國立政治大學宗教研究所

碩士論文

人間淨土的教化：

聖嚴法師的淨土觀與法鼓山的念佛實踐

Constructing a Modern Pure Land:

Pure Land practice at Dharma Drum Mountain

指導老師：李玉珍教授　　碩二 黃穎思 **Jens Reinke**

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Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Topic

The present study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the modernization process of Chinese Buddhism by examining the issue in relation to different understandings and practices of Pure Land (淨土), as exemplified by Pure Land as it is practiced at the Taiwanese/Chinese Buddhist organization Dharma Drum Mountain (DDM 法鼓山) and the thought of DDM's founder Ven. Sheng Yen (聖嚴, 1930-2009 CE).

The Pure Land is a characteristic concept of East Asian Buddhism. It is closely linked with the practice of recollecting the Buddha's name (念佛, hereafter referred to as *nianfo*) in order to ensure rebirth in *Sukhavati*, the Western Pure Land of Amitabha (極樂淨土). The concepts and practices of Pure Land Buddhism date back to the beginnings of Chinese Buddhism[1] and its precursors lie in Indian Buddhism.[2] Over time it became part and parcel of general Chinese Buddhist practice, and is particularly popular with the laity. It is also linked to Chinese notions of an afterlife and Chinese deathbed culture. Reciting Amitabha's name ensures that the faithful escape from rebirth in one of the six realms of our world and are instead reborn in the Western Pure Land of Amitabha, said to be a place where conditions for Buddhist practice are ideal. It is also in the context of Pure

[1] Robert Sharf, "On Pure Land Buddhism and Ch'an/Pure Land Syncretism in Medieval China," *T'oung Pao* 88, no. 4-5 (2003): 220, 321.
[2] Jan Nattier, "The Indian Roots of Pure Land Buddhism: Insights from the Oldest Chinese Versions of the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha," *Pacific World,* 3rd series, no. 5 (Fall 2003): 179-201.

Land Buddhism that the practice of End-of-Life Chanting Groups (助念團) developed, a practice that came to be widely popular in China. Clerics or relatives of the deceased themselves chant beside the deathbed on behalf of the dead. This will only be discussed very briefly in order to limit the scope of this study.

In conclusion, the conception of the Pure Land as a place in which to achieve rebirth and the practice of *nianfo* as a way of attaining this goal have a long history in Chinese Buddhism, thus it is here understood as a traditional Pure Land practice.

Yet Pure Land concepts have also been utilized in attempts by elite monastics like Taixu (太虛, 1890-1947 CE) to modernize Chinese Buddhism—most explicitly in creating the idea of a Pure Land on Earth (人間淨土). Here the Pure Land is not understood as a place far away in which to be reborn, but as a kind of Buddhist utopia to be realized in our world. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Taixu, other monastics, and a number of lay people perceived Buddhism to be in crisis and so attempted to save the religion by modernizing it. Thus I will understand the new approach they developed to Pure Land as modern or modernist.

In other words, Pure Land's concepts and practices and different interpretations thereof are where demarcations between elite and popular, modern and traditional, lie. Clarifying the relationship between these differing approaches to Pure Land will help us to understand the modernization of Chinese Buddhism. To do so, I aim to examine Pure Land as it is understood and practiced at a contemporary Buddhist group, Dharma Drum Mountain (DDM), and as embodied by the life and thought of its founder Sheng Yen.

1.2. Sheng Yen and Dharma Drum Mountain

Dharma Drum Mountain is one of the four largest Chinese Buddhist organizations in Taiwan, the others being Tzu Chi (慈濟), Foguangshan (佛光山), and Chung Tai Shan (中台山). Of the four, Chung Tai Shan is the only order that does not identify with Humanistic Buddhism (hereafter referred to as *Renjian* Buddhism 人間佛教). *Renjian* Buddhism is a modernist form of Buddhism developed by Buddhist reformers such as Taixu and Yinshun (印順, 1906-2005 CE) that aims to correct Chinese Buddhism's perceived overemphasis on death and the dead by presenting a version of the tradition that focuses more on the living. One of its key concepts is the Establishment of a Pure Land on Earth (建設人間淨土).[3] While Tzu Chi and Foguangshan both surpass DDM in size and membership, it is DDM's special emphasis on Buddhist orthodoxy that makes it of interest for the present study. DDM stresses the importance of a sound understanding of Buddhist doctrine, while aiming to make Buddhism applicable to modern times. Richard Madsen recognizes a strong Confucian orientation at *Renjian* Buddhist groups like Tzu Chi and Foguangshan, but perceives DDM as "much more Buddhist than Confucian" compared to the latter two organizations.[4] Tzu Chi and Foguangshan's sociopolitical vision is based on Confucian values, while DDM, although containing Confucian elements, puts its prime focus on Chan (禪) practice.

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[3] There is no coherent translation for 建設 at DDM. To create, to establish, and to build are all used as translations in DDM publications.

[4] Richard Madsen, *Democracy's Dharma: Religious Renaissance and Political Development in Taiwan* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), p. 89.

DDM and its founder Sheng Yen are commonly associated with *Renjian* Buddhism and Chan; however, one must be careful not to categorize Sheng Yen and his organization as either one or the other. Although he was a lineage holder in the Linji (臨濟) and Caodong (曹洞) traditions and is best known as a Chan teacher, especially in the United States of America, Sheng Yen's career as a Chan master in fact started relatively late in life. In Taiwan, Sheng Yen is probably best known for establishing Dharma Drum Mountain and for its maxim, "Uplifting the Character of Humanity and Building a Pure Land on Earth (提升人的品質，建設人間淨土)." However, such a reputation does not give a complete picture of Sheng Yen's life and work, since it fails to include his many other interests, such as his study of the Vinaya and the Agamas, his urge to reform (lay and cleric) Buddhist education, and his interest in Ming dynasty Buddhism, to name but a few. Sheng Yen's field of interest encompasses the full breadth of Chinese Buddhism. He aims to ground Buddhism in solid Buddhist doctrine, while at the same time making it applicable to our times. It is this bidirectional movement—back to the tradition and forward towards modernity—that makes him such an interesting subject for the present study.

Nianfo, the practice of reciting the Buddha's name, is often perceived as a more "traditional" form of practice in East Asian Buddhism today, in the sense that it requires faith in higher beings and stresses the importance of ritual. Yet the notion of Building a Pure Land on Earth is a core concept of *Renjian* Buddhism, which is a distinctly modernist project emphasizing rationality and this-worldly benefit. Sheng Yen's bidirectional vision incorporates both elements in his "ecumenical" version of Chinese Buddhism. Thus, the intention of the present study is to examine and compare just these

two elements of Sheng Yen's take on Pure Land, "traditional" and "modernist," how they are implemented in the practices taught at DDM, and how they relate to each other in Sheng Yen's thought.

