status is somewhat distinct from that of the commissioners and other volunteer workers, who
contribute their time to accomplish diverse tasks.
fathers.” When an event or a convention takes place, they control traffic, maintain order and clean. They are also in charge of other duties such as sweeping streets and parks around their houses, collecting and sorting garbage, and selling what can be recycled. In addition, they accompany commissioners to take care of those unable to look after themselves and lend a hand during the distribution of emergency relief.

Members I met in Hualien mentioned another duty they undertake: protecting Zhengyan against threats. Wearing navy blue uniforms, caps and Ciji badges, members of the “Faith Corps” could easily be mistaken for policemen. According to one account, the Corps consists of four battalions further divided into companies, which are in turn divided into platoons. Members of Ciji aspiring to join the Faith Corps go through a two-year training period before qualifying as full-fledged members, during which time they are educated about the spirit of Ciji. While some members of the Faith Corps are already working within the Ciji organization – male employees are encouraged to join, but not obliged to do so - others work elsewhere as businessmen or in the local media.

529 Some of those I met in Hualien told me that they joined the organization either because their spouses encouraged them to do so, or because they felt they need some form of spiritual fulfillment beyond their professional activities. 
531 In 1991, a disproportionate number of them, 54%, came from North Taiwan (the Greater Taipei area, plus
Along with the Faith Corps, the Honorary Board Members Association [Rongyu Dongshi Lianyihui 榮譽董事聯誼會] and the Commissioners Association [Weiyuan Lianyihui 委員聯誼會], Zhengyan has approved the creation of eight other functional groups. Some of these groups are aimed at influencing certain sectors of society outside of Ciji. For instance, two of these associations, the Collegiate Youth Association [Dazhuan Lianyihui 大專聯誼會],\(^{532}\) and the Teachers Association [Jiaoshi Lianyihui 教師聯誼會],\(^{533}\) seek to promote interest in and support for Ciji among students outside of the organization’s own educational system. Another association, the Reformation Corps [Ciyudui 慈育隊], performs a role in reform schools comparable to that of the above mentioned associations.\(^{534}\) Some of the other groups are designed to reinforce cohesion within the organization. One of the most important among them is the Yi Teh Mothers and Sisters Association [Yide Mujiehui 懿德母姊會], which provides guidance and advice

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\(^{532}\) The Association is a federation of 25 associations representing students at the junior high, collegial and graduate levels. For details, see Shi Zhengyan, ed., Ciji Nianjian, 1995, 239.

\(^{533}\) The Association comprised in 1995 over 7500 teachers. 50% are teaching at the elementary [Guoxiao 國小] level, 25% in junior high [Guozhong 國中], 13% in senior high [Gaozhong 高中], and only 4% at college level or higher [Dazhuan 大專] From Shi Zhengyan, ed., Ciji Nianjian, 1995, 238.

\(^{534}\) Its members giving speeches and using their personal experience to enlighten their audiences.

Keelung [Jilong 基隆] and Taoyuan). In 1993, there were 545 certified members of the Faith Corps. In 1994, more than a thousand men joined in, and in 1995, 476 others followed. More than half of the new members were from North Taiwan. Shi Zhengyan, ed., Ciji Nianjian, 1966-1992, 461; 1995, 474-477.
to the students at the Tzu Chi College of Nursing. Members sharing similar interests can meet and exchange their experiences in four other functional organizations.

The reliance on the leadership of Zhengyan, apparent in the structure of Ciji, ensures that her will is executed, but it raises problems in the long term. This is the case because there are no rules for the succession to Zhengyan. This has led members, sympathizers outside of Ciji, as well as independent observers, to voice increasingly urgent concerns about what will happen to the foundation after Zhengyan passes away. The founder herself does not worry about the future of the organization: “We don’t have to worry about the future. (...) Before he (the Buddha) attained nirvana, he did not appoint any successor, but his teachings have been passed on.” Notwithstanding Zhengyan’s views, this is a worrisome problem considering the enormous responsibilities of the head of the foundation.

536 The Volunteers Team [Zhigongdui 志工隊] groups together those working at the Tzu Chi Hospital and in various kinds of activities organized by the foundation. The Ciji Choirs [Hechangtuan 合唱團] perform at special events and occasions. The Foreign language team [Waiyudui 外語隊] comprises members fluent in English, Japanese and other languages who serve as liaison in international affairs, translate Ciji publications, prepare information for overseas distribution, and host foreign visitors. The Writers Group [Bigengdui 筆耕隊] is a loose association of people recording members’ stories orally or in print in order to inspire the public. For the impact on the public of these stories, see “Dajia Qiangshuo Ciji Gushi 大家搶說慈濟故事 [Everyone comes up with a story on Ciji],” Zhongguo Shibao, 31 may 1996, 39.
537 “Ciji Shijie de Yinyou 慈濟世界的隱憂 [The latent fear within Ciji],” Yuanjian Zazhi, 15 December 1993, 46-48. I have discussed the issue in both Hualien and Taipei and in both cases members of the organization agreed with Zhengyan herself and claimed that the issue will somehow sort itself out.
What will happen in the future if the successor to Zhengyan fails to match her ability to inspire? Will the organization split into different components if there are disagreements among the members? In the absence of any checks to authority within the organization, what would prevent it from falling under the control of outsiders? What will be the effect on the political strategy currently pursued by Ciji? Before answering these questions, the following section clarifies the nature of the political choices made by the leader of Ciji.

The Political Behavior of Ciji

The organization discourages its members from getting involved in politics, a position that was understandable during the period of KMT dictatorial rule, but is at odds with current trends. This avowed disapproval of political participation, it should be noted, does not represent a strategy of remonstrance critical of KMT policies. On the contrary, Ciji relies on government support for the implementation of its goals and its leaders are careful
in not opposing the government and working within the bounds of ROC laws regulating civic organizations.

The apoliticism of Ciji

Ciji has adopted a practice of “neither flattering nor criticizing the authorities, but practicing Buddhism and providing relief to the living.”\(^{539}\) Although more than one politician has sought to harness the mobilization potential of Ciji for electoral gains, not one has succeeded in this attempt for the last thirty years.\(^{540}\) During the March 1996 presidential election, Zhengyan clarified her stand on politics, in response to speculation that she might throw her support behind Chen Lü’an. She said that she did not want Ciji to get involved in politics, wished all candidates the best of luck, and stated that she respected the democratic choice of the people.\(^{541}\) In an interview for the conservative Lianhebao, which is close to the KMT non-mainstream faction then led by maverick presidential candidate Lin Yanggang, she explained further: “Ciji is a religious organization

\(^{539}\) See Feng Wenrao, “Zhiyuan Fuli Fuwu Zuzhi Xingcheng ji Yunzuo zhi Tantao,” 141.

\(^{540}\) “Ciji Gongdehui bu She Zhengzhi 慈濟功德會不涉政治 [Ciji does not involve itself into politics],” Zhongguo Shibao, 28 November 1995, 6.

\(^{541}\) “Chen Lü’an Baihui Zhengyan Fashi 陳履安拜會證嚴法師 [Chen Lü’an implores Zhengyan],” Lianhebao, 21 November 1995, 6.
as well as a charity organization. Its ideal is the respect for all life and the affirmation of
humanity.” Therefore, she said, all it cares about is “…the security of the population, its
happiness, safety, harmony, and prospects for the future.”542 In an interview with a weekly
magazine close to the pro-independence opposition, she admonished the volunteers
working for Ciji that “religion and politics ought to be separated. [Volunteers] can go out
and vote, but they cannot use the name of Ciji to help one candidate.”543

The foundation does not engage in lobbying on behalf of the many people who
receive its support, even though it possesses the organizational capacity to do so. Until
the lifting of martial law, lobbying on behalf of Buddhists was inconceivable because of the
monopoly held by the BAROC; but since then, such lobbying is not uncommon, as
demonstrated in the 1990s by the activities of other organizations such as the BAROC and
Foguangshan. So far, Ciji has not shown any inclination to articulate or represent the
interests of its constituents. It gives relief to the poverty-stricken but does not articulate
the interests of the “poor and the downtrodden,” does not promote policies addressing the
sources of poverty in the long run, and does not harbor views comparable to the

543 “Ciji Meili Zhengtan Qingdao 慈濟魅力政壇傾倒 [The attractiveness of Ciji in the political arena
“preferential option for the poor” upheld by “liberation theology.” Despite its importance for the social welfare of people in Hualien County, the organization does not seek to act as the political representative of this area. Although the foundation helps aboriginals, it does not claim to represent them.

