Buddhist Responses to Christianity in Postwar Taiwan

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Buddhist Responses to Christianity in Postwar Taiwan

Awakening the World

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Between 2011 and 2013, when I commenced this project in earnest (while still pursuing other projects), I was a postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Asian Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. My time there was funded by the Australian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the form of a Golda Meier Fellowship for Postdoctoral Research. My second year in Jerusalem was also partly funded by the Louis Frieberg Center for East-Asian Studies. I am grateful to these institutions, and to Yuri Pines for making me feel so welcome during those two years.

Finally, my parents supported me unfailingly throughout my university study and in the years since then—during the long and difficult transition into academia and during my moves to different countries. This book is dedicated to them.

A Note on Romanization and Translations

This book uses the Hanyu pinyin system of romanization. However, if the name of an individual is commonly romanized in another way (e.g. Chiang Kai-shek), this more usual romanization will be given. Sanskrit terms listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (www.oed.com, as of November 28, 2019) are considered naturalized English terms, and appear here without diacritical marks. I refer to the "People's Republic of China" using the abbreviation "PRC" or simply as "China," while the "Republic of China" is referred to as the "ROC". After 1949, when the ROC was confined to the island of Taiwan and other smaller, surrounding islands, the ROC is also referred to simply as "Taiwan". Meanwhile, following convention, the Chinese Communist Party (Gongchandang) is abbreviated as "CCP," and the Nationalist Party (Guomindang) is abbreviated as "KMT," based on its Wade-Giles romanization (Kuomintang). Finally, unless otherwise noted, the translations in this volume are mine, but quotations from the Bible are taken from the English Revised Version, the source text of which was used when translating the most popular Protestant translation of the Bible in Taiwan—the Chinese Union Version (CUV; Heheben).[1]

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1 See I-Jin Loh, "Chinese Translations of the Bible," in *An Encyclopedia of Translation*, ed. Chan Sin-wai and David E. Pollard (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2001); Jost Oliver Zetzsche, *The Bible in China: The History of the Union Version or the Culmination of Protestant Missionary Bible Translation in China* (Nettetal: Steyler Verl., 1999), 200. See also Joseph Hong, "Revision of the Chinese Union Version Bible (CUV): Assessing the Challenges from an Historical Perspective," *The Bible Translator* 53, no. 2 (2002).

Preface

In the 1950s and 1960s, Christianity was rapidly expanding in Taiwan—so much so that in 1961, the senior presidential advisor Hollington Tong (1887-1971) proclaimed that "at the present rate of conversion, Taiwan is destined to become a Christian island in less than half a century."[1] While Tong may have been trying to shore up support for the island's ruling party, the KMT, by appealing to American Christians, shortly after making his prediction Christian growth plateaued. Today, Taiwan is not a "Christian island" at all. In fact, according to the 2015 Taiwan Social Change Survey, Christians have instead made more modest gains; only 4.5% and 1.5% of respondents were Protestants and Catholics respectively. By way of contrast, Buddhists comprised 19.9%—and Daoists 16.6%—of the population; adherents of folk religion (35.5%) were even more numerous.[2]

But when Tong was writing his book, the situation was quite different. In 1945, Taiwan was returned to China after half a century spent in the Japanese Empire; then, there were only 8-10,000 Catholics and 60,000 Protestants on the island.[3] But by the early 1960s, it was home to 300,000 Catholics and 280,000 Protestants.[4] In addition, Christians sat atop Taiwan's political pantheon. This included the "Father of the Nation" (Guofu), Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), who in 1912 became the ROC's Provisional President after the overthrow of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), and the "generalissimo" Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975)—who ruled Taiwan as President of the ROC after losing the mainland to the Communists in China's civil war, in 1949. Hundreds of foreign missionaries were active on the island as well.[5]

As we will see, this expanding Christian presence was particularly challenging to a vocal and influential group of Buddhists. It led them to issue stern critiques of Christianity, because they considered the rise of Protestantism and Catholicism to pose an existential threat—one that

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1   Hollington K. Tong, *Christianity in Taiwan: A History* (Taipei: China Post, 1961), 240.

2   See page 168 of Fu Yangzhi, Zhang Yinghua, Du Suha and Liao Peishan (eds.), "Taiwan shehui bianqian jiben diaocha di qi di yi ci diaocha jihua zhixing baogao" (Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Shehui Kexue Yanjiusuo, 2016). Available at: http://www.ios.sinica.edu.tw/sc/cht/datafile/tscs15.pdf (accessed January 25, 2019). Module II results are on page 290.

3   Government Information Office, *The Republic of China Yearbook 1996* (Taipei: Government Information Office, 1996), 425.

4   Ibid.

5   See Murray A. Rubinstein, *The Protestant Community on Modern Taiwan: Mission, Seminary and Church* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), 35.

complemented Communism in mainland China. This is because after 1949 in the PRC, Buddhists (and other religious practitioners, including Christians) were faced with severe limitations on their religious freedom. Following more than a decade of repressive policies, during China's Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the Red Guards (*Hong Weibing*) decimated the country's religious infrastructure, and religious practice itself was driven underground. Across the Taiwan Strait, a perusal of Buddhist publications reveals a general anxiety about the long-term viability of their tradition—with both Christianity and Communism mentioned as threats.

Taiwan's political context also incorporated clear boundaries of religious acceptability. For Buddhists to do well in the socio-political environment of the ROC—that is, to expand and flourish rather than just survive—they needed to demonstrate their adaptation to this climate. Between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s, Buddhist laymen and monks, as well as Christian pastors and priests, thus competed with each other to demonstrate their compatibility with the party-state's modernizing vision, and over which side was more loyal to the KMT's conservative vision of Chinese culture.

This book will show that while genuine interfaith dialogue in the PRC was impossible, Buddhist-Christian engagement remained vibrant in Taiwan—and that this had direct implications for how Buddhists saw and represented themselves. We will see that as Taiwan's Buddhist-Christian engagement unfolded, a process of identity formation took place. This saw Buddhists frame their tradition using the language of modernity as a way of competing with Christians for socio-political acceptance. The microhistory that unfolds in the following pages also demonstrates that when we think about the engagement of religious actors with "modernity," we should give due consideration to the type of modernity they dealt with. In this case, the process had implications for the continued development of Buddhism after the intensive phase of this interfaith competition had ended.

This research evolved over a long period of time. I arrived in Taipei in 2005 as a doctoral student with the intention of researching contemporary Buddhist organizations. Although I did complete my dissertation on this subject, I found myself often surrounded by Christians rather than Buddhists. That year, I spent my first week in Taipei in the Living Stone Church (Huo Shi Jiaohui) in the district of Muzha,[6] at the invitation of friends who, when dropping me off from the airport, baulked at the messy state of my pre-arranged accommodation. After leaving the church, I subsequently

6   The name of this church is taken from Peter 2:4, which refers to "a living stone, rejected indeed of men".

remained in Muzha, where one could find other churches besides this one. Indeed, while I was there, two new churches opened nearby: one affiliated with "Little Flock" (Xiaoqun) movement, and a branch of the True Jesus Church (Zhen Yesu Jiaohui).[7] Close-by was the Muzha Peniel Church (Muzha Bianyilihui). And, sharing a house with Christians, the television was often tuned to "Good TV"—a cable channel broadcasting Christian content.

Although I lived near National Chengchi University, in 2005 I was actually an exchange student in the Philosophy Department at National Taiwan University (NTU). I was struck by the significant Christian presence in this area too. In front of the campus, one found everything you would expect in a student area—bookstores, print-shops and fast-food restaurants. But the area was (and remains) home to numerous churches as well. Staff and students at NTU were especially familiar with the Presbyterian "Grace Baptist Church" (Huai'en Tang), since it was situated directly opposite the university. In those days, it beamed the words "God is Love" in bright red lights from atop the roof, although this sign had disappeared when I passed by again in 2013. Another Christian edifice also towered nearby—the "True Lutheran Church" (Zhenli Tang)—the construction of which had been completed by the end of 2005. At night, a shining red crucifix gleamed from their sleek, ten-story building.

There are other Christian establishments in the area besides these particular churches. Nearby is a brightly-lit bookshop called "Campus Books" (Xiaoyuan Shudian). With a slick, inviting interior, it does not specifically cater to the broader NTU community as the name would suggest—it only sells Christian publications and stationary. Yet it is bustling and well-patronized. Meanwhile, Xinsheng South Road, which runs right near the university, is known as the "Road to Heaven" (Tiantang Lu) because of its high concentration of religious establishments.[8] And a short distance away on Dingzhou Road, next to the Christian Morrison Academy-Bethany School (a Christian elementary and junior high school), is the China Evangelical Seminary (Zhonghua Fuyin Shenxueyuan), which provides comprehensive programs in theology, Bible Studies and missiology.

It is not just around universities that one finds churches in Taipei. When the subway emerges from beneath the city, crucifixes compete with shop-signs for attention. And in Taiwan's rural areas, tucked away between dumpling stalls, motorcycle repair shops and 7-11s, small congregations

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7 Both are indigenous church movements with roots in China.
8 See "About Daan District," Taipei City Government, available at: http://english.gov.taipei/ct.asp?xItem=1104101&ctNode=27830&mp=100002 (accessed April 19, 2018).

meet in much less obvious facilities. Yet, while this brief portrait may suggest that Christians have a significant numerical presence in Taiwan, they are a minority. According to 2005 statistics from the Ministry of the Interior, Taiwan was home to 3,609 Protestant churches and 1,151 Catholic churches. That is a sizeable number, but recall that in the mid-2000s, Catholics and Protestants together made up less than 4% of Taiwan's overall population (which was nearly 23 million). At that time, Buddhists still had a comparable number of temples (4006) to Christian churches, but comprised a much higher proportion of the population.[9]

A word of caution is in order, however. As scholars of Chinese religion know, this type of data can be seriously misleading. Exclusivist belief-systems, such as Christianity, have traditionally been alien to the Chinese religious framework. Even if respondents do align themselves with a particular religious identity, it might very well imply preference rather than exclusivism.

Despite this, establishments identifying themselves exclusively in Buddhist terms these days dominate the island's religious landscape. Organizations such as Tzu Chi, Dharma Drum Mountain and Buddha-Light Mountain today have numerous, highly visible projects across the island, and their outreach extends abroad. They contribute to a Buddhist cultural and media industry that includes books, television productions and websites. Buddhist mega-temples, almost brutalist in their declaration of presence—and their associated hospitals and universities—now loom large on the island. Twenty-first century Buddhism has greater institutional strength than it did in the middle of the twentieth century, when for the Buddhists we shall deal with here, the Christian challenge seemed urgent.

Towards the end of this book, I will argue that the shape of modern Buddhism in Taiwan is partly due to its earlier engagement with Christianity—and that even as Buddhists critiqued Christian beliefs on the dimensions of KMT modernity, they emulated Christian behavior in areas such as charity, education and institutional organization. In this sense, for Buddhists, Christianity was a model "modern" religion. While it played this exemplary role in the republican era (1911-1949) in mainland China too, the Communist victory in China's civil war meant that the framework for Buddhist engagement with Christianity was radically altered there. It was

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9   Daoists, in turn, had a much larger number of establishments (18,274 temples) than Buddhists and Christians combined. See: Government Information Office, *Taiwan Yearbook 2006*, available at: http://web.archive.org/web/20070708213510/http://www.gio.gov.tw/taiwan-website/5-gp/yearbook/22Religion.htm (accessed August 2, 2019).

in Taiwan, rather than China, that Buddhist-Christian engagement could continue to unfold, and where the implications of this earlier phase of their dialogue would manifest more fully. This had tangible, real-world effects on Taiwan's religious landscape.

Finally, a note on the methodology employed in this study. A scholar seeking to document Buddhist-Christian debate in China's or Taiwan's recent history is faced with a vast swathe of materials too numerous for any one individual to deal with. To avoid this archival deluge I have taken a microhistorical approach, and instead drawn from a limited range of inter-linked publications consisting of books, essays and magazine articles. I concentrate on a small number of actors—who were among the most vibrant and well-known participants in their respective religious communities. The time-span of this study has also been carefully chosen. Not only does it reflect the actual timeline of engagement between these religious actors—it commences when Christianity was growing rapidly on the island, and finishes when this growth had already plateaued. By then, Chiang Kai-shek's death, and shifts in Taiwan's socio-political landscape, changed the conditions in which interfaith competition took place.