1.3. Research Questions and Methods

The present study aims to examine different Pure Land practices at Dharma Drum Mountain and to assess how they are linked to Sheng Yen's thought. In addition they are to be examined in the context of the modernization of Chinese Buddhism. Therefore I aim to answer the following questions:

What Pure Land concepts and practices exist in Chinese Buddhism in general and at DDM in particular?

What is the difference between the Western Pure Land and the Pure Land on Earth? How do they relate to each other at DDM in terms of doctrine and practice?

How are tensions between different understandings of Pure Land negotiated?

How should different Pure Land practices at DDM be evaluated from the perspective of modernization theory? Are literal understandings of Pure Land merely remnants of "traditional" Buddhism that will eventually disappear with ongoing modernization? Or can they be understood differently without applying a linear model of modernization?

To answer these questions I have chosen to adopt a case study approach, taking as my subject one particular Taiwanese Chinese Buddhist organization, DDM. Nevertheless, I still want to situate these questions in the broader context of Chinese Buddhism. Traditional Western Pure Land and the modernist concept of Pure Land on Earth both function on the levels of practice and doctrine. Hence, I will look at each respectively with regard to both levels. I will examine DDM's Building the Pure Land on Earth campaign and their *nianfo* practices, comparing them and assessing both their relationship with each other and to other contemporary discourses *outside* of Buddhist discourse, and to the way they are linked to doctrinal concepts *within* Chinese Buddhism. Furthermore I aim to contextualize them within the broader history of Pure Land in Chinese Buddhism.

Sheng Yen published two books explicitly dealing with Pure Land and *nianfo* practices: *Nianfo in order to be born in/ to create a Pure Land* (念佛生淨土)[5] and *Master Sheng Yen Teaches the Pure Land Approach to the Dharma* (聖嚴法師教淨土法門).[6] Thus I will focus mainly on these two books out of his oeuvre for my thesis. In addition I have critically reviewed studies on Chinese Buddhism in general and Pure Land in particular in Chinese, English and German.

To attain data "on the ground" I have conducted fieldwork at several branches of DDM in Taiwan and the US. The first time I encountered DDM was not when I actually began this research project in summer 2012, but four years earlier when I moved to Taiwan for

[5] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu.*
[6] Shengyan, *Shengyan fashi jiao jingtu famen*.

Chinese language training. Motivated by a general interest in modern Chinese Buddhism I had developed while studying in the China Studies Department at the Free University of Berlin, over the years I had visited several Buddhist activities organized by DDM and other Taiwanese groups. Beginning with my master's at NCCU Taiwan in 2012, I intensified my fieldwork and focused my observations on DDM. To get a broader picture of the organization I participated in a wide range of activities: I visited the organization's temples, centers and monasteries all over the country, participated in Chan meditation classes for foreigners as well as for Taiwanese, attended several one-day, one three-day and one six-day Chan retreat and Outdoor Chan classes. I attended *nianfo* group practices, Dharma assemblies, repentence ceremonies, as well as conferences and a camp that introduced monastic life to college students. In addition I continued to visit other Buddhist groups in Taiwan to have a frame of reference with which to compare DDM.

On March 17, 2012 I attended my first *nianfo* group practice (念佛共修) at the main DDM monastery at Jinshan (金山). Since then I have attended *nianfo* practice at other DDM branches, including DDM Anhe branch (安和分院) in Taipei on a weekly basis during the fall semester 2013/2014. During the spring semester 2013, I volunteered at the International Meditation Group (IMG) at DDM Degui academy (法鼓德貴學苑). Attending these activities has given me countless opportunities to participate in informal conversations with participants, volunteers and monastics at DDM. I have also conducted semi-structured interviews with the leading volunteer in charge of the End-of-Life Chanting Group, the volunteer responsible for the International Mediation Group IMG,

and Guojing (釋果鏡), director of the Center for Research and Practice (研修中心主任) at Dharma Drum Buddhist College (DDBC 法鼓佛學院) and an expert on Sheng Yen's Pure Land thought. A transcript of the latter interview is included as an appendix to this thesis.

One of the concerns of this study is to link Chinese language and English language perspectives on the topic. In spite of today's increasingly globalized world, academia in any given country tends to stay within in its particular linguistic frame, with scholarly debates often held in one particular language.

Chinese language scholarship of Chinese Buddhism often treats the subject from a philosophical and doctrinal perspective. Trying to understand concepts and related practices as they are established within their own linguistic system may help us to avoid making culturally shaped assumptions in our approach to research.

Conversely, by drawing upon Western scholarship we can broaden our perspective. Chinese Buddhism is a particularly thriving area of scholarly research in North America, contributing many new methodologies and terms and setting research trends. The Social Sciences play a special role there, and are being applied to the field of Buddhist studies. By bringing together these different scholarly traditions that use different approaches and ask different questions, research on Chinese Buddhism can only benefit.

I have used *hanyu pinyin* (漢語拼音) to romanize Chinese characters throughout, except where another romanization is more widely accepted, as is the case for example with some personal and place names, e.g., Taipei, Sheng Yen.

I have added the Chinese characters following the *pinyin* after the first occurrence only. Chinese sources cited in the footnotes are given in *hanyu pinyin*, and Western sources in their respective languages. In the bibliography, Chinese sources are given in *hanyu pinyin* and Chinese characters, and Western sources in their respective languages. Dates are given for deceased historical figures only.

1.4. Scholarship on modern Chinese Buddhism

Holmes H. Welch (1924-1981 CE) published a trilogy of books on modern Chinese Buddhism based on fieldwork and historical research he conducted in China, namely: *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism: 1900–1950,*[7] *The Buddhist Revival in China,*[8] and *Buddhism under Mao.*[9] Despite this promising start to Western scholarship on the topic, the field subsequently went dormant again for another two or three decades. However, in recent decades the situation has improved greatly with the appearance of several works that examine the changes in the Chinese Buddhist tradition that have occurred since the late nineteenth century. In addition to several other books, articles and dissertations, Charles Brewer Jones' work on Buddhism in Taiwan[10] and Don A. Pittman's study of

[7] Holmes H. Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism: 1900-1950* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967).
[8] Holmes H. Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).
[9] Holmes H. Welch, *Buddhism under Mao* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).
[10] Charles B. Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).