Because its financial assets have come from private sector funding, Ciji does not depend on government support. As the discussion on the resources of the foundation will demonstrate later, Ciji can afford to be critical of the government, or at least its policies. But whether the state remains under the control of the current ruling party or is led by its challengers, members of the foundation show no inclination to take advantage of Ciji’s reach into society to mount a challenge to state policies. This indifference on the part of Ciji regarding political intervention persists, even though it is increasingly likely that parties opposed to the KMT will come to power.

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544 This would seem anathema to Ciji, which advocates itself “help to the poor and enlightenment to the rich.”
545 As documented later, most members of the foundation do not hail from that part of that country. Members, volunteers and workers of the Foundation now have roots in all Counties of Taiwan.
546 Two-third of them belong to the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations who already do lobbying on their behalf. Michael Stainton, from York University, is currently doing research on this issue.
547 As I write this dissertation, the KMT retained in the Legislative Yuan a majority made up of a single seat, with 80 seats out of 161. The second party in importance, the DPP, and a splinter group from the DPP, the
The political connections of Ciji

Zhengyan may frown upon the perplexities of politics, but she often has had to rely on good relations with KMT politicians to ensure the growth and development of Ciji.548 The foundation cannot afford to ignore the government. Although most of its resources come through small donations from the public, it still needs to collaborate with relevant ministries to obtain permission for construction, recognition of professional competence, etc. A look at the history of the organization reveals how governmental intervention was at times crucial to its growth.

During the first thirteen years of the organization’s existence, only the local government of Hualien County paid attention to Ciji. All this changed in 1980, after a fact-finding visit by then-Governor Lin Yanggang. President Chiang Ching-kuo himself stopped by immediately after that inspection and officially approved of the organization’s projects. Over the next three years, the provincial government cleared the way for Ciji to

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548 A telling illustration about how close can be the connection between the government and Ciji is offered by an anecdote about the brochure Que dix mille lotus de la miséricorde éclosent en ce monde, a French translation for an older edition of the Ten Thousand Lotus Blossoms of the Heart. Reacting to my surprise after I realized that the editor was the GIO, my interlocutor at Ciji explained to me that Hu Zhiqiang, the director of the Office at that time - and ROC Foreign Affairs Minister during my interview- has many affinities with the foundation and that it is only natural he would help. (Taipei: GIO, 1994).
obtain the necessary construction permits.\footnote{549} In 1983, the newly-appointed Minister of Interior Lin Yanggang was instrumental in helping the organization obtain land previously belonging to the Ministry of National Defense to build its hospital.\footnote{550} Since 1984, ministers from the central government and heads of the KMT have paid visits to Ciji, inquiring about the needs of the organization, handing over donations from the public, or simply honoring Ciji with awards for its contribution to society.\footnote{551} The relations between Ciji and the government have been so good that, in 1993, as an expression of gratitude, then-Interior Minister Wu Boxiong recommended Zhengyan to the Nobel Peace Prize committee.\footnote{552}

Ciji fulfills several needs that are appreciated by governments at every level, but its most important contribution relates to the provision of health care.\footnote{553} The hospital in Hualien compensated for the inadequate services provided by the county government until the early 1980s.\footnote{554} Many other specific services provided by the foundation continue to

\footnotetext{550}{\textit{Ibid.}, 56-57.}
\footnotetext{551}{\textit{Ibid.}, 61-66.}
\footnotetext{552}{"Ciji Meili Zhengtan Qingdao," \textit{Heibai Xinwen}, 14-17.}
\footnotetext{553}{Former Governor and current President Lee Teng-hui, who was instrumental in helping Ciji build its hospital, declared in a bout of enthusiasm in 1983, while joining the organization as a contributing member: "you do more social work than the government!" Shi Zhengyan, ed., \textit{Ciji Nianjian}, 1966-1992, 59.}
\footnotetext{554}{"Enlightened volunteers," \textit{Free China Review}, December 1994, 32.}
compensate for the kind of welfare that the Central government cannot afford:

rehabilitation for mentally handicapped children, creation of a bone-marrow bank, research
on the health problems faced by aboriginal people, and so on. Another area that is
important is the training of nurses in the Ciji Junior College of Nursing, designed to address
a labor shortage across the country. The manner in which Ciji has become involved in the
implementation of health care policy illustrates its general strategy of avoiding political
participation.

Ciji and the KMT health care policy

Ciji does not become involved in public debates that bear on health care policy-
making. It appears content to provide services to the population, in accordance with
existing policies, if not at the explicit request of the government. At the same time, the
ruling party policy of encouraging the private sector to take up initiatives for the provision
of health care needs organizations like Ciji. The most obvious illustration of this
convergence of interests is provided by the Ciji hospital in Hualien. The foundation

555 “Ciji Meili Zhengtan Qingdao,” Heibai Xinwen, 14-17.
needed the authorities’ permission, land, and financial help for the construction of its hospital; the KMT was all too eager to encourage a private initiative to fill a gap in that traditionally impoverished region. To understand more clearly the role of Ciji in the implementation of KMT health care policy, it is necessary to provide some background information.

Health care issues and policies

Health care issues in Taiwan in the 1990s have been typical of those faced by industrialized societies, as demonstrated by statistics on life expectancy and the causes of mortality.\(^{556}\) Massive urbanization, serious environmental degradation and a rapidly aging population have all contributed to changes in these indicators of public health. Particularly worrisome has been the welfare of the elderly. The shift from an economy based on agriculture to one based on high-technology industries and services has witnessed

\(^{556}\) In 1951 Taiwanese women could hope to live on average until the age of 57, and men until the age of 55. By 1994 women could expect to live over 77 years, men over 71. Changes in social-economic structures and in lifestyles, as well as improvements in health and medical care, have considerably changed the causes of death over the last decades. In 1952, mortality was most often the result of acute infectious diseases such as gastritis, enteritis, colitis, pneumonia and tuberculosis; in 1994, it was instead typically caused by chronic afflictions such as cancer and cerebral-vascular diseases. See the website of the Department of Health, The Executive Yuan, Taiwan, Republic of China, on “http://www.doh.gov.tw/english/ch1.html” (November 1997) Chapter One, section6.
an erosion of the extended family, the traditional provider of care for the elderly. The state has been, moreover, ill prepared to face the enormous burden of this looming problem.\textsuperscript{557}

The country suffered in the 1990s from a severe shortage of nurses,\textsuperscript{558} and until 1994 only 54.1 percent of the entire population in Taiwan was covered by one of thirteen programs of health insurance.\textsuperscript{559} Official figures also pointed to important regional differences for the year 1994.\textsuperscript{560}

In response to popular dissatisfaction with the state of health care,\textsuperscript{561} the authority in charge of health care in Taiwan, the Department of Health [\textit{Weishengju 衛生局}] (DOH), set up in 1995 a universal program of health care and a National Health Insurance Program.\textsuperscript{562} Barely one year after its establishment, however, instances of fraud among

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{557} The \textit{Free China Review} has dedicated its issue of November 1997 to this problem. See in particular Kelly Her, “A Long Gray Line,” 4-15; Anita Huang, “Fate or the State?” 16-23; Su Men-ping, “Feeling One’s Age,” 24-29.
\item \textsuperscript{558} ROC, GIO, \textit{Republic of China Yearbook, 1994} (Taipei: GIO, 1993), 285.
\item \textsuperscript{559} ROC, GIO, \textit{Republic of China Yearbook, 1994} (Taipei: GIO, 1993), 287.
\item \textsuperscript{560} There were 219 hospital beds for every 10,000 people in Hualien County, on the east coast, while there were only 13.9 in Chiayi County on the West. Note that Hualien County is where the Ciji hospital was established in 1986. “1995 Taiwan Minqing Baogao 23 Xianshi Zongtijian 1995 台灣民情報告 23 縣市統計 [A comprehensive report on the conditions of the Taiwanese population in 1995 across 23 counties and municipalities],” \textit{Yuanjian Zazhi} 114, December 1995, 114-119.
\item \textsuperscript{561} “Jianbao Bandehao ma? Diantouzhe Budao Banshu 健保辦得好嗎?點頭不到半數 [Is health insurance well managed? Not even half approves],” \textit{Lianhebao}, 26 February 1995, 3; “Gaoda Liucheng Minzong dui Quanmin Jianbao Buman 高達六成民眾對全民健保不滿[60% unsatisfied with the current health insurance system],” \textit{Zhongguo Shibao}, 24 April 1995, 3; “Jianbao: Manyide Minzong Yida Banshu 健保: 滿意的民眾已達半數 [Health Insurance: the number of satisfied beneficiaries does not even reach half of the population], \textit{Lianhebao}, 3 October 1995, 5.
\item \textsuperscript{562} See the website of the DOH on “http:// www.doh.gov.tw/english/ch1.html” (November 1997) Chapter Two,
members of the medical profession in 1996 raised questions concerning the fairness of the whole program.\(^{563}\)

Taiwanese voters want the government to expand services, but they are also reluctant to see an increase in their tax rates. Meanwhile, influential voices from the business sector think the government is already spending too much.\(^{564}\) Understandably, politicians are hard-pressed to come up with solutions that would reconcile such differences.\(^{565}\)

Recent policies have been designed as a response to an emerging consensus among politicians and sociologists: public welfare programs can succeed only if they complement private initiatives.\(^{566}\)

Religious organizations have been expected to play an especially important role in this matter.\(^{567}\) Because Ciji had a good record in the provision of affordable or, in some

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\(^{563}\) "Yijie Weigui Cengchubuqiong, Jianbaoju Fangbushengfang 醫界違規層出不窮, 健保局防不勝防 [The National Health Insurance Bureau unable to cope with the repeated offenses committed by the medical circle]," Zhongyang, 1 March 1996, 9.