Through this more limited analysis, we will see the bigger-picture themes of adaptation and influence develop and operate in the process of Buddhist identity formation. By the end of the book, it will be clear that even as some Buddhists framed their self-conceptualization in opposition to Christianity, they also learned much from the normative model of modern religiosity they perceived in it. Later, they founded organizations and temple complexes that would eventually dwarf comparable Christian examples. The analysis will show that Buddhism in Taiwan thus bears the imprint of its engagement with Christianity in the middle of the twentieth century—something that can be seen in contemporary Buddhist self-conceptualizations, as well as the Buddhist hospitals, universities and media—of today.

Introduction

Abstract

The introduction outlines the study's historical context and main questions. Beginning with a discussion of a 1981 conference on Buddhism and politics, it asks why elite Buddhist figures, in the decade after Chiang Kai-shek's death, aligned KMT ideology with Buddhism—especially when the two figureheads of the party, Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, were both Christians. Stepping back, and having outlined a phase of Christian growth in the early postwar era, it then describes the party's modern Chinese cultural vision and values, which it promoted in the postwar period and which elite Buddhists aspired to in their competition with Christians for adherents. It then outlines the focus of the study: how Buddhists defined themselves as patriotic, "Chinese" and "modern", in contrast to Christians, as a way of generating socio-political acceptability.

Keywords: identity, modernity, KMT, *Sanminzhuyi*, Taixu, BAROC

In 1981—the 70th anniversary year of the revolution that brought an end to dynastic China—the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (BAROC; Zhongguo Fojiao Hui) held a conference in Taiwan. As the official body representing Buddhists on the island, the BAROC had a close relationship with its ruling political party, the KMT.[1] An important aim of the meeting was to express support for the party and its guiding ideology—the Three Principles of the People (*Sanminzhuyi*; consisting of nationalism, democracy and livelihood).[2] What is notable about the speeches given there is the extent to which presenters were willing to actually equate Buddhism with this ideology. The three principles had been devised by the party's founder, Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), who led the movement to overthrow the Qing dynasty

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1   See Laliberté, *The Politics of Buddhist Organizations in Taiwan, 1989-2003: Safeguard the Faith, Build a Pure Land, Help the Poor* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 46-47.
2   See Orville Schell and John Delury, *Wealth and Power: China's Long March to the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Random House, 2013), 127-135.

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and establish the Republic of China in 1911-12. Although he was a Christian, speakers praised Sun and his ideological system in Buddhist terms, evoking a curious mixture of sacred and secular ideals.

For example, according to the speaker Wuyi,

> only the thorough implementation of the Three Principles of the People, and the improvement of material and spiritual forms of life, accords with the needs of the Chinese people. This is also consistent with the Buddha's original intention to purify the world. Therefore, using the Three Principles of the People to unite China is a unanimous requirement of all Chinese people. Naturally, Buddhists are no exception.[3]

According to Wuyi, then, involvement in the project to unify Taiwan and mainland China, brining it under KMT rule, was necessary not only because the Buddha's teachings would perish under Communism, but because it was a patriotic duty.[4]

Other speakers went further in their praise of Sun. The monastic Kaizheng compared him to the Buddha himself.[5] Another contributor, Nianfa, asserted that Mahayana Buddhism (the form of Buddhism predominating in China and Taiwan) and the Three Principles of the People shared the same aim—that of "saving sentient beings."[6] Another, Longdao, even praised the principles as "a special Dharma-gate for seeking rebirth in the Pure Land."[7] In other words, it was a path leading to rebirth in an important paradisiacal realm featuring in Buddhist cosmology.[8] By way of contrast, the monastic Shengkai described the PRC as a Buddhist "hell [existing within] the world of human beings."[9]

Buddhism and the Three Principles of the People were therefore compatible; and the Buddha, and Sun Yat-sen, were spiritually aligned. (We shall

3   Wuyi, "Lixing de jueze," in *Fofa yu xiangguan zhengzhi sixiang lunji*, ed. Cheng Wenxi (Taipei: Tianhua chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1981), 1.
4   Ibid.
5   Kaizheng, "Lun sixiang yu zhuyi," in *Fofa yu xiangguan zhengzhi sixiang lunji*, ed. Cheng Wenxi (Taipei: Tianhua chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1981), 7.
6   Nianfa, "Cong Tiantai zongzu Tingzhe jiangning boguan zongjiangsi bei xian shuo qi," in *Fofa yu xiangguan zhengzhi sixiang lunji*, ed. Cheng Wenxi (Taipei: Tianhua chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1981), 12.
7   Longdao, "Shixian Sanminzhuyi yu qiu sheng Jingtu," in *Fofa yu xiangguan zhengzhi sixiang lunji*, ed. Cheng Wenxi (Taipei: Tianhua chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1981), 52.
8   Ibid., 54.
9   Shengkai, "Tuixing rensheng Fojiao jianshe renjian jingtu," in *Fofa yu xiangguan zhengzhi sixiang lunji*, ed. Cheng Wenxi (Taipei: Tianhua chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1981), 44.

see a similar approach taken by the monastic Taixu—this time during the republican era—later in this chapter and again in chapter five.) Considered alongside each other, the meaning behind these statements is clear—they conveyed a message to the party that Buddhists were patriotic supporters, because KMT ideology and Buddhism shared similar goals. Meanwhile, the speakers reiterated the view that the Communist political system would lead to Buddhism's demise—after all, Communists saw religion as the "opium" of the people, and therefore, they implicitly urged Buddhists to support the ROC's leadership—both for the sake of the nation, and their religion.

Chinese Buddhism and identity

Did the speakers really believe in KMT ideology, or was their professed alignment with the party simply a matter of political expediency? We have reason to believe it was both. On the basis of research and interviews conducted in the mid-twentieth century, Holmes Welch reported that most émigré monastics (those who had fled the mainland) opposed Communism—and the BAROC was dominated by such figures.[10] More recently, studies have shown that Taiwanese Buddhists (and indeed, most Christians) sought cooperation, rather than confrontation, with the government during Taiwan's authoritarian era. Cheng-tian Kuo has demonstrated that that under martial law in Taiwan between 1949 and 1987, most Christians and Buddhists either supported the KMT or stepped back from political engagement.[11] Richard Madsen has found that in the post-authoritarian era, Buddhist organizations contributed to democracy through their civic activities, but like other religious groups, they sought to cooperate with the government rather than confront it.[12] And André Laliberté has also shown that the BAROC continued supporting the government even after martial law ended.[13] Therefore, we cannot discount the probability that while the BAROC stance was expedient, it did not contradict their beliefs about the relationship between their faith and the party-state.

10   See Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968): 158-159.
11   Presbyterians were a notable exception, since they opposed the KMT's authoritarian governance and advocated democracy. See Cheng-tian Kuo, *Religion and Democracy in Taiwan* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).
12   See Richard Madsen, *Democracy's Dharma: Religious Renaissance and Political Development in Taiwan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
13   Laliberté, *The Politics of Buddhist Organizations in Taiwan*.

This should come as no surprise; Buddhism and nationalism have been entwined at numerous points in China's recent history. Chan Sin-wai observes that late Qing figures like Tan Sitong (1865-1898) saw a unity between Buddhism and modernity that would enable China to elevate its global status and play a constructive role in the modern world.[14] Zhang Taiyan (1868-1936) thought that Buddhism incorporated concepts which could foster an anti-Qing revolution.[15] In republican China, the government official Dai Jitao (1891-1949), and the politician Zhang Jian (1853-1926), considered Buddhism as capable of saving society from moral decay. And reformer monastics like Taixu (1890-1947) saw it as the cure for China's (and the world's) modern ills.[16] Others played an active role in opposing the Japanese invasion and defending the nation, arguing that it was acceptable to temporarily renounce vows against killing, or that killing was justifiable if it was to defend the lives of sentient beings.[17] All of them saw Buddhism as able to save China from a moment of national crisis—either the domination of the crumbling Qing dynasty; social decline; intellectual and cultural instability; or the warlordism, Japanese invasion, and civil war that ravaged the nation until 1949.

Even with these examples in mind, we are still no closer to understanding why the monastics in 1981, who were supposed to renounce worldly affairs, would promote nationalism or assert conceptual unity between Buddhism and secular politics. In reality, the question is probably more complex than this, because the KMT was not just a political party. According to its own narrative, it was the protector and promoter of Chinese culture that the Communists were destroying on the mainland. And to be sure, under Chiang Kai-shek, the government saw itself as representing all of China on the world stage. After all, the ROC occupied the China seat at the United Nations until it was replaced by the PRC in 1971, and Chiang planned to eventually retake the mainland by military force. Gestures towards Chinese cultural values were therefore not politically empty—by virtue of their connection to the KMT, they were bound up in the party's conception of Chinese nationhood and identity.

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14   Chan Sin-wai, *Buddhism in Late Ch'ing Political Thought* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1985).
15   Hao Chang, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning, 1890-1911* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).
16   Xue Yu, "From Rejection of Buddhism to Advocacy of Buddhism," *Chinese Studies in History*, 46:3 (2013), 7-27; Gregory Adam Scott, "The Buddhist Nationalism of Dai Jitao," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 39:1 (2011), 55-81; Don A. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); see also Xue Yu, *Buddhism, War and Nationalism: Chinese Monks in the Struggle Against Japanese Aggressions*, 1931-1945 (New York: Routledge, 2005).
17   See chapter 2 of Xue, *Buddhism, War and Nationalism.*

Culture, politics and the nation have also been closely related in recent Chinese history. For scholars such as James Harrison, in pre-modern China, identity in fact derived from "culturalism" rather than any political affinity.[18] Being "Chinese" was therefore open to anybody who partook in the Confucian culture. This perspective complemented the imperial project, enabling emperors to rule over a vast, diverse empire and ensure ideological unity. But with China's transition to the Westphalian model of statehood after 1911, culturalism gave way to nationalism. With this change in how "China" was conceived, one could express loyalty to the nation while critiquing its culture since the two were now seen as related, but separate.[19] Joseph Levenson explains that Chinese nationalism resulted from an "intellectual alienation from traditional Chinese culture,"[20] which intellectuals blamed for China's fall from great power status. Intellectuals subsequently grappled with which aspects of Chinese tradition should be retained, and which should be rejected, if there were to be a national rejuvenation.

The "culturalism to nationalism thesis" has an heuristic appeal, but it is not without its detractors. James Townsend notes that in reality, there was no clear distinction between culturalism and nationalism. His observation reminds us that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "contrary to the thrust of the thesis, culturalism could co-exist with other ideas about state and nation, could lend support in modern times to both state and ethnic nationalism, and hence could retain some influence on Chinese nationalism down to the present."[21] We can say the same for republican China; Sun promoted a form of Chinese nationalism devoted to bringing about the end of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911)—a dynasty presided over by the non-Han Manchus.[22] His nationalism was therefore tied up with notions of culture and ethnicity.[23] And Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975)—Sun's ideological heir and leader of the ROC between 1928 and 1975—promoted Chinese nationalism alongside Confucianism.[24]

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18   James Harrison, *Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Hunter College of the City of New York, Research Institute on Modern Asia, New York, n.d).

19   Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: The Problem of Intellectual Continuity, Vol. 1 of 3* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), 98.

20   Ibid., 95

21   James Townsend, "Chinese Nationalism," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 27 (January, 1992): 123-124.

22   Schell and DeLury, *Wealth and Power*, 123.

23   Ibid., 131.

24   Ibid., 182-187.

The KMT's cultural projects during the republican era, and later in Taiwan, reflected its particular cultural vision. In *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies*, Cheng-tian Kuo argues that

> The political and religious anarchy in the early Republican era contributed to the rise of a new state religion, called "Chinese nationalism". China became the new god above all other gods (Buddha, Confucius, Laozi, Jehovah, Allah, Mother of No Birth, and others). The Chinese state officials and intellectuals became the greatest prophets and priests among all religious clergy, although they were free to take on other religious identities. All other religions were supposed to serve this supreme god and obey the new political revelations of its prophets and priests.[25]

Such was the context—one of "asymmetrical religion-state relations"[26]—in which Buddhists, Christians and other religious groups carried out their own forms of religious practice. That is, one in which the state clearly held the balance of power in the emerging church-state relationship.