Taixu[11] provide invaluable broad overviews and deserve to be mentioned here. Pittman's study portrays the life, historical background and thought of the monastic who has come to be recognized as a key figure in the modernization of Chinese Buddhism, while Jones' book offers an outline of the historical development of Buddhism in Taiwan. As a result of the Communist Party of China's anti-religious policies on the mainland, since 1949, this small island in the Pacific Ocean has come to be regarded as the center of contemporary Chinese Buddhism. In recent years other studies have focused on Chinese Buddhist organizations in Taiwan. Important examples include Stuart Chandler's analysis of Foguangshan (佛光山) in relation to globalization and modernization[12] and Julia Huang's study of the Buddhist Charity organization Tzu Chi (*Ciji* 慈濟).[13]

Only a handful of English language studies exist that focus exclusively on DDM and Sheng Yen; most notable are several articles by Jimmy Yu.[14] Additionally, there is a dissertation by Seth Clippard analyzing the rhetoric of Chinese Buddhist environmentalism,[15] and Daniel R. Tuzzeo, a student of Jimmy Yu, has completed a master's thesis exploring education at DDM.[16]

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[11] Don A. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms* (Honolulu: Hawai'i University Press, 2001).
[12] Stuart Chandler, *Establishing a Pure Land on Earth: The Foguang Buddhist Perspective on Modernization and Globalization* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).
[13] C. Julia Huang, *Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).
[14] E.g., Jimmy Yu, "A Tentative Exploration into the Development of Master Sheng Yen's Teachings," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 23 (2010): 3-38. For a comprehensive list of Jimmy Yu's publications, see bibliography.
[15] Seth Clippard, "Protecting the Spiritual Environment: Rhetoric and Chinese Buddhist Environmentalism" (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2012).
[16] Daniel R. Tuzzeo, "Education, Invention of Orthodoxy, and the Construction of Modern Buddhism on Dharma Drum Mountain" (Master's thesis, Florida State University, 2012).

Naturally, the situation is very different in Chinese language scholarship. There are numerous publications and dissertations about Sheng Yen and DDM, so many that it would be difficult to list them all here. However, some scholars and works at least deserve brief mention. One series of books serves as a particularly indispensable resource: *Studies of Master Sheng Yen 1-4* contains articles by leading scholars dealing with different aspects of Sheng Yen's oeuvre.[17] Li Yu-Chen (李玉珍) has published here on Sheng Yen and Chan meditation in a global context.[18] In addition to many publications on the topic in the above-mentioned edition and elsewhere, Lin Chihsien (林其賢) has compiled a detailed two-volume biography of Sheng Yen.[19] Chen Chien-Huang (陳劍鍠), Taiwan's leading researcher on Pure Land Buddhism, has published articles on the doctrinal aspect of Sheng Yen's Pure Land thought.[20] Guojing has also published articles about Sheng Yen's Pure Land thought,[21] and historian Chiang Tsan-teng (江燦騰) has written several books on the history of modern Chinese Buddhism, including DDM and contemporary Pure Land thought.[22]

[17]*Shengyan yanjiu diyi dao disi ji* (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2010/2011/2012/2013).
[18] Li Yuzhen, "Chanxiu chuantong de fuxing yu dongxi jiaoliu-yi Shengyan fashi weili," in *Shengyan sixiang yanjiu disi ji*, (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2013), 7-34.
[19]E.g. Lin Qixian, *Shengyan fashi qishi nianpu* (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2000).
[20] E.g. Chen Jianhuang, "Shengyan fashi「jianshi renjian jingtu」yu「yixin buluan」zhi yaoyi", in *Shengyan yanjiu di'er ji* (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2011), 201-240.
Chen Jianhuang, "Shengyan fashi dui「jingnian xiangji」yu「ruliu mangsuo」de quanyi jiqi tizheng," in *Shengyan yanjiu disi ji* (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2013), 75-130.
[21]Shi Guojing, "Shengyan fashi jingtu sixiang zhi yanjiu-yi renjian jingtu wei zhongxin," in *Shengyan yanjiu diyi ji* (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2010), pp. 69-112, and Shi Guojing, "Zai tan Shengyan fashi de jingtu sixiang," in *Shengyan yanjiu disi ji* (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2013), 305-352.
[22]E.g. Jiang Canteng, *Taiwan dangdai jingtu sixiang de xin dongxiang* (Taibei: Xinwenfeng, 2001).

1.5. Buddhism, Asia and discourses of modernity

It seems necessary to clarify what is meant by terms such as modern or modernization, especially with regard to Buddhism, before we continue with this study. In the literature on Buddhism and modernization we find two main approaches to the topic. One is to perceive modernization as a universal process that unfolds on an international stage. Other scholars, while understanding modernization itself as universal phenomenon, find that it manifests differently in different regions.

Donald S. Lopez, Jr. and David L. McMahan represent the former approach. Modern Buddhism, according to Lopez, "rejects many of the ritual and magical elements of previous forms of Buddhism, it stresses quality over hierarchy, the universal over the local, and often exalts the individual above the community."[23] Adherents of modern Buddhism often perceive their endeavor not as a contemporary advancement of Buddhism, but as a return to the tradition of the time of the historical Buddha. Often called early Buddhism, this is frequently believed to be "most compatible with the ideals of the European Enlightenment that occurred so many centuries later, ideals embodied in such concepts as reason, empiricism, science, universalism, individualism, tolerance, freedom and the rejection of religious orthodoxy."[24]

While some of Lopez's criteria may apply to contemporary Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan, e.g., the fact that many of the reforms Chinese Buddhism underwent were legitimized by appealing to early Buddhism (原始佛教),[25] there are many others that are

[23] Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *A Modern Buddhist Bible* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), p. ix.
[24] Lopez, Jr., *A Modern Buddhist Bible,* ix-x.
[25] Especially true of Yinshun and his *renjian fojiao*.

less applicable. The notion of orthodoxy (正信) most definitely plays an important role in the modernization of Chinese Buddhism,[26] and during the fieldwork I have carried out in Taiwanese Buddhist circles, I have observed that hierarchy, ritual, and community do indeed play an important and vital role even in Chinese Buddhist groups who identify with the modernist project of *Renjian* Buddhism.

McMahan uses the term Buddhist modernism instead of modern Buddhism to describe "forms of Buddhism that have emerged out of an engagement with the dominant cultural and intellectual forces of modernity."[27] He draws on Charles Taylor to identify three main broad discourses in Modernist Buddhism: Western monotheism, rationalism and scientific naturalism, and Romantic expressionism.[28]

Furthermore, McMahan attributes the emphasis on meditation to modernist Buddhism.[29] McMahan's criteria, similar to those of Lopez, are still closely linked to a one-sided Western experience of modernity and thereby seem to take a Western form of modern Buddhism as the ideal type of modern Buddhism to contrast with non-Western forms. In chapter two of his book, McMahan provides a selection of six ideal types of contemporary Buddhists; all "traditional" Buddhists are represented by Asians while all "modernist" types are represented by Westerners, with the exception of one, a Western educated Asian who teaches Buddhism to Westerners.[30]

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[26] One of Sheng Yen's most famous books is *Orthodox Buddhism*. Shengyan fashi, Zhengxin fojiao (Taibei: fagu wenhua, 1996).
[27] David L. McMahan, *The Making of Modernist Buddhism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 6.
[28] McMahan, *The Making of*, 10.
[29] McMahan, *The Making of*, 184.
[30] McMahan, *The Making of,* 27-60.