\(^{564}\) "Jianbao Zhengzhi Ganraobuxi, Zhidu Yongnan Jianli 健保政治干擾不息,制度永難建立 [The unrest over the health insurance policy can't stop: it's never easy to establish such a system]," Lianhebao, 29 February 1996, 15.

\(^{565}\) "Quanmin Jianbao Zeme Gai 全民健保怎麼改 [How do we reform the National Health Insurance system?]?" Zhongshi Wanbao, 25 May 1997, 3.

\(^{566}\) "Social welfare: How much is too much?" Free China Review (March 1994), 41.

\(^{567}\) According to the legislation relevant to religious organizations, they are in fact required by the government to devote some of their resources to charitable activities. "Zongjiao Tuanti Zuo Gongyi, Qunian Quan’e yu Sanshiyi 宗教團體做公益,去年金額逾三十億 [The social welfare work of religious organizations amounted last year to more than three billions]," Lianhebao, 15 May 1995, 17.
cases, free health care to the public, the government has been particularly interested in enlisting the assistance of Zhengyan and her organization for the implementation of its policies. The foundation has established its own hospital in the county of Hualien, is building a new one in Chiayi County, and currently plans a third one in Taipei. Ciji offers the government a way out of the conundrum of reconciling the need for qualitative and quantitative increases in the provision of social welfare services while holding down taxes. Although the organization willingly helps the government implement its policy, however, it has not participated in the design of the policy. The input of Ciji into the health care policy of the ROC is limited to addressing the problems that the government is unable to face, and it does not include questioning or advising the state on the best ways to tackle them.

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568 The Tzu Chi General Hospital [Ciji Zonghe Yiyuan 慈濟綜合醫院] provides almost half the required beds and practicing medical personnel for the entire county, whose population was about 360,000 in 1995. This figure is based on a comparison between numbers throughout the country and within Hualien, for the same year, on the availability of beds and practicing medical personnel for 10,000 people. See the DOH site at “http://www.doh.gov.tw/english/ch1.html” (November 1997) Chapter One, section 5.
The acquiescence to government directives

Ciji may encourage individuals to feel responsible for the welfare of fellow citizens, but it does not nurture the participation of citizens in the design of health care policy. Taiwanese sociologist Feng Wenrao has observed that, while the foundation’s activities go further than the schemes of volunteer work generally encouraged by the government, they nevertheless remain within the bounds of state-approved grass-root actions. This is because the actions of Ciji are never used as opportunities to assess, evaluate, or criticize any element of government policy. On the contrary, by providing relief to the needy with the full support of the state, Ciji gives short shrift to demands for social change. The foundation does not intervene in the debates between opposing groups, some of whom call for a more comprehensive health care system and some of whom feel that the state should cut back existing programs. Such a combination of volunteer work and aloofness in public debate goes a long way in supporting the government’s argument that health care managed by private organizations is more efficient than state-sponsored plans. In sum, by doing much and not saying anything, Ciji gives its tacit approval of government policy.

569 "Zhiyuan Fuli Fuwu Zuzhi Xingcheng ji Yunzuo zhi Tantao:” 146.
This attitude, in turn, is reinforced by the philosophy adopted by the organization with respect to political participation.

In performing their charitable activities, members of Ciji differ very much from organizations like the Presbyterian Church, which have reached the conclusion that the advocacy of social reform is the logical consequence of their salvationist ideals.\textsuperscript{570} This is apparent in the tone adopted by Zhengyan with respect to the many issues addressed by the Church over the years. While the Presbyterian organization has called for Taiwanese independence since 1971, she has always been very evasive on the independence-reunification issue, merely saying that she is primarily concerned with national security. In contrast to the “social gospel,” which advocates social change to address the issue of poverty, she offers a different diagnosis: poverty is caused by disease; once cured of their ills, people will be able to escape the scourge of deprivation.\textsuperscript{571} By not questioning the

\textsuperscript{570} On comparisons between Ciji and the Presbyterian Church, see Wang Shunmin 王順民, “Zongjiao Fuli Sixiang yu Fuli Fuwu zhi Tanju – yi Ciji Gongedhui, Taiwan Jidu Changlaohui wei Lie 宗教福利思想與福利服務之探究-以慈濟功德會,台灣基督長老會為例 [Religious Thought on Welfare and the Provision of Welfare: An Enquiry Using the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation and the Presbyterian Church as Examples],” Taichung: Tunghai [東海] University, 1991, photocopied.

economic conditions that give rise to disparities in well-being, Zhengyan and the members of Ciji accept the current socio-political status quo.\(^{572}\)

Although Ciji occasionally cooperates with other organizations for relief work, it has never sought to join other like-minded civic groups for the purpose of lobbying the government for improvements in social welfare or health care policy. In 1995, for example, it did not join the alliance of thirty-seven social welfare associations and seven academic groups that pressured the government for the implementation of legislation for the welfare of children, even though the foundation has an interest in the rehabilitation of children.\(^{573}\) In the area of legislation on religion as well, Ciji is also non-cooperative: it refused to join other Buddhist organizations in opposing or approving the proposals of the BAROC concerning a law on Buddhism.\(^{574}\)

\(^{572}\) Wu Zhenghuang, “Ciji Gongdehui, Taiwan Shijie Zhanwanghui he Zhonghua Lianhe Quanmu Xiehui Juece Jingying Fuliguan ji qi Xiangzheng Fuhao zhi Bijiao Yanjiu.”

\(^{573}\) On that same day, candidate Chen Lü’an came to pay a visit to Zhengyan. See “Luoshi Ershao FuFa: 44 ge Tuanti Jiemeng 落實兒少福法: 44 個團體結盟 [44 civic groups join forces to push for the implementation of the legislation on the social welfare of children and young people],” Lianhebao, 21 November 1995, 17; “Chen Lü’an Baihui Zhengyan Fashi 陳履安拜會證嚴法師 [Chen Lü’an implores Zhengyan],” Lianhebao, 21 November 1995, 6.

\(^{574}\) Most Ciji people I talked to don’t hold in high esteem the BAROC, and since that organization was spearheading the movement for a BFA, they were not keen on joining a group which, in their view, has too many obvious connections with the government.
Although the practical consequences of its religious ideals are germane to the implementation of the neo-liberal policy of minimal state intervention in social services advocated by the current ROC government, this does not mean that Ciji is working for the KMT. Failing to respond to government calls to provide relief would be problematic for Ciji because by doing so, the organization would act in a way that contradicted its raison d'etre, which is based entirely on its Buddhist ideal of compassion. But if its beliefs require active participation in improving human welfare, why would Ciji not also adopt a strategy of remonstrance, similar to Foguangshan? To explain this, we will examine below the ways in which Zhengyan’s theology differs from that of Xingyun.

**Explaining the Political Behavior of Ciji**

The discussion above has underlined that Ciji has adopted a strategy that differs substantially from that of Foguangshan. How can we best explain that difference? Do we look primarily to such factors as organizational resources and the composition of
membership, or do we focus more on the personalities and preferences of leaders? To
address these questions, this section begins by looking at the ideas of Zhengyan.

**Ciji as humanistic Buddhism in action**

The leadership of Zhengyan needs to be situated in the context of the ascendancy of
humanistic Buddhism in Taiwan in organizations like Foguangshan, as opposed to the more
conservative trends that remain dominant in the BAROC. As we have seen before, the
approach developed by Taixu and his disciple Xingyun in Foguangshan emphasized the
importance of the laity and charitable activities in the propagation of the Dharma. Judged
by these criteria, Ciji clearly represents the embodiment of humanistic Buddhism: it is
primarily a lay organization and it advertises itself as a charity. In her speeches, Zhengyan
airs her own views on social problems such as environmental degradation, a rise in crime,
and international crises. In one important respect, however, Zhengyan differs from
Xingyun: she shuns participation in politics. Considering that both leaders claim to be the
disciples of the humanistic Buddhist monk Taixu, why such a difference?
The Thought of Zhengyan: the legacy of Taixu seen through Yinshun

The key to that answer is the role played by Yinshun, the prestigious monk whose fate has been mentioned briefly in the second chapter. Yinshun is celebrated as the protégé of Taixu and he is seen outside Taiwan as the “Chinese monk-scholar of our generation.”