After the civil war, the KMT continued to promote Chinese nationalism in Taiwan. But in time, Taiwanese nationalism came to compete with the KMT's Chinese nationalism. Martial law ended in 1987, and the ensuing democratization meant that "various religious groups are no longer subject to the guidance of Chinese nationalism nor the strong state."[27] The reconsideration of what it means to be Taiwanese, rather than simply "Chinese," meant that different conceptions of identity developed. Today, Kuo argues that a nascent civil religion has emerged in Taiwan—one that "bestows godly status to universal human rights and democracy rather than Taiwanese nationalism or Chinese patriotism."[28] This has, in turn, been a powerful influence on religion in Taiwan over the last several decades.[29]

Meanwhile, Edmund Frettingham and Yih-Jye Hwang have observed that while modernization is normally associated with a division between religion and national identity, in Taiwan, "religious traditions have been shaped by the same impulses towards culturally authentic modernity that

25   Cheng-tian Kuo, "Introduction: Religion, State, and Religious Nationalism in Chinese Societies," in *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies*, ed. Cheng-tian Kuo (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 23.
26   Ibid., 27.
27   Ibid., 28.
28   Ibid., 33.
29   Ibid., 33-34.

animate nationalist projects."[30] In the case of the Buddhist figures to be discussed here, some of them maintained a close relationship with the state through various institutions, while others, such as Yinshun and Shengyan (as we will see), had close, tense encounters with state authorities. These relationships and pressures created a normalizing influence that supported the nationalist project at the elite religious level.

Given that BAROC served as an interface between the government and Taiwanese Buddhism on the ground, we would therefore expect representatives to cite an affinity not only between Buddhism and KMT thought, but also Chinese (primarily Confucian) culture. And in 1981, other speakers did just this.

The prolific writer and lecturer on Buddhism and Chinese philosophy, Zhang Tingrong, for example, said that

> the Father of the Nation's [Sun Yat-sen's] Three Principles of the People inherits Chinese culture and Confucian orthodoxy. It is broad and extensive, and blends the virtues and wisdom of a fine culture. Mahayana Buddhist culture has existed in China for 2,000 years. Inseparable, like water mixed with milk, it has combined with mainstream Confucian and Mencian culture, and the habits and lives of the Chinese people.[31]

Meanwhile, the Buddhist layman Wen Genghe stated that Buddhism "has influenced our culture and way of life," and that the teachings of ancient Chinese sage kings and philosophers, such as "Yao, Shun, Wen, Wu, the Duke of Zhou, and Confucius, not only are the same as what the Father of the Nation said, but are a line of Confucian orthodoxy that is continued forth by the Three Principles of the People."[32] Zhang and Wen thus linked Buddhism not only to the progenitors of Confucian thought, but directly to Sun Yat-sen and his ideology.

At the same conference, then, we encounter multiple kinds of Buddhists—Buddhists as patriots, and Buddhists as cultural loyalists. These comments

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30   Edmund Frettingham and Yih-Jye Hwang, "Religion and National Identity in Taiwan: State Formation and Moral Sensibilities," in *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies*, ed. Cheng-tian Kuo (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 367.

31   Zhang Tingrong, "Fahui Fojiao wu tezhi yi zengqiang sanminzhuyi tongyi Zhongguo wu zhong Liliang," in *Fofa yu xiangguan zhengzhi sixiang lunji*, ed. Cheng Wenxi (Taipei: Tianhua chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1981), 85. Mencius (371-289 BCE) was the most important Confucian after Confucius himself.

32   Wen Genghe, "Shijian Fofa jiushi shijian datong lixiang," in *Fofa yu xiangguan zhengzhi sixiang lunji*, ed. Cheng Wenxi (Taipei: Tianhua chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1981), 22.

are emblematic of a decades-long process of Buddhist identity-formation within a political context dominated by the KMT. After half a century in the Japanese empire, being returned to China in 1945, and then becoming the last bastion of the ROC after Chiang's loss to the Communists in 1949, Taiwan has a complex history of identity. Mark Harrison has shown how the KMT sought to exert control over this, aiming to "naturalize notions like a singular coherence to Chinese identity and 5,000 years of continuous history,"[33] teaching Chinese identity through the education system and military. We can perhaps see the fruits of this identity-building project in the above speeches, made by figures associated with BAROC, itself an interface between the state and temples. But with the US-China détente in 1972, as Harrison writes, and "without the external reference of cold war geopolitics … the rhetoric of anti-Communism, struggle, and hope for revival became more and more hollow." And following this decline of KMT ideology,

> alternative expressions of Chinese nationalism filled the void left by its increasing hollowness. A new generation was emerging at the same time as these broad geopolitical changes were occurring. Its members were the product of twenty years of economic development and of a broadening of the demographic base of education. By 1970, this generation of younger Taiwanese found themselves in schools, universities, and the armed forces reciting KMT ideology. But precisely as the meaning of KMT rhetoric evaporated, those in a position to perceive its emptiness immediately sought to fill the social vacuum with a different language, one that was legitimized in ways alternative to those of the KMT, and through which they could sustain the meaning of the nation and of their place in it.[34]

Harrison argues that identity in Taiwan "does not simply have a location and Taiwanese identity is as much nowhere as everywhere."[35] And yet, identity itself is not an empty construct; as we have seen, it can encompass political, cultural, and religious elements; it is a useful concept that can help us understand why the BAROC speakers, even in 1981, claimed Sun's thought to have Buddhist, rather than Christian, leanings, and why they were so intent on displaying their cultural and political cache. And as Harrison

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33   Mark Harrison, *Legitimacy, Meaning and Knowledge in the Making of Taiwanese Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 99.
34   Ibid., 117.
35   Mark Harrison, "Where is Taiwanese Identity?" in *The Margins of Becoming: Identity and Culture in Taiwan*, 241-253, ed. Carsten Storm and Mark Harrison (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 248.

makes clear, notions of identity do not emerge from a vacuum—instead, they exist in a complex relationship with the environment and other actors in it.

Since a repertoire of politically-charged values proliferated under the KMT, it is not the case that one configuration was possible when identifying with the party or its values. Moreover, identity itself is not fixed or static. As Craig Calhoun has written, essentialist approaches to identity posit rigid categories that do not allow for fluidity,[36] but recent work on identity postulates that "as lived, identity is always project, not settled accomplishment; though various external ascriptions or recognitions may be fixed and timeless."[37] Bearing in mind the malleability and contextual-embeddedness of identity, it becomes possible to see how varieties of Buddhist identity could incorporate cultural, nationalist and "modern" elements among different actors across the ROC's history.

The multi-dimensionality of Buddhist identity in the ROC was a product of the engagement it had with different actors on the religious and socio-political landscape, since identity-formation occurs through interaction—something that scholars such as George H. Mead and Erving Goffman have dealt with in their now-classic studies. For Mead, "the transformation of the biologic individual to the minded organism or self takes place ... through the agency of language" and occurs in interactive contexts.[38] And for Goffman, identity is not only contextual but also performative, because on the basis of "setting, appearance, and manner" we project desired identities to other social actors.[39]

Other scholars have shown us that identity is constructed discursively.[40] This is affirmed by Stuart Hall, who points out that identities are "never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions."[41] He explains that since

> identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional

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36   See Craig Calhoun, "Social Theory and the Politics of Identity," in *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity,* ed. Craig Calhoun (Oxford, Blackwell: 1994).

37   Ibid., 27.

38   Charles W. Morris, "Introduction," in George H. Mead, *Mind, Self & Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), xx.

39   Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1990), 39.

40   Bethan Benwell and Elizabeth Stokoe, *Discourse and Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 29.

41   Stuart Hall, "Who Needs 'Identity'?", in *Identity: A Reader*, ed. Paul Du Gay, Jessica Evans and Peter Redman (London, Sage: 2000), 17.

sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific
enunciative strategies. ... Moreover, they emerge within the play of specific
modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of
difference and exclusion ...[42]

Identities may not be fixed and interminable, but they take shape in relation
to frameworks of normativity and the power they embody.[43]

From where do these frameworks of normativity, and power, derive? Ac-
cording to Foucault, "each society has its régime of truth, its 'general politics'
of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function
as true."[44] A truth regime is an expression of power precisely because without
the institutional capacity to discipline, or the disciplinary conventions of
truth, truth itself cannot be established as such. Looking at Taiwan, we find a
clear example of this in the martial law period. Normative truth (concerning
the culture and politics related to the party-state) was promoted through
official state channels, while counter-truths were censored by government
departments. To actively oppose this meant risking arrest and punishment.
Discursive expressions of identity, in 1981 and in the decades before, therefore
unfolded against a background of the KMT's own particular presentation
of what the nation was and what Chinese culture meant.

While the dynamics of identity-formation can be understood in this
way—that is, as being multi-dimensional, contingent upon interaction,
and formed within frameworks of normativity and power, we are still no
closer to understanding the actual motives of Buddhists in 1981. Why would
they articulate such an identity—one that aligned them with the KMT's
worldly, secular values and cultural vision—and Sun Yat-sen, who was
a Christian? To answer this question, we need to situate Buddhism on
China's political, cultural and religious landscapes during the decades
prior to the conference. In particular, we must consider the emergence of
the narrative of modernity, and how this impacted discussions of religion
by establishing new frameworks of normativity. Following on from this,
we must consider the role of Christianity as a model of normative modern
religiosity, in competition and in dialogue with Christianity.

But first, we need to gain some background knowledge—about Buddhism
and its place in China's broader religious world, and about the historical

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42   Ibid.
43   Ibid., 23-24.
44   Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed.
Colin Gordon (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), 131.

reception of Christianity in China. This will prepare us for the discussion that follows, but will also provide another example of how Chinese Buddhists framed their identity in response to interactions with non-Buddhists. Our coverage of this history will not only provide us with necessary contextual information; it will also demonstrate that the twentieth-century was not the first time Buddhist identity and self-representation emerged as an adaptation to external, non-Buddhist frameworks of truth and normativity.

The three teachings

After its arrival in the first century from the Indic cultural sphere, Buddhism interacted with China's two main religico-philosophical traditions: Confucianism and Daoism. In time, these traditions were seen as broadly compatible, forming a triad called the "three teachings" (or *sanjiao*, in Chinese). Stephen Teiser provides an example of how this was conceived with the scholar Li Shiqian (523-588), who compared "the three traditions to significant heavenly bodies, suggesting that although they remain separate, they also coexist as equally indispensable phenomena of the natural world."[45] Even though, as Joachim Gentz notes, such conceptions ascribed primacy to one tradition or another,[46] they indicated a recognition of the place of each within a larger system. Such comments indicate how Buddhists were able to successfully integrate into a broader framework of normativity by showing that they did not conflict with pre-existing values and attitudes.

The three teachings did not, and do not, account for the totality of Chinese religion—popular religion expanded beyond these to include magical practices, the veneration of different deities, spirit-writing, as well as oral and textual traditions that vary across communities.[47] But because Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism provided so much conceptual material to these traditions; and because the three teachings are most relevant to the discussion at hand, we will focus on them here.

The first we will consider is Confucianism. Confucius (551-479 BCE) himself was responsible for laying the foundation of China's perennial system of civic ethics, which, at their most fundamental level, teach that

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45   Stephen F. Teiser, "The Spirits of Chinese Religion," in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3.

46   See Joachim Gentz, "Religious Diversity in Three Teachings Discourses," in *Religious Diversity in Chinese Thought*, ed. Perry Schmidt-Leukel and Joachim Gentz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

47   See Tesier, "The Spirits of Chinese Religion," 21.

human life should be ordered according to normative standards and forms of behavior, the performance of which generates virtue. According to this view, social order would be achieved through the regulation of relations between people who performed different social roles (those of friends, siblings, husbands and wives, rulers and ministers, and parents with their children).[48] Meanwhile, Confucians upheld filial piety (*xiao*) as underpinning notions of what it meant to be civilized. As we will see in the next chapter, questions around filiality—or the roles and duties of children and parents—became important in the discussion that unfolded between Buddhists and Christians, as it was also considered a defining feature of what it meant to be "Chinese."