Nevertheless both authors clearly contribute immensely to the understanding of an important and growing phenomenon in contemporary Buddhism, a modernist Buddhism that mainly develops in Western countries, but which may involve non-Western actors—many of the Buddhist teachers in the West are of Asian descent. The Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh, for example, enjoy great popularity, but mainly cater to a Western audience.[31] However, it is important to emphasize that the Buddhisms of the different countries and regions of Asia have also undergone rapid changes, changes that might be related, yet not identical, to developments in the West. Are we then to deny these groups their self-acclaimed modernist identity, because they do not fit certain criteria? Or are the criteria themselves in need of re-evaluation?

Joseph B. Tamney, among other scholars, has developed a set of criteria for a modernist Buddhism, which does take East Asian Forms of Buddhism into account: (1) A stronger role for the laity, including women; (2) Buddhism as a voluntary, chosen religion; (3) engagement in social welfare and environmental protection; (4) loosening ties to a single culture; and (5) emphasis on personal spiritual development.[32]

Tamney's criteria are explicitly linked to the situation in East Asia, while he understands modernity as a universal experience, which he defines as follows:

> "Technological development, social expansion and increasing population density, structural differentiation (i.e. the appearance of new, independent institutions such as an independent "church" or a capitalist economy), the

[31] By using the term "Western audience," I do not refer to a particular ethnicity but to persons that are mainly socialized in Europe, the Americas, Australia and New Zealand.
[32] Joseph B. Tamney, "Afterword: Modernization, Globalization, and Buddhism," in Paul David Numrich, ed., *North American Buddhists in Social Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 232.

> fragmentation of societal culture (pluralism), and the growing importance of the individual at the expense of groups."[33]

This universal understanding of modernization and general criteria based on it may help to identify commonalities in the changes the different Asian Buddhisms undergo, but it also has its weaknesses. Modernization theory in general, and the theories above in particular, presuppose modernization as a temporal linear process. Here, a binary of *not yet* modernized countries, traditions and groups, and *already* modernized countries, traditions and groups is created.

Unfortunately, these criteria impose a specific historical experience, and establish the modernization process experienced by Europe as a universal standard against which Chinese Buddhism is to be compared. This introduces a temporal hierarchy of advanced and backward, and does not adequately explain those traditional elements that persist even in a modernized tradition. But this is precisely the topic of this study: The coexistence of traditional and modernist notions of Pure Land in Chinese Buddhism. Thus, instead of understanding the remnants of traditional Pure Land practice at DDM as artifacts of an incomplete process of modernization, this study aims to approach them with an open mind.

Wang Hui (汪晖) examines the assumed universality of the concept of modernity and points out several problematic aspects if one is to apply the concept to non-Western regions in general and China in particular. He claims that a study on Chinese modernity must be situated in the perspective of the study of China's history and culture.[34]

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[33] Tamney, "Afterword: Modernization," 225.
[34] Wang Hui, *The Politics of Imagining Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 265.

However, the discourse of modernity was created in the era of European enlightenment. It reconstructed the relationship Europeans had with the past, the present, and the future. Key features of this discourse are the concepts of rationality and subjective freedom. Wang Hui writes:

> "Modernity (*xiandai xing*) is an internally complicated, much contested Western concept. It contains only one unambiguously clear feature, which is that modernity is principally a conception of time, or, perhaps better to say, a conception of historical time that moves linearly forward and cannot be repeated …The notion of modernity … while it is intertwined with the process of European secularization, its roots reveal its origins in medieval Christianity, because implicit in both Jewish and Christian eschatological conceptions of time is the peculiar feature that time cannot be repeated."[35]

Wang Hui goes on to sketch the development of the understanding of modernity. The conception that modern contrasts with ancient was formed during the renaissance.[36] Yet at that time modern was meant in a pejorative sense while ancient had positive connotations. It was only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that the term modern gained its positive connotations, coming to mean improved, satisfactory and efficient.[37] Subsequently, the binary of tradition/modernity was constructed. This binary is based upon a linear conception of time, containing a teleology of progress, where everything inevitably strive towards the same final end.[38]

Wang Hui draws heavily on Weber, Habermas and Calinescu to demonstrate how the discourse on modernity is produced from a perspective *within* Christian Europe.

[35] Wang, *The Politics of,* 266.
[36] Wang, *The Politics of,* 266.
[37] Wang, *The Politics of,* 267.
[38] Wang, *The Politics of,* 270.

In the 1950s the term modernization appeared. It dissociated modernity from its European traditions and was modeled "into a spatio-temporally neutral model for processes of social development in general."[39] Different countries and regions were on different levels of development; nevertheless all were on the same route. From now on it could be expanded to non-Western societies. The binary of modern/traditional came to be situated in this context of modernization theory.[40]

Wang Hui asks: "The key concepts of modernity were produced from within Christian civilization, so why use them to describe non-Western societies and cultures?"[41] Instead, he suggests that we "establish a new perspective for the study of cultures, the first obligation is to seek out a basic language and framework with which to describe Chinese society and culture, both of which are rooted in a particular linguistic community and social interactions."[42] He advocates studying key concepts of the formulation of the modern Chinese world view, like public (共), community (群), society (社會), country (國家), nation (民族), progress (進步), etc.[43] In this way, he seeks to determine a range of analysis from within Chinese society and culture.[44]

As seen above, the Pure Land is a key term with regard to the modernization of Chinese Buddhism. Different understandings, practices and believe systems are merged into a single concept.

[39] Habermas after Wang. Wang, *The Politics of,* 295.
[40] Wang, *The Politics of,* 299.
[41] Wang, *The Politics of,* 277.
[42] Wang, *The Politics of,* 303.
[43] Wang, *The Politics of,* 303.
[44] Wang, *The Politics of,* 304.

Wang Hui's approach also reminds us to take care not to misunderstand modernization as a linear universal process, where every culture walks the same route towards the same goal, but to stay open to differing developments. It is not that terms like traditional and modern should be completely avoided, but that they should be used in a purely descriptive rather than in a normative sense. Something modern is then to be understood as just something new, which has developed in the context of the changes of modern society beginning with the nineteenth century, while traditional describes a phenomena that existed long before his period.