The style of Yinshun could not be more different from that of Xingyun, the other living disciple of Taixu. Yinshun does not head a large monastic order like Foguangshan or Fagushan. Despite this low profile, he is deeply admired by Taiwanese Buddhists, an appreciation that is naturally transferred to his disciples, of which the most famous is Zhengyan. The point to note here is that Yinshun departs in some important and significant ways from Taixu, who is perceived by some of Yinshun’s admirers as a mere “pamphleteer” rather than a scholar.

Yinshun emphasizes a return to appropriate religious practice and charity activity on the part of lay Buddhists rather than political activism for the defense of the religion. In his views about the proper conduct that monks and nuns should adopt, it is clear that political participation is seen as a degrading activity. His opinion is worth quoting:

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576 Ibid.
“They [monks and nuns] should not go to places where there is singing and dancing, or visit brothels, red-light districts, bars, and political organizations, because doing so could easily arouse defiled thoughts and deeds.”  

Although lay Buddhists are not forbidden from political participation, it is clear that involvement in politics stands in the way of spiritual growth in Yinshun’s exegesis of Taixu’s doctrine, contrary to Xingyun’s own interpretation.

Zhengyan, who is not involved in the controversies dividing the Sangha and does not partake in the politics of the ROC, subscribes to Yinshun’s teachings. Her reasons for avoiding political participation lie in such beliefs that view religious people as inherently more honest and sincere about the welfare of other people. Zhengyan has stated that,

“The true religious person has surpassed the desire for gaining merits and benefits. The political person wants to have merits and benefits.”

While not fundamentally hostile to politicians (that would be contrary to her value of ‘compassion for all’), obviously she does not trust them. In that respect, she goes further than merely reflecting a widely held view

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578 Lay Buddhists must abide by only five precepts: “not to kill,” “not to steal,” “not to engage in improper sexual conduct,” “not to make false statements,” and “not to drink alcohol.”
in Taiwan that politicians are not civil servants, but notables greedy for influence.\footnote{See "Shiwei Xinke Liwei Toushang Longzhazhe Shexian Huixuan Yinying 帅威新科立委颛上龍澤著涉贿選陰影 [Ten new deputies take function surrounded by a shroud of suspicion on bribing the electorate]," \textit{Xinxinwen} (3-9 December 1995), 103-4.}

Zhengyan believes that the predicaments faced by Taiwan - and the world, for that matter - have their roots in a lack of moral virtues [\textit{Daode 道德}] on the part of politicians and in their contempt for religion.\footnote{This analysis of Zhengyan is synthesized by Wang Ruizheng. See Shi Zhengyan, ed., \textit{Ciji Nianjian}, 1966-1992, 27-30.} Solutions to problems of socio-economic inequities, the rise in crime, and environmental degradation, accordingly, cannot come from politicians, since they are part of the problem, but from moral reeducation.\footnote{Shi Zhengyan, ed., \textit{Ciji Nianjian}, 1966-1992, 29-31.}

Members of the organization I have interviewed agree with this view. They are skeptical about the campaign of spiritual reform launched by President Lee after his election in 1996,\footnote{All the members of Ciji I asked agreed with the need for such a campaign, but most commented that it is "just a slogan [\textit{Kohao 口號}]."} and believe that by joining forces with a political party, Ciji would ruin its reputation for compassion, impartiality and universality in the accomplishment of its goals.\footnote{From interviews and informal conversations with members of Ciji in Taipei.}

Zhengyan also does not wish to get involved in the public debates for another reason closely related to her religious beliefs: she finds that the conflicts inherent in politics are...
disturbing.\textsuperscript{585} When pressed to give her opinion on the demands for social change advanced by opposition politicians, for example, she offered the view that:

Fighting for the downtrodden and shouting about justice will make the situations [sic] even more complicated and confused. Many injustices are not as simple as they seem, so do not be too hasty to fight for justice, because you might just make things worse.\textsuperscript{586}

This disapproving comment represents more than the common conservative rebuttal that demands for social change may trigger instability. The meaning of Zhengyan's censure becomes clear from a further examination of her beliefs. She justifies her reproof of social activism this way: "A sense of responsibility is more important than a sense of justice. If everyone acts this way (...) then there is a possibility that society will become even more fair and just."\textsuperscript{587}

This statement reflects Zhengyan's belief about the law of causes and effects, or \textit{Karma}, that is, the consequences each must face for deeds done in previous lives, and the possibilities of gaining spiritual merit as a result of good actions performed during one's current existence. She claims that since the world is impermanent, it is a waste of time to

\textsuperscript{585} Members volunteering or working for Ciji in Taipei or Hualien to whom I have talked to agreed with their leader and generally described politics as too "complicated" or "divisive."

\textsuperscript{586} Douglas Shaw, ed., \textit{Still Thoughts, Volume One}, 160.

\textsuperscript{587} \textit{Ibid.}
lobby for social changes or for the replacement of government. Conversely, she also asserts that individual efforts to cure and relieve fellow living creatures of their sufferings represent a more efficient way to "benefit the world" than calling for political reform.

This reluctance to engage in public discussion on policy matters, out of concern for public harmony, inevitably maintains the social-political status quo.

In practical terms, the organization seeks to use its charitable activities to reform individuals in line with the principles of Buddhism. This holistic approach, curing the ills of society through moral reeducation, does not differ much from the arguments of Islamist thinkers in the Middle East or proponents of Hindutva in India, who hold that reform of society starts with moral and religious reconstruction. Therefore, when someone joins Ciji, she is doing more than merely providing relief: she agrees with a program of holistic reform, a comprehensive and encompassing transformation of society that seeks to go deeper than political reform. As one participant at a retreat [ho ̄ 生, life; ying 营, camp] I attended in Hualien stated spontaneously, "thanks to her social work, Zhengyan is a most radical politician." Viewed in that perspective, the foundation she leads is more than.
simply a charitable organization: it embodies a lifestyle, an ideal and a reform program that claims to transcend politics.

This holistic approach based on the reform of individual morality and advocating minimal government intervention is not as apolitical as it seems. It has some important practical consequences for public policy. For instance, Zhengyan believes that health care should be a matter of individual compassion and family support rather than a scheme enforced by the government through taxes. This is consistent with the ideal of Ciji of promoting a Taiwanese version of communitarianism that stresses social harmony, individual responsibility for the welfare of the community, and the fulfillment of duties.

In other words, the role of Ciji in the implementation of government policy in the area of social welfare and health care, where state agencies are unable to intervene, is entirely compatible with the religious ideals of the members of the foundation.

The influence of resources, lay support and congruence

Although the founder of Ciji herself maintains an ascetic lifestyle in the small monastic community that she has established at her headquarters in Hualien, the resources
at her command are considerable. One can appreciate the importance of the assets owned by Ciji when considering its property and the reach of its activities. The property includes the headquarters of the foundation in the Abode of Still Thoughts, situated in Hualien County; the Tzu Chi General Hospital, the Tzu Chi College of Medicine, the Tzu Chi College of Nursing, and the Still Thoughts Hall [Jingsitang 靜思堂] in Hualien City, and the Tzu Chi Cultural center [Ciji Wenhua Zhiye Zhongxin 慈濟文化志業中心] in Taipei. The location of a chapter [Zhihui 支會] in Taoyuan, as well as five branches and eleven liaison offices [Lianluoju 聯絡局] throughout the island point to a determination to reach everyone in the country. The foundation also has four branches abroad, in Singapore, Tokyo, Vancouver, and Los Angeles. In the United States alone, it has established over twenty chapters, liaison offices, as well as a clinic, a school for the study of humanities, and a publishing house. It also has liaison offices located throughout Canada, Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, Australia, Latin America, Western Europe, and Southern Africa.