We can understand how individual identities and responsibilities contributed to Confucian governance by consulting the *Great Learning* (*Daxue*)—a key fifth to third century BCE Confucian text. This taught that

> the ancients who wanted to manifest their bright virtue to all in the world first governed well their own states. Wanting to govern well their states, they first harmonized their own clans. Wanting to harmonize their own clan, they first cultivated themselves. Wanting to cultivate themselves, they first corrected their minds. Wanting to correct their minds, they first made their wills sincere. Wanting to make their wills sincere, they first extended their knowledge.[49]

Confucianism, in this construct, links the individual to the state through the family and society. At each level, successful regulation according to ethical and behavioral standards contributed to stability and order in the next.

But Confucianism was, and is, not simply a device for social control; it also taught people how to become morally exemplary individuals. The Confucian thinker, Mencius, explained that human nature was fundamentally good—but that this goodness had to be cultivated. While others suggested that human nature was fundamentally selfish, the Mencian view gained precedence in China, and thus we might say that Confucianism is a total system of moral, behavioral and political standards and ideals. Following on from this, Dong Zhongshu (179-104 BCE)—whose reading of Confucianism stressed strong centralized government—successfully

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48   On this, see Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).
49   Charles A. Muller (trans.), *The Great Learning*, 2013. Available at http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/greatlearning.html (accessed June 7, 2016).

lobbied for Confucian texts to become the only philosophical treatises to be studied at the imperial academy, further cementing their influence.[50] Confucianism has been influential in Chinese politics since then, and we can see elements of Confucian loyalty extended to the state in the KMT's conception of government.

One example of this concerns the party's treatment of the "Great Unity" (*datong*). Originally, the Great Unity was a concept proposed in the second to third century BCE text, *Book of Rites* (*Liji*). It described an idealized, well-ordered, peaceful, virtuous society; this provided inspiration for Sun Yat-sen, who conceived of his three principles as underpinning the establishment of a modern *datong*.[51] Chiang Kai-shek likewise praised the Great Unity, taking it as an ideal for China's future economic development.[52] Clearly, then, this ancient utopia occupied a unique place in KMT theory. Establishing continuity between KMT thought and China's Confucian past was a key legitimizing strategy for the government. The aspiration towards the Great Unity remains in the national anthem of the ROC today.[53]

Confucianism has traditionally incorporated the veneration of deceased ancestors, which became problematic for Christians seeking to convert followers in China. These ancestors required sustenance in the form of sacrifice; to be unfilial towards one's ancestors was profoundly inhuman and it was therefore an essential part of Chinese religiosity. In the early eighteenth century, ancestor veneration became an obstacle to the continued promotion of Christianity in China by the Catholic priesthood, since Rome regarded this practice as pagan. It was only in 1939 that the Church finally decreed that the veneration of ancestors was an expression of respect, that it had lost its religious connotations and that it was civic in nature.

In many ways, the second tradition we will consider, Daoism (sometimes also romanized as "Taoism"), is fundamentally different to Confucianism. It is unlikely that the first Daoist thinker, Laozi (fl. 6th century BCE), actually existed. Rather, the text attributed to him, the *The Classic of the Way and Virtue* (*Daodejing*—differing versions of which date to at least the 3rd century BCE)—probably stems from a broad community of teachers. Unlike

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50   See Daniel L. Overmyer, "Chinese Religion," in *The Religious Traditions of Asia: Religion, History and Culture*, ed. Joseph Kitagawa (London: Routledge, 2002), 271.

51   See Bart Dessein, "Yearning for the Lost Paradise: The 'Great Unity' (*datong*) and its Philosophical Interpretations," *Asian Studies* 5: 1 (2017): 83-102.

52   Chiang Kai-shek, *China's Destiny and Chinese Economic Theory* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1947), 288-292.

53   See Sun Yat-sen, "National Anthem," Office of the President of the Republic of China (Taiwan), available at: https://english.president.gov.tw/Page/97 (accessed April 17, 2019).

the clear standards of morality and behavior found in Confucianism, *The Classic of Way and Virtue* talks about the "Way" (Dao) being unknowable, and explains that adaptation to the processual unfolding of reality can yield personal benefit. The next most important Daoist thinker after the putative Laozi, Zhuangzi (369-286 BCE), taught that standards such as Confucius's were human constructs, did not reflect nature, and should not be adhered to unquestioningly. Instead, he actively flaunted tradition and taught a doctrine of opposites, finding truth in the space between juxtapositions.

Laozi and Zhuangzi are representative of what we call "philosophical Daoism". But by the fourth century, Daoism had "a literate and self-perpetuating priesthood, a pantheon of celestial deities, complex rituals, and revealed scriptures in classical Chinese."[54] A key focus of this religious form of Daoism was the pursuit of longevity and immortality through dietary, alchemical, meditative and physical techniques aimed at replenishing the body's *qi*, or vital energy. Although these practices are different to those found in Buddhism, Daoist cultivation led to early practitioners taking an interest in Buddhism.[55]

Buddhism shares some similarities with Confucianism and Daoism, but there are also many differences. Like Christianity, it originated outside the Chinese cultural sphere. The Buddha himself was born in the sixth century BCE in Lumbinī, in modern-day Nepal. The body of doctrine that emerged from his teachings centers on becoming "enlightened," or understanding the world in its true and correct totality. This realization leads to liberation from the continuous cycle of rebirths known as "samsara." Such a state, known as "nirvana," is the absence of the dissatisfaction and suffering which characterizes samsara.

Two broad kinds of Buddhism proliferate in the world today: Hinayana and Mahayana.[56] (We have already heard "Mahayana Buddhism" referred to at the 1981 conference.) The first kind, which means "small vehicle" in the Buddhist liturgical language of Sanskrit, and which is pejoratively named as such by adherents of Mahayana, predominates in Sri Lanka and South-East Asia. The second kind, which emerged by the first century and means "great vehicle," predominates in Central and East Asia. Mahayana Buddhists accept a greater number of canonical texts than Hinayana Buddhists do; one the most important features of these is the expanded role of the "bodhisattva"—a

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54   Overmyer, "Chinese Religion," 279.
55   See Erik Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism: A Survey of Scriptural Evidence," *T'oung Pao Second Series* 66:1/3 (1980): 84-147.
56   Tibetan Buddhism, or Vajrayana, is sometimes considered a third vehicle.

being who delays full enlightenment in order to help others reach that state. The Mahayana pantheon also includes an expanded cosmos, replete with innumerable buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Both Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhists nominally take refuge in the "Three Jewels": the Buddha, the "Dharma" and the "sangha." (Few Chinese adherents, though, actually go through a ceremony to do this.) The Buddha features among the so-called "jewels" because his enlightenment serves as evidence that the cycle of reincarnation can be brought to an end. Meanwhile, his doctrine—the Dharma—provides the teachings necessary to achieve enlightenment. At the most basic level, this consists of the eightfold path, which includes right views, thoughts, speech, actions, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration.[57] Finally, the sangha, or community of Buddhists, provides a network of mutually supportive followers. In China, monastics (who are celibate and vegetarian), renounce all family ties and devote themselves to practice, providing ceremonial and teaching services to lay-Buddhists on whom they depend for alms.

Mahayana Buddhism underwent substantial development in China after it started arriving there in the first century. But tension with Confucians and Daoists ensued in the centuries that followed. Mario Poceski notes regarding the intellectual climate following Buddhism's introduction that

> in the eyes of many Chinese ideologues and intellectuals, their culture was glorious and complete. It also had distinguished sages such as Confucius and Laozi, who in ancient times have revealed the essential patterns of proper human behavior and have plumbed the timeless mysteries of the Dao. Therefore, it looked unseemly for their countryman to worship an odd foreign deity, or to follow strange customs imported from distant lands.[58]

Besides accusations of general corruption, philosophers and members of the Chinese literati also charged Buddhism with being unsuited to China's socio-political context, and the monastery as being a drain on economic resources. In contrast, Buddhists argued that there was coherence between their tradition, and Daoist and Confucian ideas.[59] Tension also spilled over

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57   See Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, s.v. "eightfold correct path". Available at http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%85%AB%E6%AD%A3%E9%81%93 (accessed June 4, 2016).
58   Mario Poceski, "Buddhism in Chinese History," in *Wiley Blackwell Companion to East and Inner Asian Buddhism*, ed. Mario Poceski (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 45.
59   See chapter 5 of E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959).

into the political arena. The Northern Wei tried to abolish Buddhism in 446-452, and the Northern Chou ordered monks to return to lay-life in 574-577.[60] Along with other foreign religions, Buddhism underwent a severe persecution in China between 843 and 845 at the hands of the Daoist emperor Wuzong (814-846).[61]

Why would such tensions exist? Confucians charged that Buddhism was antithetical to values such as filial piety, seeking instead to transcend the conventional world and society. For example, monastics did not produce male heirs to continue the family line—an egregious Confucian sin. In tracts such as the second-to-fifth century text, *Master Mou's Treatise on Resolving the Doubts* (*Mouzi lihuo lun*), Buddhists argued their tradition enabled disciples to present a means of ultimate liberation to their parents—a supreme act of filial piety.[62] And while Daoists saw similarities between their tradition and Buddhism, even regarding it as a doctrine that had been taught by Laozi himself (in the guise of the Buddha) in India, there was, of course, a difference: Buddhists aimed at escaping the cycle of rebirths, and key Daoist aim was to extend life, even attaining immortality. However, meditative, conceptual, and cosmological similarities meant that Buddhism and Daoism found a way to coexist within the three teachings construct.

By the Tang dynasty (618-907), Buddhism had become a key influence on Chinese intellectual and artistic life. In the Song (960-1279), Confucian philosophers were deeply influenced by Buddhist ideas; neo-Confucianism subsequently became a mainstay of Chinese religico-philosophical life, particularly among literate elites.[63] And Buddhism itself remained important, despite the tensions surrounding its presence in China and its compatibility with native Chinese traditions, in the centuries that ensued.

There are two Buddhist traditions, in particular, that we need to consider in order to understand our discussion in later chapters: Pure Land, and Chan. The first centers on paradisiacal realms located in distant regions of the Buddhist cosmos, which various buddhas have purified of negative karma by fulfilling benevolent vows. The Pure Lands themselves are supremely suited to Buddhist practice, since none of the earthly afflictions hindering progress on the path to enlightenment can be found there. In China, the focus of Pure Land belief is the land of Sukhāvatī, over which the Buddha

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60　Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 199.

61　Overmyer, "Chinese Religion," 288.

62　Erik J. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2007), 13-15.

63　Overmyer, Chinese Religion," 290-291.

Amitābha presides. Practitioners aim for rebirth in this realm, focusing their practice on the recitation of his name.[64]

Meanwhile, Chan (or Zen, in Japanese) focuses on meditation, in which the mind is stilled so as to gain direct insight into reality. Tradition holds that the Indian monastic Bodhidharma (b. 5th century) brought this practice to China, and later, according to an account found in the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* (*Liu zu tan jing*; composed in the 9th century), a debate emerged between two monastics—Shenxiu (606-706) and Huineng (638-713), each of whom represented a different approach to enlightenment. Huineng apparently won this debate and became the sixth patriarch of Chan, establishing the idea that one could become instantaneously enlightened as orthodox. Later still, two important schools of Chan emerged; the Linji school employed riddles aimed at disrupting conventional thought, and the Caodong school employed sitting meditation as a way of gaining "silent illumination."[65] The Buddhist writers we will examine later emerged from a background in which these ideas were dominant—and later on, we will see what role they played in their discussions with Christians.

Buddhism and Christianity in China

In sum, although tensions existed around the presence of Buddhism in China, it eventually came to be broadly accepted as a part of the Chinese religious landscape. Buddhist writers paid homage to Confucian and Daoist ideas, also influencing these two traditions. While this process of adaptation and development was underway, Nestorian Christians entered the Chinese world from the Sassanian Empire (224-636).[66] Yet the context surrounding Christianity

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64   Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, s.v. "forty-eight vows". Available at: http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%9B%9B%E5%8D%81%E5%85%AB%E9%A1%98 (accessed June 4, 2016). On Chinese Pure Land thought, see Charles B. Jones, "The Pure Land in the History of Chinese Buddhism," in *The Buddhist World*, ed. John Powers (London: Routledge, 2015); David W. Chappell, "The Formation of the Pure Land Movement in China: Tao-ch'o and Shan-tao," in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, ed. James Foard, Michael Solomon and Richard Payne (Berkeley: Regents of the University of California, 1996), 162.

65   For an overview of Chan, see Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History. Volume 1: India and China*, trans. James Heisig and P. Knitter (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2005).