For example, in the present study, the notion of a Pure Land on Earth describes a new concept that emerged in the course of Buddhism's encounter with a new era, thus I call it modern. On the other hand, literal understandings of the Pure Land as a place existing somewhere in the west have a long history in China, and I therefore call them traditional.

Examining changes within specific concepts and practices within Chinese Buddhism thus allows us to understand current developments within their own cultural and linguistic setting.

However, that does not mean that Chinese Buddhism is to be understood as an independent entity, developing completely without any interaction with an *Other*, like, for example, the West. In fact Li Yu-Chen has shown how the current trend of meditational Buddhism in Taiwan indeed owes something to the popularity of meditation in the West.[45] Combining perspectives, the developments within Chinese Buddhism and

[45] Li, "Chanxiu," 29.
A study on the influence of Western Buddhism on Korean Buddhism: Ryan Bongseok Joo, "Countercurrents from the West: "Blue-Eyed" Zen Masters, Vipassanna Meditation,

the tradition's interactions and contacts with the West, will aid our understanding of modern Chinese Buddhism in its complexity.

1.6. Pure Land in Chinese Buddhism

In the context of Buddhist studies, I aim to broaden the perspective on Pure Land Buddhism in Western language scholarship. Most studies examine Pure Land Buddhism in its Japanese form, but in recent decades some important studies on Pure Land in Chinese Buddhism have appeared. First to deserve mention here is the work of Charles B. Jones.[46] In addition to Jones' work, there are a series of articles that challenge the previously commonly held assumption that Chinese Pure Land should be regarded as an independent school. Of these, Robert Sharf's article on the issue might be considered the most often cited;[47] however, Yü Chün-fang might have been the first to raise an objection to the habit of equating of Japanese and Chinese Pure Land in her study of Zhuhong (袾宏, 1535-1615 CE).[48] Nevertheless, Japanese Pure Land still continues to dominate Western perceptions of East Asian Pure Land in general.[49] Here, Pure Land is portrayed

and Buddhist Psychotherapy in Contemporary Korea," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* vol. 79, no. 3 (2011): 614-638.

[46] A comprehensive list of Jones' publications about Chinese Pure Land is included in the bibliography below.

[47] Sharf, "On Pure Land Buddhism," 282-331.

[48] Yü Chün-fang, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

[49] Charles B. Jones, "Toward a Typology of Nien-fo: a Study in Methods of Buddha-Invocation in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism," *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*, 3rd series, no. 3 (2001): 219.

as the antithesis of Chan/Zen. Chan/Zen and Pure Land are discussed as two completely distinct schools with different soteriologies and sets of religious practices. Chan/Zen is presented as a religious system, in which the practitioner relies strictly on his or her own effort (自力) to achieve salvation (awakening or Buddhahood). In contrast, in Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, practitioners seek salvation through their faith in Amitabha's vows (他力), aiming to gain rebirth in the western Pure Land.

Recent research on Buddhism in the West, apart from studies on Western Japanese Pure Land groups, while seldom taking Pure Land Buddhism and practices as a main focus, does touch on the issue when examining religious practice and its relation to the modernization of Buddhism. Studies aiming to describe the process of the development of Buddhism in the West pay special attention to the practice of meditation. Meditation is often perceived as a modernist religious practice per se,[50] which stresses individual religious experience and is favored by Western Buddhist practitioners. Since the 1990s, many US scholars have based their analysis of American Buddhism on a two-fold notion, based on ethnicity. A modern meditation Buddhism practiced by Westerners of European descent is contrasted with a supposedly traditional Buddhism practiced by Americans of Asian descendent, which stresses aspects like community and devotional chanting.[51]

[50] McMahan, *The Making of*, 181.
[51] For a comprehensive discussion of the perceived bifurcation of Buddhism in the U.S., see Paul David Numrich, "Two Buddhisms Further Considered," *Contemporary Buddhism* 4.1 (2003): 55-78.
David McMahan also juxtaposes a "modern Western" with a "traditional Asian" Buddhism. See McMahan, *The Making of*, chapter 2.

However, neither model is applicable to Chinese Buddhism in contemporary Taiwan. Instead of viewing Chan/meditation and Pure Land/devotional chanting as polar opposites, I aim to demonstrate that Pure Land at DDM is a key concept, where different practices, and believe systems, elite and popular, modern and traditional, are negotiated.

1.7. Chapter outline

The structure of this study is as follows:

Chapter 2 offers some background by briefly sketching the developments that have taken place in Chinese Buddhism since the nineteenth century, and also provides a short biography of Sheng Yen. This biography does not claim to be comprehensive, but rather an examination of his life with regard to Pure Land. Questions which are of main interest here are: the role of traditional Pure Land practices like *nianfo* retreats, etc., Sheng Yen's intellectual formation, and the importance of the modernist notion of a Pure Land on Earth in this biographical context.

Chapter 3 offers some historical background on Pure Land in Chinese Buddhism. It aims to provide a bigger historical framework for understanding Pure Land in order to demonstrate how a variety of understandings of Pure Land have always coexisted throughout Chinese history. It also examines the relationship between Pure Land and lay Buddhism, and between Pure Land and Chan.

Chapter 4 examines different approaches to Pure Land at DDM as an institution and on the level of practice. It discusses the establishment of DDM as a modernist attempt to

build a Pure Land on Earth within contemporary society. The second half of the chapter introduces the sub-groups of DDM that are principally involved with Pure Land practice, including the Merit and Wisdom Chanting Society (福慧念佛會), and the End-of-Life Chanting Group. Furthermore it contains a "thick description"[52] of DDM's *nianfo* group practice to illustrate how *nianfo* is practiced at DDM.

In Chapter 5, I turn to Sheng Yen's writings on the Pure Land, the practice of *nianfo* and concept of a Pure Land on Earth, hoping to shed light on his understanding of modernist and traditional Pure Land concepts, and to show how these two approaches relate to each other in his thinking. It will also show the importance of Mind-Only conceptions in Sheng Yen's understanding of Pure Land.

Finally, in chapter 6, I draw some conclusions, especially with regard to conceptions of the modernization of Chinese Buddhism. Instead of understanding modernization as a linear process I will suggest a hybrid model, as developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, to describe the phenomenon.

The appendix contains a transcription of an interview I conducted with Guojing, Director of the Center for Research and Practice at Dharma Drum Buddhist College, and an expert on Sheng Yen's Pure Land thought.[53]

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[52] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

[53] http://www.ddbc.edu.tw/zh/buddhist_studies/faculty.html accessed June 14, 2014.