588 It is a large multifunctional building that houses offices, libraries, galleries, lecture halls, research rooms, and halls for preaching and meditation.
589 The impact of Ciji has been felt, in Canada, where the Foundation has contributed to public policy by lobbying successfully for the use of traditional Chinese medicine in British Columbia. Yang Hsing-chi, "Alternative Medicine Centre in Vancouver," translated by Lin Shen-shou, Tzu Chi Quarterly (winter 1996), 61-62.
590 Fojiao Ciji Jijinhui, Ciji Zhiye Xunli, 123-126.
This wealth allows Ciji to finance a considerable amount of proselytizing activity under the rubrics of “culture” and “education” that covers Taiwan and reaches communities abroad. Since 1967, Tzu Chi Cultural Enterprises has distributed the Ciji Yuekan [the Tzu Chi Monthly], with a circulation of 100,000, and since 1986, has distributed the semi-monthly Ciji Daolu [the Tzu Chi Companion], a four-page newspaper with a circulation of 600,000. Since 1994, its foreign language department has also launched the Tzu Chi Quarterly, a sister publication of Ciji Yuekan in English. The three publications feature speeches by Zhengyan, news on charity, medicine, education, culture, reports from various branches, members’ stories, as well as introductions to figures of Buddhism. Ciji has its own publishing company, with over a hundred titles on Ciji, the sayings of Zhengyan, philosophy, medicine, history and literature. Tzu Chi Cultural Enterprises also has a branch that produces audio and video recordings of speeches by Zhengyan, as well as edifying stories about members. In 1985, the foundation started the island-wide broadcast of “The world of Ciji [Ciji Shijie 慈濟世界],” a one-hour program

591 The American Branch of Ciji also publishes its own newspaper, the 8 pages Tzu Chi World Journal, who had already published its 86th issue in September 1996. Fojiao Ciji Jijinhui, Ciji Zhiye Xunli.
on Taiwanese radio, and since 1995, has launched a similar presentation on cable television.

Ciji also has used its vast resources to expand further its activities in the area of health care. It runs a hospital in Hualien, and wants to build two other ones in Talin [Dalin大林], in Chiayi County, and in Taipei. The quality of the services offered in Hualien meets the standard of technical competence found in North America, and nurses trained by Ciji provide psychological and spiritual relief along with medical support. Along with these three hospitals, the foundation has plans to establish a medical research center for the study of birth defects and genetics and a center for the rehabilitation of handicapped children.

All these resources have over the years expanded to meet the needs of increasingly varied constituencies benefiting from the actions of Ciji. What the case of Ciji highlights here is

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594 Having visiting friends in two of the allegedly best institutions on the island, the Taiwan University Hospital and the Adventist Hospital, both located in Taipei, I can only concur with the opinion that the services offered by the Tzu Chi General Hospital stands above the rest.
595 The Tzu Chi General Hospital, which opened in 1986 in Hualien, comprises 500 beds for emergency relief, 186 for long-term patients, and 211 for intensive care patients. The hospital can accommodate about 1200 patients daily, including 150 patients in the emergency ward. In 1995 the hospital had 1,214 employees, including 78 physicians, 48 resident physicians, 623 nurses, 166 support staff, and 287 administration personnel. In 1994 the rate of occupancy was 80%.
the lack of correlation between an organization's resource base and the level of its political involvement. Like Foguangshan, Ciji is relatively resource-rich; but unlike the former, it has adopted a decidedly unassertive political stance. (Indeed, its political strategy is more akin to the relatively resource-poor BAROC.) Clearly, availability of material resources alone does not govern the choice of political strategy. Are differences in lay support more likely to explain the differences in the political behavior of these organizations? The next section explores that question.

The predominance of the laity

In 1966, Zhengyan established her foundation with only five disciples and thirty followers. Today, Ciji has an estimated membership of about four million people in Taiwan and abroad. The monastic community led by Zhengyan numbers only 110 nuns and thus it is appropriate to describe Ciji as a purely lay organization. However, the precise size of the laity is difficult to ascertain. According to some calculations, one

596 For a detailed narrative of Ciji's history, see Shi Zhengyan ed., Ciji Nianjian.
597 Chen Zailai, Zongjiao yu Guanli, 16.
Taiwanese out of every ten is a “Ciji person [慈濟人].” However, these figures should be treated with caution. Figures for membership are difficult to come by: the title of “member [Huiyuan 會員]” basically refers to anyone who contributes financially to the organization, or what Huang and Weller describe as “checkbook members.”

Obviously some of these members do not have to abide by Ciji’s tenth precept of non-participation in politics, and their admission to the organization does not preclude affiliation with other organizations. Two of the more prominent check-book members, for example, are Lin Yanggang (a presidential candidate in the 1996 election), and Wu Boxiong, a high-ranking member of the KMT and the head of the BLIA, ROC. In fact, the criteria for lay membership appear lax to the extreme: even President Lee, a Presbyterian, is considered to be a “member” of Ciji.

Even if we exclude checkbook members from the tally for Ciji’s membership, it remains difficult to come up with specific figures. Can we put part-time volunteer workers [zhigong 志工], who may do little more than attend a single event, in the same

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598 Kang Le and Jian Huimei, Xinyang yu Shehui, 92.
600 For an introductory guide to the duties and obligations of Ciji members as well as their contribution to society, one can consult Ciji Cishan Shiye Jijinhui [Handbook for discussions and research on the spirit of Ciji] (Taipei: Ciji
category as those involved full-time as commissioners [weiyuan 委員], or employees [rongdong 榮董]? Even if we cannot determine the exact number of people who are committed to the foundation’s missions, we can at least gauge its growth by looking at existing figures for specific categories of people within the organization. In 1966, Ciji commissioners numbered 190, rising to 4,253 in 1993.601 This growth recently accelerated, with more than 800 new commissioners joining the foundation in 1994, and another 855 in 1995.602 The organization had 293 volunteers in 1966: by 1994, there were 2,100 in the areas of Taipei City and Taipei County, Keelung City, Taoyuan County and Hsinchu County.603 Such numbers are much more modest than the four million figure suggested above, but they are nevertheless significant if one keeps in mind that they represent active lay members in the organization.

Even when one takes into consideration the number of lay “checkbook members” in Ciji and Fuguangshan, the broad base of support enjoyed by both organizations stands out from the BAROC’s narrow one. Like Fuguangshan, Ciji receives passive support from

601 Kang Le and Jian Huimei, Xinyang yu Shehui, 87.
603 Kang Le and Jian Huimei, Xinyang yu Shehui, 87.
those that benefit from the relief work undertaken by the organization. The stories of people receiving aid from Ciji in Taiwan and abroad dominate the pages of the various periodicals and books published by the foundation. They represent its best form of advertisement, and arouse the immense wellspring of public sympathy from which the organization draws for its survival. Comparable levels of lay support, however, have not led to the adoption of similar political strategies by Ciji and Foguangshan. Before jumping to the conclusion that lay support does not influence leaders’ choices, however, we need to explore in more depth the way that such support is expressed in each organization.

The discussion above has indicated that as far as the numbers of active laity and the positions occupied by lay Buddhists are concerned, Ciji differs significantly from the BAROC and Foguangshan. The core monastic community led by Zhengyan comprises only 110 nuns and is vastly outnumbered by the few thousands active lay members of the organization. Besides Zhengyan, all those who are heading important administrative units within Ciji are lay people. This contrasts with the BAROC, whose charter forbids giving more than one third of responsible positions to lay people within its central committee.

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Even though Fuguangshan has sought through its affiliate organization, the BLIA, to increase lay support, the clergy still remain in charge of that organization. That is, the laity is more important in Ciji than in the two other organizations, both in terms of numbers and in terms of influence within the organization.

This correlation between greater lay support and a lower degree of political assertiveness among Buddhist organizations in Taiwan is intriguing, because it contradicts observations about the greater political participation of religious organizations with massive lay support such as the Soka Gakkai in Japan. Indeed, it would appear to support the findings of Fowler and Michels, discussed in the first chapter, that point to the constraining effects of the laity on the political activism of ecclesiastical orders. This last assertion would receive further confirmation, however, if the BAROC, which has even less lay support than Fuguangshan, had been more politically assertive than the monastic order. The previous case studies have shown that this has not been the case. This suggests that the specific political behaviors of Taiwanese Buddhist organizations’ leaders are independent of the degree of lay support. Below we ask whether the extent of ethnic and gender congruence provide any more explanatory power than the degree of lay support.
Congruence on the dimension of ethnicity

Ciji manifests an even higher degree of congruence than does Foguangshan on the dimension of ethnicity because, in contrast to Xingyun, Zhengyan herself is a *bendiren*. Zhengyan embodies the outlook of a majority of Taiwanese, who see themselves as different from the other Chinese on the other sides of the Taiwan Strait. She delivers her lectures in *Minnanhua*, the language of the majority in Taiwan, even though - contrary to her own assertions - she speaks fluent Mandarin.\(^605\)

Does Zhengyan’s native background explain why she refused to support the *waishengren* candidate Chen Lü’an? This seems unlikely. Other *waishengren* leaders, such as Jingxin, did not support Chen, while many of the *bendiren* members of Foguangshan’s Committee for Religious Affairs were enthusiastic about his candidacy.