66   Nestorius (381?-451?), the bishop of Constantinople, held Jesus had a dual nature: he was both a man, and the son of God. This position differed from that arrived at by the councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381)—that these divine and human aspects existed in a perfect union. Nestorius was exiled to Egypt in 436, but a school formed around his teachings in the fifth century in Edessa.

in China was quite different to the Buddhist experience. While Buddhism was becoming increasingly sinified, the Nestorian presence remained mostly foreign. And when the emperor closed foreign religious institutions in 845, there was no Chinese community to maintain Nestorian Christianity, leading to its disappearance. Although Christianity later returned to China with the expansion of the Mongolian Yuan dynasty (1260-1368), Nestorians lost contact with westward Christians when the Mongols embraced Islam.

During the Yuan, Christianity again gained a foothold in China when the Franciscan monk Giovanni da Montecorvino established a church in Beijing in 1294. Even so, it was nearly three centuries before a concerted Catholic effort to spread the gospel in China would commence. In 1583, the Italian Jesuits Michele Ruggieri and Matteo Ricci arrived in the southern Chinese city of Zhaoqing; eager to show their respect for Chinese tradition, they shaved their heads and dressed as Buddhist monks. They soon learned that it was Confucians, rather than Buddhists, who were held in most respect and formed the political and philosophical elite. Ricci and his colleagues therefore changed tack and emphasized the similarities between Christianity and Confucianism.[67] And they interpreted Confucian rituals as civic rather than religious in nature (and hence as compatible with Christianity).[68] Rome later forbade Chinese Christians from practicing rites venerating ancestors in 1704—a ban reinforced by Benedict XIV in 1742.[69] In response, in 1724, the emperor proscribed Christianity, and missionary efforts stalled until after China's defeat in the Opium War with Britain in 1842.

Despite the liberal approach of Jesuit missionaries to proselytization in the early seventeenth century, and some initial admiration from the literati, Christianity had already begun provoking strong critiques from Buddhists and Confucians. According to Paul A. Cohen, this opposition was founded in two notions—the "heterodox" (*xiejiao*) and "orthodox" (*zhengjiao*)—terms that were used to label teachings that were "subversive of the political and social status quo."[70] The accusation was that Christianity was an alien tradition

67   This lead to critiques from some members of the literati—the Buddhist Ouyi Zhixu, for example, criticized their use of the Confucian term for "Heaven"—*Tian*—as a translation for "God," thus implying that Confucianism embodied an ancient monotheism. See Charles Jones, "Pi xie ji: Collected Refutations of Heterodoxy by Ouyi Zhixu, 1599–1655," *Pacific World Journal* (*Third Series*) 11 (Fall, 2009), 352.
68   Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 24.
69   They did, however, recognize them as secular and permit them in 1939.
70   Paul A. Cohen, *China and Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Antiforeignism, 1860-1870* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 19.

which disrupted the traditional religico-philosophical order founded in the teachings of past Chinese sages,[71] leading to attacks that were sufficiently consistent and continuous to represent a "tradition" of Chinese anti-Christian thought. This "proved a major influence on, as well as source for, the anti-Christian attitudes of the nineteenth-century Chinese intellectual";[72] as we shall see, the impact of this tradition carried forth into the twentieth century.

We can get a sense of this "tradition" by considering a collection of Buddhist and Confucian criticisms of Christianity called the *Record of Refutations against Heterodoxy* (*Poxie ji*), which was published in 1640. The works in this compilation included different kinds of texts—those based in "reason and common sense," in which authors tried to demonstrate that Christianity was nonsensical and contradicted itself; those which employed a skeptical approach, citing a lack of "proof" for Christian claims;[73] and those which charged Christians with violating the Ming legal code,[74] and established Chinese tradition.[75] Later texts aimed at discrediting Christianity by presenting it as counter to Chinese morality.

In 1643, the Buddhist monk Ouyi Zhixu (1599 – 1655) published a notable attack on Jesuits, mainly from the perspective of Confucianism.[76] For example, he wrote that "we Confucians say that the sagehood of Yao and Shun [ancient sage kings venerated by Confucians—also referenced, as we have seen, in 1981] was not able to cover their sons' evil. … But now that the Lord of Heaven [God] is able to redeem men's faults, people can do all the evil they please and wait for the Lord of Heaven to redeem them in his mercy."[77] Ouyi appealed to Chinese tradition by citing the Confucian sage-kings from China's distant, mythologized past as moral exemplars. He also levelled skeptical arguments against Christianity. For example, "Now let us suppose that prior to the division of Heaven and Earth there was one who was most spiritual and holy called the Lord of Heaven. Such a being would have the power to govern and there would be no disorder; he would be good and there would be no evil."[78] In both examples, Confucian notions of morality and governance

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71   Ibid., 58-60.

72   Paul A. Cohen, "The Anti-Christian Tradition in China," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 20:2 (1961): 170.

73   Cohen, *China and Christianity*, 22.

74   Ibid., 24.

75   Ibid., 23.

76   See Beverley Foulks, "Duplicitous Thieves: Ouyi Zhixu's Criticism of Jesuit Missionaries in Late Imperial China," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 21 (2008): 55-75.

77   Jones, "Pi xie ji," 12.

78   Ibid., 27-28. See Jones's explanation on page 28.

formed the standard against which Christianity was to be judged. According to this logic, Christianity could not be accepted because it ran counter to the teachings of China's past sages and Confucian exemplars—unlike Buddhism.

Christianity also came to be associated with violence and imperialism. The Treaty of Nanjing, signed after China's loss to Britain in the Opium War in 1842, allowed missionaries to operate in treaty ports; its defeat in the Arrow War against Britain and France in 1860 allowed them to once again travel in China's interior. In other words, the right of missionaries to proselytize had resulted from victory in war. Around this time, China also faced a threat from the Taiping Rebellion. This arose when Hong Xiuquan (1814 – 1864), who, after repeated failed attempts to pass the civil service exam, concluded he was Jesus's younger brother, established his own "kingdom" in southern China. With its capital in Nanjing, and replete with a system of government and army, 20-30 million people perished in the ensuing war with the Qing state. According to Cohen, hostility towards Christianity subsequently grew due to its "identification with the Taiping rebellion, its association with the use of foreign force and gunboat diplomacy, [and] the interference of some missionaries in Chinese administrative affairs".[79]

This resentment found expression in the 1900 Boxer uprising. The Boxers (*Yihetuan*) were members of a religious movement dedicated to driving foreigners and Christians out of China; to help them achieve this aim, they engaged in physical exercises they believed would grant them supernatural abilities. After killing an unknown number of Chinese Christians, missionaries and their families, they surrounded foreigners and Chinese Christians in Beijing's Legation Quarter (where the embassies were located) and besieged them for almost two months. The siege ended only when the Boxers were defeated by the combined response of seven Western powers and Japan—a force consisting of 20,000 troops.

New intellectual and political responses

While Buddhists had previously adapted to China's Confucian climate, in the twentieth century, the discourse of modernity dominated intellectual and political landscapes. The political and intellectual acceptance of this discourse increasingly demanded adaptation, or at least a response, from all religions. Christianity was a key vector for the discourse of Western modernity in China, leading Buddhists later in Taiwan to recognize an association between the two.

79　Cohen, "The Anti-Christian Tradition in China," 169.

As Thoralf Klein has pointed out, from the mid-nineteenth century Christian missionaries, who "agreed that secular activities could usefully supplement direct evangelization,"[80] published translations of Western secular materials, as well as opened schools, universities and hospitals.[81] Whether religion could, and should, be socially useful was a question emerging from China's discourse on modernization. Intellectuals—including Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909) and Kang Youwei (1858-1927) in 1898—suggested transforming temples into schools.[82] In the following years, local officials devoted temples to a range of non-religious purposes, which included (in addition to schools) "police stations, barracks, post offices, and new local administrations."[83] According to the scholar of Chinese religion, Vincent Goossaert, under the Qing and republican governments "probably more than half of the million Chinese temples that existed in 1898 were emptied of all religious equipment and activity."[84]

It was therefore in the interest of Buddhists to demonstrate their capacity to partake in this modernization drive; and so in coming decades, some would model their social activities on Christian examples.[85] But the crux of the problem was whether Buddhism could be considered a religion equal to Christianity, with its bureaucratic framework and social activities. Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer write that of particular importance was

> the national religious association. This particular form of organization, as it appeared in 1912 and developed throughout the rest of the century, indigenized Christian models of clerical training, community organization, confessional identification, and social engagement. In the Republican context in which a "religion," to be recognized by the state and protected by law, had to conform to the Christian-secular model, Chinese traditions, whether Confucian, Buddhist, or Taoist, had to reinvent themselves.[86]

80   Thoralf Klein, "Christian Mission and the Internationalization of China, 1830-1950," in *Trans-Pacific Interactions: The United States and China, 1880-1950*, ed. Vanessa Künnemann and Ruth Mayer (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 145.

81   Ibid., 141-160.

82   Vincent Goossaert, "Le destin de la religion chinoise au 20ème siècle," *Social Compass* 500:4 (2003), 433.

83   Ibid., 431.

84   Goossaert, "1898," 308. This figure is not limited to Buddhist temples.

85   For an overview of Buddhist activities after the Taiping Rebellion and during the early twentieth century (including Taixu's), see Raoul Birnbaum, "Buddhist China at the Century's Turn," *The China Quarterly* 174 (June, 2003): 428-438.

86   Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 74.

At the national level, then, religious professionals aimed to "eliminate superstition, ritual, and autonomous local communities" and present themselves as national, and religious (rather than superstitious) bodies.[87] But besides these national associations, "the most visible manifestation of the Christian-liberal normative model of a good religion was social action in the field of education and charity."[88] This put pressure on Buddhists to initiate activities in these areas in order to cohere with political and intellectual expectations.

Christianity's association with Western modernity lent it a special status in this regard. According to Daniel H. Bays, "in 1915 there were almost 170,000 students in mission schools (as opposed to 17,000 in 1889). In the mid-1920s the figure reached almost a quarter million."[89] And "by 1941 over 51 per cent of all hospital beds in China were in mission hospitals."[90] Christian institutions—hospitals, schools, the YMCA and so on—were therefore a principal means for Chinese people to encounter not just Christianity, but modernity itself.

Similar, non-Christian efforts were not unknown in China. Various Chinese associations had long carried out charitable work; Yu-Yue Tsu's thesis, itself published just after the fall of the Qing, and Liang Qizi's study, describe Chinese philanthropic activities carried out across a range of fronts.[91] Reports from missionaries in the late Qing and early republic thus presented a skewed picture of Chinese charity that contrasted unfavorably with Christian enterprises. However, while charitable work was encouraged and carried out privately in China, it was only in the late Ming that records of it increased, along with publishing and literacy. Philanthropists drew from Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian ideas to support their efforts; Joanna Handlin Smith provides examples of voluntary societies that performed socially useful acts such as distributing food and medical care to the needy.[92]

In addition, David Palmer and Vincent Goossaert write that in the late Qing, "Buddhist and Taoist pious societies financed, within or without monasteries,

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87　Ibid., 75.

88　Ibid., 77.

89　Daniel H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 94.

90　Kathleen L. Lodwick, "4.7. Good Works," in *Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol. 2 of 2*, ed. R. G. Tiedemann (Leiden, Brill: 2010), 431.

91　Yu-Yue Tsu, "The Spirit of Chinese Philanthropy: A Study in Mutual Aid," doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 1912; Liang Qizi, *Shishan yu jiaohua: Ming-Qing de cishan zushi* (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1997).

92　See Joanna Handlin Smith, *The Art of Doing Good: Charity in Late Ming China*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

activities such as rituals, the making of scriptures or icons, and mutual aid between members."[93] Folk religious institutions also performed social roles. A prominent example was the "Red Swastika Society"—modelled on the Red Cross (which was too readily identified with Christianity)—and founded in 1922 by a redemptive society called the Daoyuan (School of the Dao). This "ran disaster relief operations as well as schools and war hospitals, in which Chinese medicine as well as talismans and spirit-writing cures were provided."[94]

Zhang Hua has written about the influence of the Christian social gospel on Buddhism during the Republic. This included "the interpretation of teachings, organizational form, the form of denominational expression, economic sources, the status of the laity, the mode of cultivating teaching personnel, exchanges between China and abroad, especially in terms of proselytization techniques, all [of which] resulted in new changes. These changes transformed the relationship between Buddhism and society".[95] For Zhang, these developments revitalized Buddhism, which had declined after the destruction caused by the Taiping Rebellion, and suffered from a lack of organizational capacity, the illiteracy and ceremonial emphasis of the clergy, and the movement to turn temples into schools.[96] The social gospel thus formed a model for Buddhist activity beyond the monastery; Taixu (1890-1947), who we shall discuss below, is the most notable example of a monastic pursuing such social Buddhist practice. Focusing on Shanghai, Zhang Hua also discusses the charity work, study opportunities, publishing activities, radio productions and so on that arose from this context.