2. Sheng Yen: A Chinese Monk Navigating Through Modernity

2.1. Chinese Buddhism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century

The Nineteenth Century saw a series of tumultuous events in Chinese history. Two events stand out: The Taiping rebellion and the First Opium War. The Taiping rebellion was led by Hong Xiuquan (洪秀全, 1814-1864 CE), a militant evangelist, who established his Great Peaceful Heavenly Kingdom (太平天國, 1851-1864 CE) in large parts of southern China. The Qing government with the help of French and British armed forces finally crushed the rebellion.[54] The second event is the First Opium War, when the British forced China to open its markets to the opium trade, is usually considered in Chinese literature as the start of the early modern era (近代).[55] The forces of Western imperialism in conjunction with the Taiping rebellion greatly weakened the Manchu government. The aftermath of these events eventually resulted in the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911. These events and the subsequent infusion of Western ideas and personnel into China challenged the self-perception of the Chinese.[56] In their search for the causes of the unequal relationship with the West they began to turn to their own culture.
The assumptions and conjectures which resulted from this introspection resulted in philosophies numerous and varied which ranged from a radical iconoclasm to a

[54] John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China a New History* second enlarged edition (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2006), 206-216.
[55] Fairbank and Goldman, *China a New History,* 198-205.
[56] Pittman, Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism, 14.

conservative petrification.[57] Many reform-minded literati looked to Western culture as a model to find ways to re-strengthen China. Western culture, religion and especially education were perceived as the key to the renewal of China's culture.

This tempestuous era was especially devastating for Chinese Buddhism. The followers of the Taiping rebellion had destroyed Buddhist monasteries in the south. Many Buddhist libraries and scriptures were burned.[58] Consequently some lay Buddhists, such as Yang Wenhui (楊文會, 1837-1911 CE) were concerned about the destiny of Buddhism and engaged in the publishing of Buddhist sutras.[59] Many other Chinese intellectuals on the other hand blamed Buddhism for being responsible for China's backwardness. The monastic sangha was perceived by many as "to be primarily engaged in performing rites for the dead for personal financial gain and were judged largely incapable of contributing much of significance toward national goals."[60] Protestant missionaries, supported by Western forces, proselytized aggressively during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They too criticized Buddhism as superstitious and escapist.[61]

With the end of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic, a secularization model was introduced which required legitimate religions to conform to church-like institutional models in order to distinguish them from popular religious worship places.[62] Mimicking protestant conceptions of religion, Buddhism was to retreat to the realm of

[57] Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy,* combined edition, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).
[58] Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism,* 35.
[59] Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism,* 40-45.
[60] Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism,* 28.
[61] Gareth Fisher, "Buddhism in China and Taiwan," in David L. McMahan, ed., *Buddhism in the Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 70.
[62] Fisher, "Buddhism in China and Taiwan," 70.

private belief. Several formerly accepted religious practices came to be labeled superstitions (迷信). The KMT (國民黨) launched campaigns against superstitious practices; this was followed by attacks against an even wider range of religious practices by the subsequent communist government. If Buddhism wanted to survive the new era, it had to respond to these challenges.[63] Buddhists responded in two ways to the new situation: (1) they established national associations to which local temples became affiliated and (2) a group of reform-minded Buddhists aimed to transform Buddhism from within.[64]

Lin Chi-Hsien identifies four generations of Buddhist modernizers in China: (1) Yang Wenhui, (2) Taixu and Ouyang Jian (歐陽漸, 1871-1943 CE), (3) Yinshun, Cihang (慈航, 1893-1954 CE), Dongchu (東初, 1907–1977 CE), (4) Hsing Yun (星雲), Cheng Yen (證嚴), and Sheng Yen.[65]

Yang Wenhui felt that in order to reform Buddhism, one must first achieve a thorough understanding of the Buddhist scriptures.[66] He had many famous students, one of whom came to be perceived as the embodiment of a Chinese Buddhist modernizer, Taixu. Taixu criticized the Buddhism of his time for being detrimentally preoccupied with funeral services and deathbed chanting. Pittman writes: "As an ethical pietist, Taixu called for an engagement with, rather than a withdrawal from, the issues of the socio-political

[63] Fisher, "Buddhism in China and Taiwan," 71.
[64] Fisher, "Buddhism in China and Taiwan," 71.
[65] Lin Qixian, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang de shijian yu hongyang," in Shengyan yanjiu diyi ji (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2010), 156.
[66] Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 41.

world."[67] Therefore, he developed concepts to promote reform of the monastic sangha.[68] In order to enhance monastic education, he established Buddhist studies academies (佛學院). Although most of Taixu's ideas were never actualized, he nevertheless developed the very influential concept of Buddhism for the human realm/life, or *Rensheng/ Renjian* (人生/人間) Buddhism.[69] Instead of being solely concerned with the dead, he wanted Buddhism to benefit the living. Therefore he aimed to establish a Pure Land on Earth. Pittman writes:

> "[H]is views on the realization of that ideal were far from those of the mainstream of the contemporary Sangha. Rather than focusing on the glories of distant pure lands, which were accessible through reliance on the spiritual merit and power of other great bodhisattvas and Buddhas, Taixu visualized this earthly world transformed into a pure land by the dedication and sacrificial hard work of thousands of average bodhisattvas who were mindful of what their concerted witness could mean. Most Chinese Buddhists were content to prayerfully await their rebirth in a celestial pure land; Taixu was impatient about establishing a pure land on earth."[70]

With the establishment of the People's Republic of China, and due to the anti-religious stance of the Communist Party, the prospects for Buddhism in China seemed to be anything but rosy. Many Buddhist monastics therefore left China and fled with the KMT government to Taiwan. Amongst these monks from the mainland was another famous

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[67] Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism,* 60.
[68] Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism,* 232-236.
[69] Although nowadays it is common to subscribe the term *renjian fojiao* to Taixu and the term *rensheng fojiao* to Yinshun, Bingenheimer has shown that Taixu in fact used both terms equally. However in the later part of his life he came to prefer *rensheng fojiao* over *renjian fojiao*. Marcus Bingenheimer, "Some Remarks on the Usage of Renjian Fojiao," in *Development and Practice of Humanitarian Buddhism* (Hualian: Tzu Chi University Press, 2007), 145-151.
[70] Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism,* 222.

reformer, Yinshun.[71] Yinshun was a student of Taixu who eventually became very influential in the Buddhist world of Taiwan. Unlike Taixu, Yinshun was not an activist but chose the life of a scholar as a platform from which to reform Chinese Buddhism. Yinshun introduced an historical research perspective to the Chinese Buddhist world.[72] He held the view that Buddhism over the centuries came to be defiled with Chinese folk religious elements and therefore advocated a *Renjian* Buddhism that he understood as a return to early Buddhism and Madhyamika.[73] However, despite their immense importance within Buddhism, when the reformers came to Taiwan from the mainland, they were perceived as foreigners, outsiders. This and the political circumstances in Taiwan under martial law limited their influence towards the Taiwanese population outside of Buddhist circles.