The reluctance of Zhengyan to support Chen probably had the same rationale as that of

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\(^605\) The culture center in Taipei sells recording of her lectures in *Minnanhua*. This inconvenience for the Mandarin-speaker who doesn’t understand *Minnanhua* is offset by the publication in print of most speeches. There exists also a sample of Zhengyan’s thought in English. See Kao Hsin-chiang, ed., *Still Thoughts by Cheng Yen*. The culture center currently considers expanding its activities, with translations in other languages for some of their titles.
most of her followers: they believed that Chen Lü'an, despite his knowledge of Buddhist philosophy, could not help the country.\textsuperscript{606}

To sum up, although Ciji manifests the highest degree of ethnic congruence of the three organizations we are studying, there is little indication that this congruence has affected its political behavior. Ciji's avoidance of politics contradicts the hypothesis that higher degrees of ethnic congruence will produce greater political activism.

\textit{Congruence on the dimension of gender}

An important distinguishing feature of Ciji is the seemingly matriarchal nature of the organization. Because of a Buddhist practice that allows nuns only to initiate women, Zhengyan's following within the small monastic community she leads is exclusively female. Indeed, the prevalence of women in Ciji is not limited to the monastic community, but extends to the whole of the lay organization. While precise figures are difficult to obtain, my own observations, (admittedly limited to Taipei and Hualien) would suggest that about 80% of the total membership is female.\textsuperscript{607}

\textit{The importance of women}

\textsuperscript{606} Many members of Ciji I talked to think were unclear about Chen's program.

\textsuperscript{607} This figure is the same as that offered in Chien-yu Julia Huang and Robert P. Weller, "Merit and
in numbers and in terms of responsibilities they take in Ciji is comparable to what has been observed in Foguangshan. However, the fact that the top leader is also female means that Ciji must be considered to have a higher degree of gender congruence than Foguangshan. This greater congruence on the dimension of gender, however, and as is the case with congruence on the dimension of ethnicity, does not correlate with the higher degree of political participation expected in hypotheses discussed before.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that under the leadership of Zhengyan, Ciji has demonstrated yet a third political approach, the strategy of avoidance. Quite different from the BAROC's strategy of lobbying and Foguangshan's "remonstrance," this strategy explicitly renounces participation in politics or any effort to alter the behavior or policy of the government. Even though Ciji plays a large *de facto* role in the implementation of the

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Mothering," 380.
KMT’s health policies, Ciji never attempts to influence those policies. Nor does the organization, or Zhengyan herself, participate in any way in electoral politics; in 1996 it supported neither the KMT, nor the Buddhist candidate Chen Lű-an.

As in the two earlier cases, we found that leadership beliefs play a key role in shaping this choice of strategy. Zhengyan’s influence within Ciji is obvious. Her personal interpretation of Taixu’s “humanistic” Buddhism – quite different from that of Xingyun – leads her to urge her followers to participate in good works while avoiding participation in politics. This is the best explanation of the organization’s failure to participate in politics.

When we examine the influence of organizational characteristics, we find some surprising results. Of the three organizations, Ciji falls farthest along the continuum in the organizational characteristics that were predicted to produce greater political activism. It commands substantial resources, and has the highest degree of lay involvement and ethnic and gender congruence. And yet, of the three organizations, Ciji is the least, not the most, politically active. While our earlier case studies of the BAROC and Foguangshan appeared to support the hypotheses about the importance of these organizational
characteristics, the case of Ciji indicates that these factors may not matter very much. In this chapter, leadership views emerge as a more powerful explanation of a religious organization's political behavior.
Chapter Six

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The previous chapters have explored the political behavior of three Buddhist organizations in Taiwan in the decade since the lifting of martial law in 1987. It has examined the extent to which the views of their leaders could independently determine the different political behavior of the organizations they head. It has sought to find out how much the availability of financial and human resources, lay support, and congruence between leaders and their followers on the dimensions of ethnicity and gender shape the extent and nature of the organizations' political participation. This chapter discusses the relevance of this study's findings for Taiwanese Buddhist organizations in general and
brings out whether there is something specific about Taiwanese Buddhists’ approach to politics.

Summary of the Findings and their Relevance

The discussion in the first two chapters questioned the validity of macro-level explanations for the political behavior of Buddhist organizations based on such variables as theology, culture or state policy.

Buddhist theology, it turns out, has sanctioned and legitimized different forms of behavior, ranging from the apoliticism of Ciji to the creation of the Komeito in Japan to the support for armed struggle in Sri Lanka. Chinese monks have not always used Buddhist theology to advocate obedience to government. The second chapter has demonstrated that Taixu even went as far as asserting in his theology that Buddhists should become involved in politics by establishing their own party.\footnote{\textit{Yige Fojiaotu de Zhengzhiguan: Cong Tai Xu Dashi Tanqi} 一個佛教徒的政治觀: 從太虛大師談起 [The political views of a Buddhist: From the words of Taixu], \textit{Faguang} 10 December 1989, 2.}
The argument that Confucian culture explains the limited range of behaviors adopted by Taiwanese Buddhist organizations was countered by evidence from two other countries where Confucianism is influential. In Japan, the Buddhist lay organization Soka Gakkai has established a political party. In the Republic of Vietnam, the Buddhist clergy has opposed the government of Diem, and the outlawed United Buddhist Church (UBC) continues to protest against the government in Hanoi today. The historical survey in the second chapter, furthermore, showed that in traditional China some Buddhist sects were involved in upheavals that toppled dynasties.

Finally, the argument that state policies can determine the political behavior of Buddhist organizations, although convincing when governments are repressive, still leaves many questions unanswered. The argument that state policy limits the political participation of Buddhist organizations does not account for the assertiveness of Christian churches in Taiwan and South Korea when both countries were under authoritarian regimes. In countries where freedom of religion exists, such as the ROC since 1989, state policies cannot explain the behavioral differences observed between organizations belonging to the same religious tradition.
In sum, the above mentioned variables cannot explain why Taiwanese Buddhist organizations claiming to represent the same religious tradition of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism, influenced by the same Confucian culture, and faced by the same political environment, have adopted different political behavior. The evidence from the case studies suggests that leaders mediate the influence of theology, culture and state policy in important ways. To uncover how these influences work through individual leadership, the following section emphasizes differences in the behavior of the three organizations and considers the views of leaders as explanatory variables. It then assesses whether the other variables of resources, lay support and congruence between leaders and followers affect the decisions of leaders.

Explaining the different strategies adopted by Buddhist organizations

The three Buddhist organizations examined in this study have sought to attain their goals by adopting one of three strategies in their interactions with the government: lobbying, remonstrance, or avoidance. The BAROC has tried to lobby the KMT into passing a law on religion that would give it authority to determine which organization should qualify as
Buddhist. Foguangshan has followed a strategy of trying to "remonstrate with," or criticize the government. In 1995-1996, it rebuked the KMT by supporting Chen Lü’an for the ROC presidency against the incumbent President Lee Teng-hui. It repeated this strategy in 1997 by joining a movement pressing for the resignation of Premier Lian Zhan. A few months later it orchestrated a large rally in front of the new Premier Xiao Wanchang.

Ciji has neither lobbied in the manner of the BAROC, nor inspired lay mobilization like Foguangshan to censure the government. Throughout its thirty years of existence, it has cooperated with the government for the pursuit of its day-to-day activities, but has never publicly endorsed politicians during electoral campaigns. Instead, it has adopted a strategy of avoiding explicit political involvement.

These variations in behavior reflect the differences between the views of each organization’s leader. The more theologically conservative monks that head the BAROC intervene in politics only when the immediate interests of the monastic community as a whole are concerned. Xingyun subscribes to the more ambitious theology of Taixu, whose legacy has been rejected by the leaders of the BAROC since the 1950s. Like his spiritual mentor, Xingyun advocates spiritual reform in society and feels it is his duty to act
as a councilor to government, reminding secular leaders about their responsibility in setting ethical and moral standards of conduct. The difference between Xingyun and Zhengyan clearly demonstrates the importance of individual leadership. Although her own mentor, Yinshun, is also one of Taixu’s followers, Zhengyan does not believe that preaching to politicians alone can achieve spiritual reform. She concentrates instead on the performance of charity work as a way to convert people to Buddhist ideals, and welcomes the help of any official who helps her achieve that goal.

Even though we have shown that the political strategy of Buddhist organizations is decisively influenced by the particular beliefs of its leaders, we have also explored the possible constraining effects of organizational characteristics on the leaders’ beliefs and actions. Does the availability of resources influence the propensity of these leaders to mobilize their constituency politically? The evidence in all three case studies suggests that the financial wealth of an organization and the existence of a large membership do not determine in any specific way the political attitude of its leaders. Although the BAROC possesses far less resources than Ciji on both counts, it has been more politically assertive. Does the greater availability of resources make a leadership more cautious, because it has
more to lose? This is not the case, as the political behavior of Xingyun demonstrates.