Nevertheless, Chinese modernizers were increasingly skeptical of religion. The 1920s, in particular, saw the rise of a major anti-Christian movement.[97] Marxist and scientistic students and intellectuals, critical

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93   Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 25.

94   Ibid., 101.

95   Zhang Hua, "20 shiji shangban ye Fojiao xuexi Jidujiao zhi xin fuxing: yi Shanghai weili," in Ji Zhe, Tian Shuijing and Wang Qiyuan (eds), *Ershi shiji Zhongguo Fojiao de liang ci fuxing*, Shanghai: Fudan Daxue chubanshe, 2016, 25. See also the following chapter in this volume, on Buddhist medical initiatives: Li Tiehua and Li Zhaojian, "Minguo shiqi dushi Fojiao yiyao cishan shiye lüeshuo," in Ji Zhe, Tian Shuijing and Wang Qiyuan (eds), *Ershi shiji Zhongguo Fojiao de liang ci fuxing*, Shanghai: Fudan Daxue chubanshe, 2016, 51-59.

96   Ibid., 26.

97   See Tatsuro Yamamoto and Sumiko Yamamoto, "II. The Anti-Christian Movement in China, 1922-1927," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 12:2 (1953): 133-147; Douglas Lancashire, "Introduction," in *Chinese Essays on Religion and Faith*, trans. Douglas Lancashire (Hong Kong: Chinese Materials Center, 1981), 6-10. See also Yip Ka-che, *Religion, Nationalism and Chinese Students: The Anti-Christian Movement of 1922-1927* (Bellingham: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University), 1980.

of Chinese tradition as a source of national weakness and backwardness, attacked Christianity as unmodern and outmoded—some also charged it with being linked to Western imperialism; saving the nation, for them, meant opposing Christianity.[98]

In 1923, this heightening anti-religious climate erupted in a textual debate over whether science or religion could provide the moral framework for a modern China.[99] "Metaphysicians" such as Zhang Junmai claimed that science did not deal with morality and therefore could not, on its own, provide moral guidance. Meanwhile, anti-religious thinkers such as the communist Chen Duxiu, or Hu Shi—a student of the American pragmatist John Dewey, along with an array of scientists, argued that science could in fact provide adequate perspectives for navigating moral life.[100]

Enter the KMT

As we can see, religion was an important locus for debates on the relationship between tradition, modernity and identity in China. And in turn, as Rebecca Nedostup has shown,[101] there was much debate among KMT intellectuals about how to actually manage religion itself. In the early years of the ROC, the government continued to insert itself in Buddhist life, including in economic matters and matters of property and temple management. For example, the 1929 "Temple Management Rules" stipulated that temples should operate facilities such as schools, libraries, hospitals and factories; and that monastics should confine their public talks to Buddhist doctrine or patriotic topics. Later that year, new regulations declared that temples should carry out philanthropic work.[102] And in 1936, all monastics were required to join the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA), which came under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior. The CBA held powers regarding monastic property and the selection of new abbots.[103] Buddhists naturally felt pressure both to inform the development of such rules. But injunctions

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98   Jessie Gregory Lutz, *Chinese Politics and Christian Missions: The Anti-Christian Movements of 1920-1928* (Notre Dame: Cross Cultural Publications, 1988).
99   Danny Wynn Ye Kwok, *Scientism in Chinese Thought 1900-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 135.
100 Ibid., 150.
101 Rebecca Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009).
102 See the appendix in Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*.
103 Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 141-43.

like these represented a clash of monastic authority and modern, secular institutions.

For Buddhists, the situation became more urgent when the Nationalists lost all of their territory on the mainland to the Communists in 1949. Concerned for the future of their tradition, monastics were soon were confronted with the dramatic rise of Christianity on the island as well. The KMT "tried hard to make the missionaries welcome,"[104] because according to Murray A. Rubinstein, it was aware that as an anti-Communist force linked to their primary benefactor, the United States, missionaries were a valuable political asset—one that also provided tangible forms of aid to the populace. American funds enabled Christians to set up schools, universities and clinics, and to provide material aid, thereby complementing the KMT's nation-building project.[105] The seeming favoritism shown towards missionaries provoked resentment among Buddhists. Meanwhile, the number of Christians continued to grow. By 1963, the island was home to 300,000 Catholics, and by 1964, 280,000 Protestants[106]—up from a total of around 70,000 Christians in 1945. Much growth came from the Presbyterian Church, which initiated a movement to double their membership between 1955 and 1965, resulting in it increasing by nearly 100,000.[107]

Some of the church growth can be explained through the particular receptivity of new arrivals from the mainland to Christianity.[108] Missionaries would later theorize that the plateauing of growth stemmed in part from an increase in Taiwan's economic prosperity, and because converts were no longer drawn to Christianity by the promise of charitable aid.[109]

Modernity, and "KMT modernity"

The success of Christianity in Taiwan during the postwar period therefore derived in part from its capacity to complement the state's efforts to establish itself in Taiwan. And we have already seen that earlier, in the republican

104 See Murray A. Rubinstein, *The Protestant Community on Modern Taiwan: Mission, Seminary, and Church* (Armonk, M.E. Sharpe, 1991), 37

105 Ibid., 33.

106 Government Information Office, *The Republic of China Yearbook 1996*, 425.

107 See Peter Chen-main Wang, "Christianity in Modern Taiwan—Struggling Over the Parth of Contextualisation," in *China and Christianity: Burdened Past, Hopeful Future*, ed. Stephan Uhalley Jr. and Xiaoxin Wu (Routledge, London, 2001), 330.

108 Rubinstein, *The Protestant Community on Modern Taiwan*, 38-40.

109 Ibid., 27-28.

period on the mainland, the provision of aid, and the promotion of modern knowledge through educational institutions founded by Christians themselves, lent Christianity an association with modernity. In turn, the "Christian normative model" informed political and social expectations about the role of religion in modern Chinese society. But what is modernity, exactly—and what did it mean in the context of the Republic?

As Matthew J. Lauzon writes, arriving at a definition is fraught with difficulty due to the varied contexts in which the term is used, but "at the most prosaic level, the words ['modernity' and 'modern'] imply simply something like 'new,' 'now,' or 'of recent invention." As a project, modernity—founded on Enlightenment thought and enacted through the nation-state—led to progress.[110] Prasenjit Duara describes the discourse of modernity unfolding in the Republic as about structuring "the world not only cognitively through the categories of rationality and science, but also by means of such values as progress and secularism, which are often inseparably entwined with the former."[111] The Chinese understanding of modernity mirrored these broad definitions, but modernity itself was viewed through a Chinese lens and reflected Chinese concerns.

Initially, modernity in the late Qing and early republican periods, where the roots of the KMT's modernity can be found, had the connotation of being Western. The question for Chinese intellectuals was therefore how to combine elements of Western modernity with Chinese tradition so as to create something that could be applied to the issues of their day. Of particular interest was the question of how the nation could attain "wealth and power," and be restored to its perceived former levels of greatness.[112] As Edmund Fung has shown, while some did call for either complete Westernization or were resolute Marxists, others combined elements of Chinese tradition with modernity. Therefore, while "it was clear to them that modernity, or modernization, meant progress, liberty and national wealth and power, and that it entailed a reevaluation of Chinese traditions against Western values,"[113] this led to many intellectuals being "liberal in one respect, con-

110   Matthew J. Lauzon, "Modernity," in *The Oxford Handbook of World History*, ed. Jerry H. Bentley (2011). Available at: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199235810.013.0005 (accessed April 20, 2018).
111   Prasenjit Duara, "Knowledge and Power in the Discourse of Modernity: The Campaigns against Popular Religion in Early Twentieth-Century China," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 50:1 (1991), 67.
112   James Reeve Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1983), 50.
113   Edmund S. K. Fung, *The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 11.

servative in another and socialist in a third, each representing a modern response to China's socio-political crisis."[114]

Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek likewise shared a complex approach to tradition and modernity. Both gestured towards different political, social and economic ideas in their conception of nationalism, livelihood, and democracy. But as David J. Lorenzo shows, Sun understood democracy almost in a Legalistic sense—that is, akin to the ancient Chinese philosophy of governance which saw law as instrumental to politics. He also believed that democracy was compatible with Confucian notions of elite governance.[115] And for Chiang Kai-shek, even more than Sun, "the teachings of Chinese philosophy" would "provide the collective spirit necessary to mold a people's will and a common good."[116] Chiang saw the people's responsibility as reforming themselves on the basis of Confucian ethics,[117] and in this formulation, democracy and the Three Principles of the People were fundamental qualities both of human nature (*renxing*),[118] the universe itself (*tianxing*), and natural order (the Dao)—concepts from Chinese philosophy.[119]

At the same time, Chiang felt that Chinese culture needed to be creatively reconstructed—that is, combined with aspects of Western modernity. He explained in his 1947 book, *China's Destiny*, that

> as to the nation's original culture, its essence is found in China's three far-reaching virtues of wisdom, benevolence, and courage, and the sincerity with which these virtues are put into practice. The teachings of Sun Yat-sen were based on China's ancient culture, and combined with this the most advanced theories of the world in order to formulate China's superior principles of national reconstruction.[120]

But he issued words of warning, too:

> In short, our citizens must become actively creative, must use their own initiative, and must transform their cold lethargy into a warm enthusiasm

114 Ibid., 16.
115 David J. Lorenzo, *Conceptions of Chinese Democracy: Reading Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, and Chiang Ching-kuo* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 11, 26.
116 Ibid., 10.
117 Ibid., 11, 118.
118 Ibid., 26.
119 Ibid., 22.
120 Chiang, *China's Destiny and Chinese Economic Theory*, 163.

for progress. In particular, they must transform their present attitude of passivity and depression into positive, determined, and daring action, and cultivate the ancient traditions of neatness, austerity, practical action, and earnest endeavor. Only then can we establish the psychology for revolutionary reconstruction.[121]

Sun and Chiang therefore advocated a specific reading of modernity that incorporated notions of science, democracy, the nation, industrialization, and marketization—all bound up in the Three Principles of the People.

But more than this, it was a Chinese modernity. It advocated hierarchy, order, and tradition. It looked to Western systems and methods, but was steeped in a romantic rendering of Chinese history and identity—looking backwards to imagined notions of national greatness, and gazing towards a hopeful future the party would take the lead in constructing. In this sense, KMT modernity had a special resonance that Western modernity lacked, providing the nation, at a time of political chaos, with a vision of national rejuvenation, and a rightful restoration of China's place in the world as a great political, economic and cultural power.

The KMT promoted its political-cultural vision in Taiwan throughout the 1950s. And its ideological conflict with the PRC escalated in 1966 when Mao launched the Cultural Revolution; in response the KMT launched its own "Cultural Renaissance Movement" (*wenhua fuxing yundong*). In 1967, the party founded the "Committee for the Revival of Chinese Culture"—which according to Paul R. Katz was "mainly responsible for promoting the KMT's vision of Chinese culture … which combined traditional Confucian values such as loyalty to the state and filial piety with doctrines created by party leaders like Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek." The Committee

enacted a number of programmes to inculcate these ideas, including 'What citizens should know about daily life [activities]' (*Guomin shenghuo xuzhi*), which focused on patriotic values and proper behavior; and 'Models for citizens' rites and ceremonies' (*Guomin liyi fanli*), which attempted to shape religious practice by stressing the importance of good manners and simple (that is, not lavish or expensive) rituals.[122]

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121 Ibid.
122 Paul R. Katz, "Religion and the State in Post-War Taiwan," *The China Quarterly* 174 (Jun., 2003): 402-403.

We can see, then, that the issues of culture and modernity were implicated in politics, and that culture itself was contested during the ideological conflict with the PRC. But did discussions of culture actually matter to Buddhists, specifically?