This changed with the next generation of Buddhist modernists: Hsing Yun, Cheng Yen, and Sheng Yen, all three of whom identify with the project of *Renjian* Buddhism and the concept of Establishing a Pure Land on Earth, and established multinational organizations to realize these concepts. Cheng Yen, a disciple of Yinshun, and the only female as well as the only Taiwanese born of the three, established Tzu Chi (慈濟), an international active disaster relief organization; Hsing Yun founded the biggest of the *Renjian* Buddhist groups, Foguangshan (佛光山); and Sheng Yen, whose teachings and whose organization Dharma Drum Mountain (法鼓山) are the topic of this thesis.

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[71] For a study about Yinshun in German, see: Marcus Bingenheimer, "Der Mönchsgelehrte Yinshun (1906*) und seine Bedeutung für den Chinesisch-Taiwanischen Buddhismus des 20. Jahrhunderts" (Ph.D. diss. Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2004).

[72] Bingenheimer, "Der Mönchsgelehrte Yinshun," 13.

[73] Bingenheimer, "Some Remarks on the Usage of Renjian Fojiao," 153.

2.2. Sheng Yen's biography

This section provides a short sketch of Sheng Yen's life. It does not aim to be a comprehensive description, but merely to give a brief overview about his life and work, emphasizing his connections to Pure Land.

Several biographies of Sheng Yen exist. The most comprehensive is probably Lin Chi-Hsien's biography in two volumes *Seventy Years Chronicle of Master Sheng Yen* (聖嚴法師七十年譜). Running to 1185 pages, it provides a detailed description of Sheng Yen's life, plus a chronology and list of publications including translations of Sheng Yen's writings into foreign languages until the year 2000.[74] Two other biographies in Chinese are Chen Qigan's (陳啟淦) *The Story of Master Sheng Yen: Teacher of the Human Realm* (聖嚴法師的故事:人間導師),[75] and an anthology by Lin Huangzhou (林煌洲) and others, *Master Sheng Yen's Thought, Conduct, and Virtues* (聖嚴法師思想行誼).[76] There are two autobiographies in English: *Footprints in the Snow*[77] and *A Journey of Learning and Insight*.[78] The latter was first published in Chinese under the title 聖嚴法師學思歷

[74] Lin, *Shengyan fashi qishi nianpu*. Unless otherwise stated, data used for this section originates from the chronology at the end of the book, pp. 1057-1070. Data regarding Sheng Yen's years after 1999 are based on: Master Sheng Yen, *A Journey of Learning and Insight* (Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing Corporation, 2012).
[75] Chen Qiga, *Shengyan fashi de gushi: Renjiandaoshi* (Taibei: Wenjing she, 2009).
[76] Lin Huangzhou, *Shengyan fashi sixiang xingyi* (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2004).
[77] Sheng Yen, *Footprints in the Snow* (New York: Doubleday, 2008).
[78] Sheng Yen, *A Journey of Learning and Insight*.

程. Including this work, there are sixteen autobiographical works and travel reports written by Sheng Yen in Chinese.[79]

2.2.1. Early years

Sheng Yen was born in Xiaoniang Harbor, Jiangsu province in December 1930. His lay name was Zhang Baokang (張保康). Like most of his contemporaries in China, he experienced the turmoil of the first half of the 20th century. He grew up poor, but still had the good fortune to receive four years of elementary school education. At the age of 14 he was ordained as a novice at Lang Mountain Guangjiao Temple (廣教寺) at Nantong.

In 1947, Sheng Yen enrolled at Jing'an monastery's Buddhist Academy (靜安寺佛學院). His teachers at the Jing'an Buddhist Academy were second-generation disciples of Taixu, whose goal was to reform and reorganize monastic education.[80] However, in 1949, only two years later, Sheng Yen disrobed and joined the communication corps of the KMT forces, with whom he relocated to Taiwan.

Although he spent a further 10 years in the army in Taiwan, Sheng Yen still regarded himself as a monk and continued to read and write about Buddhism. He even went to

[79] Shengyan fashi, *fagu quanji*, (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2005): *liuri jianwen* 留日見聞, *xuesi licheng* 學思歷程, *guicheng* 歸程 , *fayuan xieyuan* 法源血源, *foguo zhi lu* 佛國之旅, *jinshan you li* 金山有鑛, *huozhai qingliang* 火宅清涼, *dongxinanbei* 東西南北, *chunxiaqiudong* 春夏秋冬, *xingyun liushui* 行雲流水, *bubu lianlian* 步步蓮華, *konghua shuiyue* 空花水月, *liangqian nian xingjiao* 兩千年行腳, *bao jiyou gaofeng* 抱疾遊高峰, *zhengzheng da haonian* 真正大好年, *wubai puda zou jianghu* 五百菩薩走江湖.

[80] Lin, *Shengyan fashi qishi nianpu,* 63.

Shandao temple (善導寺) to meet with Yinshun, who was the abbot there at the time.[81] His writings, especially from 1957 to 1960, accordingly focus on the thinking of Taixu, Yang Wenhui and Yinshun and their ideas about modernizing Buddhism.[82] Like them, Sheng Yen perceived Chinese Buddhism at the time as being in a state of decline,[83] with Buddhists lacking a basic understanding of Buddhist concepts and Buddhist monastics focusing mainly on conducting rituals for money; but, at the same time, he was also convinced that Buddhist rituals, like reciting sutras and repentance ceremonies, constituted a vital part of the tradition. Sheng Yen proposed a Buddhism that aimed to benefit society, was based on sound Buddhist doctrine and at the same time provided rituals as a method of practice and guidance.[84]

2.2.2. Second ordination, reclusion and Japan

Sheng Yen left the army in January 1960 and took the monastic vows for the second time; this time under Dongchu, the 50th generation Dharma heir to the Caodong school of Dongshan Liangjie (洞山良价). He gave Sheng Yen the Dharma name Huikong Sheng Yen (慧空聖嚴),[85] Dongchu was also a student of Taixu who had published the periodical *Humanity* (人生), whose title was an allusion to Taixu's concept of *Rensheng*

[81] Sheng Yen, *A Journey of Learning and Insight,* 39.
[82] Sheng Yen, *A Journey of Learning and Insight*, 43.
[83] Lin, *Shengyan fashi qishi nianpu*, 128.
[84] Sheng Yen, *A Journey of Learning and Insight,* 43-46.
[85] Sheng Yen, *A Journey of Learning and Insight,* 48.