The organization he has founded relies on resources that rival those of Ciji in importance, but this has not prevented Foguangshan from displaying an attitude that is even more politically assertive than the BAROC. In other words, leaders consider their availability of material and human resources when they decide to become politically involved, but this factor alone cannot determine their choice. Leaders like Xingyun, Zhengyan and Shengyan share among themselves the opportunity to control considerable wealth and to command large constituencies but they remain free to use them for quite different purposes.

Does the support of the laity in each organization make a difference in the decision of leaders to get involved in politics? To be sure, the predominance of the clergy in the administration of the BAROC and the subordinate status of its laity explain in good part the inability of the association to mobilize lay Buddhists politically. However, the ability of Ciji to recruit a large number of lay people for volunteer work has not led to greater political participation. Quite the contrary: the clergy of Ciji is even less involved in politics than the members of the Sangha affiliated with the BAROC. Ciji has never been
politically assertive, in good part because Zhengyan sought from the beginning to prevent such a trend.

The situation has been quite different with Xingyun. For years, he relied on the Foguangshan monastery to generate revenue for his organization. Then, in 1992, he shifted to a strategy similar to that of Zhengyan by founding his own lay organization, the BLIA. His mobilization of BLIA members on the Caravan of Love and Mercy in 1997 in front of Premier Xiao Wanchang served as a reminder that his organization could serve other purposes than cooperation with the government. The lay people joining the ranks of the BLIA or Ciji are motivated individuals that subscribe to the views of their leaders. As long as the leaders continue to advocate cooperation with the government through charity work, or in the implementation of spiritual reform, the lay members of these organizations support the government. On the other hand, if these leaders decide to become politically assertive, the dedication of members to their leaders makes them likely to be mobilized rapidly against the government. In other words, the importance of the laity in each Buddhist organization is critical only when leaders are politically assertive.
Does congruence on the dimension of ethnicity between leaders and their followers affect the political participation of Taiwanese Buddhist organizations? The three organizations studied in this thesis have adopted different forms of political behavior that are not consistent with the hypothetical influence of different degrees of congruence between their leaders and followers. The absence of statistics precludes any definitive conclusion about congruence on the dimension of ethnicity between the leadership of the BAROC and its following. One fact nonetheless stands out. If we take at face value the claim that BAROC represents all Taiwanese Buddhists, who are in their majority bendiren, there is no congruence in the association because its leadership is predominantly waishengren. The background of Xingyun as a waishengren may remain a problem for more committed Taiwanese separatists, but the founder of Foguangshan has consistently promoted bendiren to higher ranks in his organization and therefore congruence between his subordinates and the mass of followers is manifest. All the candidates for Xingyun’s succession being bendiren, congruence on the dimension of ethnicity in the near future will resemble the situation of Ciji. Of the three organizations examined in this thesis, ethnic congruence is most visible in Ciji: the roots of Zhengyan on the island and her inclination
to speak Minnanhua rather than Mandarin mirror the attitude of a majority who may not support Taiwanese self-determination, but nonetheless are proud of their cultural identity.

The nature of the evidence about these differences and similarities with respect to congruence does not point to any significant finding. In particular, although there is a high degree of congruence on the dimension of ethnicity between leaders and their followers in both Foguangshan and Ciji, the leaders of each organization have adopted entirely different political behaviors.

Does the existence of congruence between leaders and followers on the dimension of gender shape the strategic choices of leaders? As in the case of ethnicity, we lack precise data on the membership of the BAROC. However, it is clear that while a majority of Taiwanese Buddhists are women, while the clergy in the BAROC’s central committee is mostly male. In other words, there is inevitably a lack of congruence between Buddhist followers in Taiwan and the leaders of the BAROC. Compared with the latter organization, Foguangshan has significantly greater gender congruence between the leadership and its followers, and Ciji is most congruent of all in this regard. However, greater gender congruence in Foguangshan and Ciji has not resulted in a tendency to be
more or less politically assertive. Foguangshan is more politically assertive than the BAROC, Ciji less. In sum, congruence on the dimension of gender does not appear to influence in any specific way the choice of leaders to become politically involved.

We are thus left with the views of Taiwanese Buddhist organizations’ leaders as our main explanatory variable, with the availability of resources and lay support as variables that matter mainly once leaders have committed themselves to get involved politically. The following discussion examines the leaders’ views more closely, and in particular, inquires whether they might allow for greater political cooperation between Buddhist organizations in the future.

The political views of Taiwanese Buddhist organizations

Are the differences between the BAROC, Foguangshan and Ciji only over strategy? Is there any set of principles among all Taiwanese Buddhists out of which some leaders could try to forge a consensus? To answer these questions, this section reviews the dissimilarities in the views held by the leaders of the organizations studied in this thesis, and asks whether these disparities could be bridged. The divergences between the leaders
of the BAROC, Foguangshan and Ciji are representative of the diversity found in the views held by most Buddhists on the island. Although the discrepancies among them are theological, the following discussion demonstrates that these differences have some significant political implications, and here lies the predicament in attempting to establish a distinct and unified Buddhist political philosophy.

*Theologically conservative and reformist Buddhists*

Two main strands have been identified in this dissertation among Taiwanese Buddhist organizations. Although there are other taxonomies that could be proposed, the classification offered here is based on the different views of leaders about the laity’s responsibility in the promotion of Buddhist values. The first strand of organizations, represented by the BAROC and the CBSA, is theologically conservative. The leaders of these organizations follow the teachings of Yuanying, who believed that the laity must remain subordinated to the Sangha. The supremacy of monks and nuns is deemed necessary to ensure the integrity of the doctrine and the standards of the practice. This approach implies that, in the absence of any means to coerce dissident Buddhists, the help
of the government may be necessary to enforce orthodoxy. It is this acceptance of state intervention in the affairs of Buddhists implicit in the views of theological conservatives and apparent during the BAROC campaign for a law on religion, that sets these associations apart from other Buddhist organizations. In accordance with that concern for discipline, and with the exception of the short period when Taixu headed the association, the BAROC clergy has not wanted to get distracted from its religious mandate by politically mobilizing lay Buddhists. Its refusal to support Chen Lü’an was consistent with that principle.

A majority among Taiwanese Buddhist organizations adheres to the strand of humanistic Buddhism [renjian fojiao 人間佛教] identified with Taixu and his spiritual successor Yinshun. The organizations that belong to that group agree about the importance of giving lay people more responsibilities for the promotion of Buddhism. Beyond the agreement of humanistic Buddhists on the importance of the laity for the future of their religion, however, some important differences exist among them, according to the views of their leaders on the proper duties of lay Buddhists. The leaders of the first group, to which Ciji belongs, believe that lay Buddhists should avoid political participation.
belief of those adhering to the teachings of Yinshun, Zhengyan, and other leaders such as Shengyan, is that the expansion of Buddhism is best achieved by adopting an attitude of selflessness. The performance of charitable activities, moral education and other meritorious deeds are considered more important than the "perplexities" of politics. The fact that the charitable activities of organizations such as Ciji have received approval from successive governments thanks to good relations between their leaders and officials of the executive may suggest that these organizations are merely Buddhist support groups for the government. This apolitical attitude may appear as conservative, to the extent that it supports existing institutions by not challenging them, and there is also some truth to the argument that organizations such as Ciji are authoritarian because of their structure, based entirely on the charismatic leadership of an individual. Such organizations, however, differ from the BAROC on one essential point: the importance of their laity makes them ready for political action should their leaders ever make that choice.

Organizations such as Foguangshan and the CBTA go further than Ciji, Fagushan and other organizations, in stressing the importance of lay people for the future of humanistic Buddhism. They believe that the Sangha has a duty to act indirectly as counsellor to the
government, and that lay Buddhists have a duty to act directly by becoming involved in politics. It is important to stress here that the more assertive political behavior of these organizations should not be construed as necessarily opposed to the government. This is demonstrated by the strategy adopted by Xingyun. On the one hand, between 1995 and 1997, he supported the opposition candidate Chen Lü’an and blamed the government’s shortcomings for the moral decline in Taiwanese society. On the other hand, just a few months after the loss of his favorite candidate and while preparing his “Caravan of Love and Mercy” campaign of remonstrance against the Premier, he accepted a government position. The point to note is that, contrary to other humanistic Buddhists such as Zhengyan, Xingyun believes that lay Buddhists must become involved politically and that political participation is a legitimate activity for devout Buddhists.

Politically active humanistic Buddhist organizations, as opposed to apolitical humanistic Buddhists, remain a minority in Taiwan. Under what conditions might this situation change? Before answering this question, one important fact needs to be kept in mind. Xingyun and his followers in Foguangshan and the BLIA, including lay disciples such as Chen Lü’an, do not represent the views of all politically active Taiwanese
Buddhists. While Xingyun's politics can be described as conservative, this is not the case with Zhaohui, who can be described as an environmentalist.