In fact, we find that the relationship between Buddhism and Chinese culture, including the question of how to "revive" Chinese culture, was a common topic in Buddhist magazines of the period. Shortly after the onset of the KMT's cultural renaissance, many articles capitalized on the movement to proclaim that a revitalization of Chinese culture necessarily implied that Buddhism should play a crucial role. For example, in a speech printed in the Buddhist magazine *Torch of Wisdom* (*Hui ju*), the speaker (from Zhongxing University in Taizhong) took pains to show that Buddhism was an integral part of Chinese culture—asserting its compatibility with Confucianism, and presenting Buddhism as playing a crucial role in the ROC's cultural revitalization—claiming that it would also help to form a bulwark against Communism.[123] Likewise, in the Buddhist periodical, *Buddhist Culture* (*Fojiao wenhua*), the monastic Dongchu wrote that Buddhism had enriched Chinese culture and thus should be part of the ROC's cultural renaissance.[124]

If we return to 1981, we find Buddhists venerating KMT modernity at the BAROC conference as well. Consider the famed Buddhist writer and layman, Chen Huijian's, assertion that when "the Father of the Nation [Sun Yat-sen] developed the Three Principles of the People, the basic aim was to cast aside China's old-style autocratic, dark, backward society and become an ideal country that is free, equal, stable and wealthy and which is 'of the people, for the people and by the people'."[125] His identification of Sun's thought with Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and his rejection of China's past, evinces his identification of Sun with Western modernity.[126] But Sun's thought had Buddhist import too, since "only a political environment in which the Three Principles of the People is the ideal category will satisfy us as individual people practicing the buddhadharma."[127]

123 Zhou Chunhua, "Zhonghua wenhua yu foxue de guanxi," *Hui ju* 53/54 (1967): 39-40.

124 Dongchu, "Fuxing Zhonghua wenhua weihu Fojiao daotong," *Fojiao wenhua* 6 (1967): 2-3.

125 Chen Huijian, "Sanminzhuyi de lixiang shehui yu jingtu sixiang," in *Fofa yu xiangguan zhengzhi sixiang lunji*, ed. Cheng Wenxi (Taipei: Tianhua chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1981), 24.

126 On Sun's appreciation of Lincoln's address, see Lyon Sharman, *Sun Yat-sen: His Life and Its Meaning, a Critical Biography* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934).

127 Chen, "Sanminzhuyi de lixiang shehui yu jingtu sixiang," 24-25.

Taixu

These were not the first attempts to articulate a Buddhist identity that was patriotic, emphasized Chinese culture, or was modern. And not all Buddhists gravitated towards the three principles, or towards "secular" issues like politics or culture. Moreover, the 1981 speeches were, in fact, one of the last instances of such a discourse in Taiwan, occurring during the waning of the BAROC's relevance and the KMT's monopoly on political power. As we have seen, Buddhists faced political pressures and challenges during the republican period on the mainland as well, and it was then that the articulation of a modern Buddhist identity, along the lines of the examples above, began taking shape.

The monastic Taixu was the most prominent advocate of this,[128] but KMT modernity was not the only important influence on him. Just as Western political ideologies and science helped shaped his Buddhist thought, Christianity also had an important role to play.[129] As Xue Yu has shown, Taixu sought dialogue with Christians from early in his career;[130] in 1938, he gave a speech entitled "China Needs Christianity and Euro-America Needs Buddhism," where he stated that his own efforts to reform Buddhism

> were in part inspired by the introduction of Christianity to China. This is because, in recent times, Christianity has had a great influence on China's cultural undertakings, social welfare, and spirit of belief. Although Chinese Buddhism has a long history, and because of its propagation has become a part of the people's mentality, and has profound teachings, in recent times it has not made much of a contribution to the country or society.[131]

His career was devoted to showing that, in fact, Buddhist teachings should focus on, and enrich, the human experience—an articulation of Buddhism he called "Buddhism for human life" (*rensheng Fojiao*) or "Buddhism for the

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128   For example, in a 1933 speech, he noted that Buddhism had indeed started to become popular in Europe, precisely because it accorded with science. Taixu, "Zenyang lai jianshe renjian Fojiao," in *Taixu dashi quanshu* (CD-ROM), ed. Yinshun, Vol. 24 of 35 (Xinzhu: Caituan faren Yinshun wenjiao jijinhui, 2005 [1933]), 454.

129   On Taixu and Christianity, see Darui Long, "An Interfaith Dialogue between the Chinese Buddhist Leader Taixu and Christians," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 20 (2000): 167-189. See also Don A. Pittman, "The Modern Buddhist Reformer T'ai-hsü on Christianity," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 13 (1993), 73.

130   Xue Yu, "Buddhist-Christian Encounter in Modern China: Taixu's Perspective on Christianity," *Ching Feng* (*N.S.*) 4:2 (2003): 157-201.

131   Taixu, "Zhongguo xu Yejiao yu Oumei xu Fojiao," in *Taixu dashi quanshu* (CD-ROM), ed. Yinshun, vol. 21 of 35 (Xinzhu: Caituan faren Yinshun wenjiao jijinhui, 2005 [1938]), 335-36.

human world" (*renjian Fojiao*). To make this stance clear, he explained that practitioners should focus on the human path of rebirth rather than the Pure Lands, or the aspects of Buddhism which appeared "akin to 'theism' or 'spiritualism'".[132] Like the speakers in 1981, he gravitated towards the KMT's political vision, professing an affinity between Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People and Buddhism, believing that the Dharma could complement the state's modernization project.

Taixu went quite far in asserting an alignment between Buddhism and the Three Principles of the People. He even devised a Buddhist ideology to complement them, which he called *Sanfozhuyi*, or the "Three Principles of the Buddha." These centered on the clergy, society and the nation, but like Sun Yat-sen's ideological construct, comprised a vague ideal rather than a concrete proposition. He did suggest some tangible reforms—these included eradicating the system of hereditary temple ownership, and reforming monastics with "superstitious" views. He called for monastics to provide religious instruction, conduct academic research, and engage in philanthropy. Other aspects of his plan remained utterly utopian, and involved using Buddhism to improve different aspects of society—from the economy, to politics, to social customs.[133]

Some, such as the famous Chan master Xuyun (1864-1959),[134] Hongyi (1880-1942),[135] or Yinguang (1862-1940),[136] remained comparatively traditional. And not all Buddhists who engaged with modernity saw KMT ideology as the clearest expression of this. Besides KMT thought, another main intellectual trend in the Republic was socialism, which some Buddhists were also interested in. Essays on Buddhism and socialism can be found, for example, in a 1934 special issue of *Tidal Roar*,[137] and later, monastics cited

132   Taixu, "Rensheng Foxue de shuoming," in *Taixu dashi quanshu* (CD-ROM), ed. Yinshun, vol. 3 of 35 (Xinzhu: Caituan faren Yinshun wenjiao jijinhui, 2005 [1928]), 209.

133   Taixu, "Duiyu Zhongguo Fojiao geming seng de xunci," in *Taixu dashi quanshu* (CD-ROM), vol. 17 of 35 ed. Yinshun (Xinzhu: Caituan faren Yinshun wenjiao jijinhui, 2005 [1928]), 603.

134   See Daniela Campo, "Chan Master Xuyun: The Embodiment of an Ideal, the Transmission of a Model," in *Making Saints in Modern China*, ed. David Ownby, Vincent Goossaert and Ji Zhe (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

135   See Raoul Birnbaum, "Two Turns in the Life of Master Hongyi, a Buddhist Monk in Twentieth-Century China," in *Making Saints in Modern China*, ed. David Ownby, Vincent Goossaert and Ji Zhe (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

136   See Jan Kiely, "The Charismatic Monk and the Chanting Masses: Master Yinguang and his Pure Land Revival Movement," in *Making Saints in Modern China*, ed. David Ownby, Vincent Goossaert and Ji Zhe (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

137   See, for example, Shuyi, "Renjian Fojiao yu shehuizhuyi," *Haichao yin* 15:1 (1934): 83. This issue focused on Buddhism for the human world.

similarities between Buddhism and Communism in the PRC.[138] What this suggests is that besides their gravitation towards specific political ideologies, Buddhists, like others in the Republic, were interested the narrative of modernity more generally, in the sense identified by Lauzon and Duara.

Overview of the study

While the KMT merged modernity with its narrative of a romanticized Chinese past and a projected, future destiny, Taixu juxtaposed these against notions of timeless Buddhist exceptionalism. His Buddhist vision indicates that the discourse of modernity (read through KMT ideology) was an important force shaping his idealized Buddhist identity. But more generally, it embodied the broader, ongoing debate on the relationship between tradition and modernity in China. Taixu was responding to this in a way that positioned Buddhism advantageously amid republican China's confluence of intellectual and political trends, maintaining its religious legitimacy by not solely conforming to the Confucian normative framework, but also the new framework comprised of modern values.

While not all of the Buddhist figures covered in this book explicitly upheld Taixu's political views, in terms of his general Buddhist vision, he did exert an influence on them. One figure, Yinshun (1906-2005), considered Taixu his teacher, and stated that "'Buddhism for human life' was a great awakening for me."[139] Another, Dongchu (1908-1977) advocated Taixu's general approach, and founded the magazine *Humanity* (*Rensheng*) to promote an engaged form of Buddhism. Dongchu's student, Shengyan (1930-2009), upheld Taixu's broad agenda, seeking to find ways to focus on, and make Buddhism relevant to, everyday life.[140] Another of the monastics we will examine, Zhuyun (1919-1986), was an associate of Xingyun (b. 1927), who took Taixu's philosophy to heart and later promoted it in Taiwan.[141] Like Taixu, Zhuyun promoted the Dharma among laypeople, and actively defended it against non-Buddhist critique.

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138 See, for example, Xue Yu, "Buddhist Contribution to the Socialist Transformation of Buddhism in China: Activities of Ve. Juzan During 1949-1953," *Journal of Global Buddhism* 10 (2009): 217-253.

139 Yinshun, "Youxin fahai liushi nian," in *Youxin fahai liushi nian, qili qiji zhi renjian Fojiao hekan* (Xinzhu: Zhengwen chubanshe, 2005 [1984]), 5.

140 Shengyan, "Dongchu laoren de rensheng Fojiao." Available at: http://dongchu.dila.edu.tw/html/01/1_5.html (accessed April 20, 2018).

141 Dingmin, "Zhuyun fashi de Fojiao jingyan yu Fojiao shiye: 1949 nian dalu laitai qingnian senggong gean yanjiu," *Zhonghua foxue xuebao* 12 (1999): 275-302. Available at: http://www.chibs.edu.tw/ch_html/chbj/12/chbj1219.htm (accessed April 20, 2018).

With this history and context in mind, we are in a position to understand why the BAROC conference participants identified with the party-state in 1981—citing affinities between Sun, the three principles and Buddhism (rather than Christianity, which they conspicuously did not mention). For them, demonstrating their allegiance with the KMT implied political, cultural and religious acceptability. As we have seen, events in the twentieth-century would have taught the speakers one thing: that governments founded on modern, secular ideologies on either side of the Taiwan Strait were capable of altering the existential conditions of religion through regulatory measures. Conforming to the KMT's framework of normativity was a pragmatic step aimed at safeguarding a constellation of interests: power, status and influence within the Buddhist world, and by claiming "ownership" of Sun and his legacy, political authority over Christianity—their main religious competitor. On the other hand, we cannot dismiss the idea that it also reflected the true beliefs of these Buddhists, who lived within a complex social milieu in which these ideas were forcefully promoted.

But this background does not explain everything. If the identity of Taixu's followers was altered through dialogue—and competition—with two particular representatives of modernity, Christianity and the KMT, how did this take shape on the ground, and what practical effect did it have? Did their Buddhist beliefs change, and if so, how? More fundamentally, we are faced with the question of how modernity—beyond its expression in particular ideological formations such as communism or the three principles, and aside from its association with Christianity, is used to support traditions that run counter to it. Do the examples we have covered thus far, point to an instrumental application of modernity aimed at enhancing the legitimacy of traditional perspectives? Or did modernity, as a generalized, malleable ideal, exert a transformative influence on traditional ideas?

Events in Taiwan provide a case study that can be used to answer these questions. Taiwan's authoritarian government, with its clear political vision, is a good example of a clear framework of normativity—one that was itself a solution to the dilemma of how to combine Western modernity and Chinese tradition. As we have seen, religious groups during the martial law period acquiesced to state power by actively supporting it or remaining politically disengaged—the Presbyterians being the notable exception in the 1970s. But at the same time, the Buddhists examined here were pressured by the expansion of Christianity—which was associated with modernity on the island through its bureaucracy, hospitals, schools, and aid-work. Their ensuing interaction was emblematic of the broader, multi-faceted Buddhist engagement with modernity in its different forms in the Chinese context.

In the chapters that follow, we will focus on one instance of this. As we know, the figures to be examined upheld Taixu's basic approach to Buddhism. They variously presented it as aligned with core KMT values—patriotism, or loyalty to the party-state; Chinese culture, as read through the prism of the KMT's cultural vision; and modernity. This latter feature entails embracing values and ideas identified by Lauzon and Duara—rationality, science and progress, and the "new-ness" embodied in the three principles: nationalism, democracy and the people's livelihood.

These values became reference points for the formation of a Buddhist identity through interfaith competition—one that that held the promise of political, intellectual and social acceptance. As we have seen, republican-era Buddhists on the mainland were concerned about what they saw as political interference in Buddhist affairs. Meanwhile, Christian missionary work in the republican period, animated by the social gospel and a Christian rational-bureaucratic mode of organization and activity that Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer have called the "Christian normative model," posed a challenge to Chinese religion. They write that

> the greatest impact of Christianity in Republican China was through its normative model, in its various Catholic and Protestant versions, or what a religion should be, which were adopted by the intelligentsia, the state, and even the leaders of other religions. … [T]he desire to conform to Western expectations regarding Chinese religious practices ran deep among both lay and religious leaders.[142]

Modernizing Buddhists, best represented by Taixu, essentially advocated a Buddhist version of this model, believing that it needed to adapt to the times. Following him then, the monastics we will consider in this volume strove to demonstrate their alignment with key features of this ROC landscape. They cast Christianity as discordant with modern values, while embedding Buddhism into the KMT's social, political and intellectual value system. The present study therefore focuses on Buddhists rather than Christians, showing how they articulated their identity in response to the Christian challenge in the context of the KMT's "regime of truth".

Perhaps recalling the KMT's anti-superstition campaigns in the republican period,[143] and the suppression of religion under Mao, Buddhists were well aware of the state's capacity to regulate religion. In the late Qing, there

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142 Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 73.
143 See chapter two of Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*.

had been little interference from the state (in practice, even if the actual laws regulating monasteries were strict), but as we have seen, this began to change in the early twentieth century.[144] In Taiwan, the corporatist model of religious representation under the KMT meant that framing Buddhism in terms of its political values could ensure political and social acceptability after decades of tension. Interfaith competition with Christians was, in the case to be examined here, a process not only of actually competing with them for adherents, but also of demonstrating Buddhism's compatibility with the KMT's framework of normativity.

To demonstrate this, we must turn to the only materials available to us—the textual material in which Buddhist-Christian interfaith competition unfolded. But how does one cope with their sheer volume, and the difficulty of placing them into sensible, discursive relationships?

It is for this reason that I have devised this study as a microhistory. The microhistorical approach focuses on a small number of actors and events as a way of elucidating broader, overarching themes. As István Szijártó remarks, "Microhistorians hold a telescope in their hands. Focusing on certain cases, persons and circumstances, microhistory allows an intensive historical study of the subject, giving a completely different picture of the past from the investigations about nations, states, or social groupings, stretching over decades, centuries or whatever *longue durée*." At the same time, "micro-historians always look for the answers for 'great historical questions'" and treat their subjects as autonomous agents rather than subjects of historical forces.[145] Perhaps the best-known example of microhistory is Carlo Ginzburg's 1976 book *The Cheese and the Worms*. In this, through a reading of records from the trial of the sixteenth-century Italian miller Menocchio (on trial for heresy), Ginzburg shed light on his cultural and religious world—something that would be obscured were we to rely on other official documents composed by, and for, elites.[146] Such a method of historical analysis is also well-suited to subjects with a voluminous and unwieldly archival records, allowing conclusions to be drawn from a smaller, and more manageable, series of records.

For this reason, we will focus on a small and inter-connected group of Buddhist figures, including Zhuyin, Dongchu, Shengyan, and Yinshun—all

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144 See chapter eight of Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*.
145 See István M. Szijártó, "Introduction: Against Simple Truths," in *What is Microhistory? Theory and Practice*, ed. Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and István M. Szijártó (London, Routledge: 2013),
146 See Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Seventeenth-century Miller*, trans. John Tedeschi and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

of whom were influenced by Taixu in some way—and the engagement they had with Christians including Wu Enpu (b. 1914), Gong Tianmin (b. 1926) and Du Erwei (b. 1913). The texts to be examined were published in Buddhist magazines, or as books. Each focused on critiquing or engaging with Christianity or Buddhism, and was usually a response to one of these other writers. By reading across texts, connecting them to each other if and when they are explicitly mentioned, I have reconstructed a period of interfaith competition that unfolded over a period of twenty years. This textual production spanned from 1955, when Zhuyun wrote his first anti-Christian tract, through to 1975, when Chiang Kai-shek died and the last major anti-Christian essay from the above circle of Buddhist figures emerged.

Some of these texts are available in digital formats, but I have strived to consult the original hard copies where possible, so as to avoid reconstructing their engagement through potentially revised versions that differ from how they were originally published. I have also read around these texts to establish context, and to gain a sense of how their anti-Buddhist or Christian writings are situated within their broader oeuvres. And I have consulted major Buddhist magazines of the period, in which some of the texts I discuss were first published, to determine if the writers from this particular circle of Buddhists were outliers, and if their contemporaries were also dealing with similar topics.[147] These are typically not digitized and therefore not text-searchable; I have therefore manually searched those issues that were published in the 1950s through to the mid-1970s in order to identify relevant articles.

As a result of this process, by juxtaposing Buddhists and Christians alongside one another and contextualizing their writings, I have constructed a microhistorical account of how a small group of inter-connected Buddhist writers have competed with Christians by establishing a particular identity for themselves through textual means. Through this engagement with Christianity, these writers articulated an identity that resonated with different facets of the KMT world—reverence for cultural tradition, appropriation of modernity, and respect for the party-state. This process of identity-formation led to the transformation of the very ideas they were trying to preserve.

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147 A list of Buddhist periodicals printed between 1952 and 1972 in Taiwan is provided in Xing Fuquan, *Taiwan de Fojiao yu Fosi* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan gufen youxian gongsi, 2006), 222-223. The list this was derived from appeared in Fojiao wenhua yanjiusuo, *Ershi nian lai Fojiao jingshu lunwen suoyin* (Taipei: Zhonghua dadian bianyinhui and Zhonghua xueshuyuan Fojiao wenhua yanjiusuo, 1972), 299-300.

I therefore do not focus on the large Taiwanese Buddhist groups that occupy such dominant positions in the island's Buddhist world today. These include Foguang Shan (Buddha-Light Mountain), Fagu Shan (Dharma Drum Mountain), Tzu Chi, Zhongtai Chansi, and Lingjiu Shan. While these groups have much to say about Christianity, they achieved prominence as the martial law period was ending, or after, and thus were not participants in the textual exchanges I examine in this volume. But because they provide a different perspective on Buddhist-Christian interaction, we will touch on these organizations later. We will see that these groups took a different tack when engaging with Christianity. And we will see that the Buddhist-Christian engagement under examination here, while representative of certain trends, was by no means the only type of contact that occurred.

For the most part, though, our focus will be on a smaller group of inter-connected writers, during a specific time-period, who, as mentioned above, will enable us to see the process of identity-formation and self-representation unfold in the context of interfaith engagement. My primary interest is in examining how contact with Christianity led certain Buddhists to reassess their identity within an overarching normative framework of values dominated by the KMT. In doing so, it will explore the idea that religious identity is not simply a product of different belief frameworks, but also the self-representation that emerges in the process of interfaith competition with reference to particular external values. It will also consider whether, more generally, Buddhist-Christian engagement in Taiwan, in the post-war period, had repercussions for Buddhist identity construction and self-representation later in Taiwan's history. As such, present-day Buddhist groups will be considered for comparative purposes towards the end of this book.

A note about positionality. I have approached this study as an objective, detached historian, informed by social scientific theoretical considerations, while reporting on the views of others. I do not follow any of the religions discussed in this volume. I reject the xenophobic and anti-Semitic attitudes exhibited by some of the writers discussed in this book. And I do not consider the texts I cover here to be good examples of interfaith dialogue—in fact, little true "dialogue" took place, and for this reason I avoid using the word, preferring (in most cases) interfaith "competition" or "engagement". But this is a little-known episode in Taiwan's religious history—one that involved figures who were themselves well-regarded or influential at the time, or were becoming so. The moments of direct engagement I examine give us insights into how the participants saw each other and themselves. This research aims to help us understand their multifaceted engagement, showing how it unfolded at a time of political tension, and how it embodied trends that

had been present since the early twentieth century. At the same time, it will give us insights into how religious identity can be formed amidst religious competition and in rigid political contexts.

The first chapter focuses on the attempt to articulate Buddhism in a way that resonated with one of the KMT's key political values: patriotism, or loyalty to the party-state. We will discuss the claims of the Buddhist monastic Zhuyun, the Christian pastor Wu Enpu, and Shengyan, then a lay-Buddhist, that their respective religions were aligned with the values promoted by the KMT, and hence that they could foster loyalty to the party-state. It will show that by doing so, both Christians and Buddhists were attempting to lend their religions legitimacy in Taiwan's authoritarian political context.

Of course, the question of Sun Yat-sen's, and Chiang Kai-shek's, Christian religious affiliations was a sensitive topic for Buddhists, which will be dealt with in the fifth chapter. In seeking political acceptance, the Buddhists under examination here also portrayed their tradition as more aligned with Chinese tradition; the second chapter therefore focuses on the question of culture. It discusses the monastic Yinshun, as well as the writing of Wu Enpu and another Christian essayist, Gong Tianmin, and shows how both sides of the debate sought to present their respective traditions as compatible with Chinese culture more generally, as well as the ethical and moral values associated with Western modernity.

The third chapter deals more specifically with the question of modernity, and examines Yinshun's responses to the writings of a Catholic priest, Du Erwei. Yinshun's own attacks on biblical doctrine exemplified a growing realization that academic studies could be used in a utilitarian sense to provide an objective basis for establishing the superiority of Buddhism over Christianity. At the same time, Yinshun's arguments continued to reference Chinese cultural values, showing the continued importance of Chinese tradition. The fourth chapter is about history. It focuses on two of Shengyan's books—one on world religions, the other on Christianity—and his attempt to devise a narrative for what many Buddhists saw as the decline of their tradition to a state where it could be criticized as superstitious and socially disengaged.

The fifth chapter will discuss how the positioning of Christianity on Taiwan's religious landscape, beneath the KMT's ideological canopy, had on-the-ground effects too. We will see how nascent Buddhist organizations, founded in the mid-1960s, were inspired by Christian activities. It will show that although Buddhists critiqued Christianity, it also inspired them to mobilize resources from their own tradition to retort the Christian charge that Buddhism was unmodern and socially disengaged. It will also consider some later examples of Christian-Buddhist engagement.

The chapter will also deal with a particular conundrum faced by Buddhists seeking to align themselves with the values of the KMT—that Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek were themselves Christian. It will show that the Buddhists under consideration here largely dealt with the problem by discussing it in oblique terms. They did not, and could not, directly attack the beliefs of these esteemed statesmen and forefathers of the nation. Instead, they proclaimed them as figures who were sympathetic to Buddhism or who embodied trans-religious perspectives. As the pressure to conform to KMT ideology subsided in the late 1970s and 1980s, such propositions became less.

The conclusion will show that the nature of Buddhist-Christian engagement in the postwar period in Taiwan was in some ways replicated in other contexts. But it will also point out that modernity itself is a fraught concept, and therefore, when considering the role of modernity in interfaith competition and identity formation, we must be aware of the "type" of modernity to which we are referring. In this case, we can refer to "KMT modernity" as comprising the particular value-set, promoted by the KMT, that inspired religious efforts at political justification. Following on from chapter five, it will also show that the instance of Buddhist-Christian engagement covered in this volume was not an example of dialogue—but it was, at least for Buddhists, an instance of competition—one that drove the figures covered in this volume to think about their Buddhist identity in new ways.