*Leadership succession and change in Buddhist organizations' political participation*

If leaders' decisions on political participation are not determined by the availability of resources under their control, the size of the laity in their organization, or any congruence between leaders and followers along the dimensions of gender and ethnicity, leadership change ought to have an impact. However, leadership transition will be significant for the political attitude of the organizations only if future leaders are able to overcome the influence of their predecessors left in the institutions that they have set up. This might not always be easy. The BAROC and Foguangshan have both achieved a degree of institutionalization that would make it difficult for new leaders to impose a radical shift of perspective. This is not the case with Ciji, where a relative lack of institutionalization ensures that if a new leader so wishes, she could change the political attitude of the organization.
The future leaders of the BAROC are likely to carry on with the general strategy of the association's previous secretary-generals, because it has served them relatively well. Furthermore, those who oppose the current views have already left the organization. The continuity in the leadership of Foguangshan suggests that its differences with the BAROC are likely to persist. The founder of Foguangshan and the BLIA has carefully nurtured a new generation of leaders who are dedicated to perpetuate his legacy. The succession to Zhengyan in Ciji is a more intriguing matter. Will her successor be another idiosyncratic leader that is able to impose her own mark on the foundation? If that is the case, will she be able to determine the political attitude of that organization in a different way? Will Ciji evolve into a more activist organization like Foguangshan? The rise in influence of other leaders outside these three organizations may also change the tone of Buddhist political participation in Taiwan. The process of theological innovation is still underway and far from being limited to the three organizations examined here. In particular, it is quite possible that the environmentalist views of Shengyan and Zhaohui will become more influential in the future and determine new types of strategies.\footnote{Shengyan's style of leadership is closer to that of Zhengyan, while Zhaohui is a more flamboyant leader.}
Conclusion

The puzzle identified at the beginning of this dissertation is that despite similarities in their environment, Taiwanese Buddhist organizations have adopted different forms of political participation. These findings bring the inescapable conclusion that leadership matters. It is especially striking that Zhengyan has never supported Chen Lü'an, a Buddhist candidate whose values, method and record of public service were, from a Buddhist perspective, impeccable and entirely compatible with the ideals she preaches. One is left with the speculation that individual Buddhist leaders, even though they refuse to admit so, see the others as rivals and do not want to submit to the authority of any peer. In the absence of such a paramount leadership, Buddhist political participation in Taiwan will continue to take many forms.
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610 Note on Chinese transliteration: I use the Hanyu Pinyin system as a rule. However, I use the transliteration system used in Taiwan when the author himself or herself provides this transliteration in the book concerned. I also follow the convention in usage in the English-language media in Taiwan for the name of personalities when I provide a transliteration of their names in an English language translation of a Chinese title. Finally, I follow established conventions in use in Taiwan for names of places and institution. Thus, I use Taipei and Kaohsiung instead of Taibei and Gaoxiong, Chengchih University instead of Zhengzhi.


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Heibai Xinwen 黑白新聞 [Taiwan News] (Weekly)
Lianhebao 聯合報 [United Daily News]
Lingyan Xinwen 另眼新聞 [New Eyes Magazine] (Biweekly)
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Appendix One

NAMES OF PERSONS CITED

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612 The transliteration for Chinese names used in the text are italicized. The three exceptions to the systematic use of the Pinyin transliteration are the three ROC Presidents mentioned in the dissertation.

613 The transliteration used here follows the norm found in Taiwanese English-language newspapers, which omit the apostrophe used in the standard Wade-Giles system. The English names of a few public figures reflect the practice of English-language media in Taiwan. The English translation of the title Fashi is inconsistent in the Taiwanese usage: it is rendered as “Venerable [Ven.],” “Master,” or even Reverend. For the sake of consistency, I have followed the usage adopted by Charles B. Jones.
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<td>Zhao Hui Fashi</td>
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<td>Chao Pu-chu</td>
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<td>Cheng Cheng-kung</td>
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<td>Zhu Gaozheng</td>
<td>Chu Kao-cheng</td>
<td>朱高正</td>
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Appendix Two

NAMES OF PLACES IN TAIWAN CITED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Wade-Giles (mod.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banqiao</td>
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<td>Dalin</td>
<td>Talin</td>
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<td>Dashu</td>
<td>Tashu</td>
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<td>Gaoxiong</td>
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<td>Hualien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiayi</td>
<td>Chiayi</td>
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<td>Keelung</td>
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<td>Lukang</td>
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<td>Hsintien</td>
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<td>Hsinchu</td>
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<td>Yilan</td>
<td>Ilan</td>
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<td>Yunlin</td>
<td>Yunlin</td>
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<td>Zhonghe</td>
<td>Chunghe</td>
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</table>

614 The transliteration for Chinese names used in the text are italicized. I have adopted the modified Wade-Giles system used in Taiwan for the names of place.
Appendix Three

LIST OF BUDDHIST ORGANIZATIONS AND TEMPLES CITED

1. Organizations related to the BAROC [Zhongguo Fojiaohui 中國佛教會]
   Fojiao Zonghui 佛教總會 BFA
   Shijie Fojiao Sengqie Dahui 世界佛教僧伽大會 WBSC
   Zhonghua Fojiao Sengjia Hui 中華佛教僧伽會 CBSA

2. Organizations and temples related to the Buddha Light Mountain [Foguangshan 佛光山] monastic order
   Guoji Foguanghui 國際佛光會 BLIA
   Guoji Fojiao Cujinhui 國際佛教促進會 IBPS
   Leiin Si 雷音 Universal Yin Temple
   Pumen Si 普門寺 Universal Gate Temple
   Puxien Si 普賢寺 Universal Virtue Temple
   Shoushan Si 壽山 Shoushan Temple

3. Others
   Ciji Gongdehui 慈濟功德會 Tzu Chi
   Fagushan 法鼓山 Dharma Drum Mountain
   Lingyanshan 靈巖山 Linyenshan Temple
   Nanying Fojiaohui 南嶽佛教會 SSBA
   Taiwan Sheng Fojiaohui 台灣省佛教會 TPBA
   Tianfosi 天佛寺 Sky Buddha Temple
   Zhongguo Fojiao Guoji Qingnianhui 中國佛教國際青年會 YMBB
   Zhongguo Fojiaohui 中國佛教會 CBA
   Zhongguo Fojiao Xiehui 中國佛教協會 BAC
Zhongguo Fojiao Zaijia Xiu Cujinhui  中國佛教在家修進會
Zhonghua Fojiao Huseng Xiehui  中華佛教護僧協會  CBLPS
Zhonghua Fojiao Jushihui  中華佛教居士會  CBAPS
Zhonghua Fosi Xiehui  中華佛寺協會  CBLA
Zhonghua Minguo Fojiao Qingnianhui  中華民國佛教青年會  CBTA
Zhongtaichan  中台禪  BYA
Appendix Four

LIST OF PARTIES, ROC GOVERNMENT AND KMT ORGANS CITED

1. Political parties
- Guomindang
- Jianguodang
- Minjindang
- Xin Dang
- Yazhou Renmin Fangong Tongmeng

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political parties</th>
<th>ROC Government Organ</th>
<th>KMT Organ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Jianguodang</td>
<td>TAIP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minjindang</td>
<td>DPP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Xin Dang</td>
<td>NP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yazhou Renmin Fangong Tongmeng</td>
<td>AACL</td>
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2. Government organs
- Guofangbu
- Guojia Kexue Weiyuanhui
- Jiaoyubu
- Laogong Weiyuanhui
- Mengzang Weiyuanhui
- Minzhengsi
- Neizhengbu
- Qiaowu Weiyuanhui
- Shehuisi
- Weishengju
- Xingzhengyuan Xinwenju

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<tr>
<th>Government organs</th>
<th>ROC Government Organ</th>
<th>KMT Organ</th>
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<td>Jiaoyubu</td>
<td>MOE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laogong Weiyuanhui</td>
<td>CLA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mengzang Weiyuanhui</td>
<td>MTAC</td>
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<td>Minzhengsi</td>
<td>BCA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neizhengbu</td>
<td>MOI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qiaowu Weiyuanhui</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shehuisi</td>
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<td>Weishengju</td>
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<td>Xingzhengyuan Xinwenju</td>
<td>GIO</td>
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3. KMT organs
- Shehui Gongzuo Weiyuanhui
- Zuzhi Gongzuo Weiyuanhui

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KMT organs</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Shehui Gongzuo Weiyuanhui</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zuzhi Gongzuo Weiyuanhui</td>
<td>OWC</td>
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