Buddhism (人生佛教). Though discontinued in 1961, the periodical was later revived by Sheng Yen in 1982, and continues to be published to this day.[86]

As far as the present study is concerned, what is of interest is that, though having a strong inclination towards modernist interpretations of Chinese Buddhism,[87] as early as 1960, Sheng Yen had led a seven-day *nianfo* retreat (佛七).[88]

Nianfo is commonly regarded as a more traditional Buddhist practice in the sense that it requires faith in supernatural beings and is especially associated with Pure Land monks like Yinguang (印光, 1862-1940 CE)[89] and his famous lay disciple in Taiwan Li Bingnan (李炳南, 1891-1986).[90]

Modernists like Taixu and Yinshun on the other hand, had a more critical take on devotional Pure Land practices.[91] Though not condemning them completely, both perceived Pure Land devotion as an inferior form of Buddhism.[92] Students of Yinshun, for example, published New Treatise on the Pure Land (淨土新論),[93] a book based on

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[86] Hu, *Sharing Dharma Drum Mountain* (Taipei: Dharma Drum Corporation, 2005), 176.
[87] Yu, "A Tentative Exploration," 6.
[88]Shengyan, *Nianfo shengjingtu* (Taibei, Fagu wenhua, 1997) 3. And Shengyan, *Shengyan fashi jiao jingtu famen* (Taibei, Fagu wenhua, 2010), 3. Both mention Sheng Yen leading a seven-day *nianfo* retreat at *Dongshan si* (東山寺) in Pingtung County. However, this is not mentioned in Lin *70 years*; instead Lin writes that Sheng Yen participates in a seven-day *nianfo* retreat in Beitou's *Zhonghua fojiao wenhua guan* (中華佛教文化館) right before his second ordination: Lin, *Shengyan fashi qishi nianpu,* 117.
[89] Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan,* 115-119.
A study on Yinguang's life and thought in Chinese is Chen Jianhuang, *Yuantong zhengdao: Yinguang de jingtu qihua* (Taibei: Dongda, 2002).
[90] Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, 124-126.
[91] For the differences between Yinshun and Yinguang's approaches to Pure Land, see Chen Jianhuang, "Yinshun daoshi yu Yinguang dashi de jingtu guandian bijiao - yi 「qili qiji」yu「chengming nianfo」wei hexin," in Renjian fojiao yanjiu (2013): 71-104.
[92] Bingenheimer, "Der Mönchsgelehrte Yinshun," 102.
[93] An excellent study on *jingtu xinlun* is: Jiang Canteng, *Taiwan dangdai jingtu sixiang de xin Dongxiang* (Taibei: Xin wenfeng, 2001).

Yinshun's 1951 lectures in Hong Kong, and a critical examination of Chinese Pure Land devotion. Charles B. Jones writes:

> "It is difficult to read Yinshun's *New Treatise on the Pure Land* without perceiving the distaste for the kind of Pure Land piety advocated by Yinguang and popular throughout China. This simple and exclusive devotion to the practice of reciting the Buddha's name in the hopes of gaining rebirth in the Western Paradise must have appeared to him to be at the heart of the crass, popular Buddhism that he had vowed to reform in his youth."[94]

Yang Huinan (楊惠南) interprets the controversy that this publication and a series of lectures Yinshun gave about Pure Land thought (念佛淺說)[95] caused, which led to Yinshun's resignation from his position at Shandao temple, as an example of the power struggle between traditionalists and modernist reformers in Taiwan.[96]

Differing from Yinshun, Sheng Yen seemed to have a more "ecumenical" approach towards Pure Land, simultaneously valuing faith in the Buddha and the historical study of Buddhist concepts.[97] Chiang Tsan-teng also suggests that Sheng Yen has a more practical approach, which takes into account the differences between an academically minded audience and one consisting of pious believers (凡夫).[98]

In 1961, Sheng Yen received his full ordination and shortly afterwards embarked on a six-year solitary retreat at Chaoyuan temple (朝元寺) in Kaohsiung County, southern Taiwan, spending his time in reclusion on intense Buddhist study and practice. He

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[94] Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, 126.
[95] Bingenheimer, "Der Mönchsgelehrte Yinshun," 101.
[96] Yang Wenhui, Dangdai fojiao sixiang zhanwang (Taibei: Dongda, 1991), 21.
[97] Sheng Yen, *A Journey of Learning and Insight,* 40.
[98] Jiang Canteng, *Taiwan dangdai jingtu sixiang de xin Dongxiang*, 43.

continued to write about a variety of topics, including Buddhism and Christianity and comparative religion, but his main focus of study was the Vinaya and the Agamas. Besides meditating and conducting morning and evening ceremonies, Sheng Yen continued to write and participate in intellectual discourse. At the time, Buddhism came under criticism by Taiwanese Catholics. Sheng Yen responded with several articles, which were then collected into book form. He even received visitors, for example Hsing Yun (星雲), who was by then already a renowned figure in Taiwanese Buddhism.[99] Jimmy Yu writes about Sheng Yen's time in southern Taiwan:

> "He produced two of his most influential works based on his studies of the *Āgamas* during this period, both were published in 1965: *Jielü xue gangyao* 戒律學綱要 (*Essentials of Monastic Precepts and Regulations*) and *Zhengxin de fojiao* 正信的佛教 (*Orthodox Chinese Buddhism*). Arguably these two books represent the foundation of his understanding of Chinese Buddhism."[100]

In 1969, a year after ending his solitary retreat, Sheng Yen moved to Japan to pursue an academic education. He wrote his master's thesis on the Tiantai monk Huisi (慧思)[101] and his doctoral thesis on the Ming dynasty monk Ouyi Zhixu (藕益智旭, 1599-1655 CE).[102] The 9th Pure Land patriarch Ouyi Zhixu, although mainly identified by many scholars with the Tiantai tradition, stressed religious cultivation over sectarianism and doctrinal specialization. He also popularized the combination of Pure Land and Chan.[103]

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[99] Lin, *Shengyan fashi qishi nianpu,* 149-209.
[100] Yu, "A Tentative Exploration," 6.
[101] Title of his master's thesis: *Dasheng zhiguan famen* 大乘止觀法門. See Lin, *Shengyan fashi qishi nianpu,* 233.
[102] Sheng Yen's Ph.D. thesis in Chinese: Shengyan fashi, *Mingmo zhongguo fojiao zhi yanjiu* (Taipei: Fagu wenhua, 2009) 聖嚴法師, *明末中國佛教之研究* (台北市: 法鼓文化, 2009).
[103] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism*, 3 and 30.

Sheng Yen appreciated his dual emphasis on mediation and the study of doctrine and his nonsectarian view of the Chinese Buddhist schools.[104] A more detailed examination of Ouyi Zhixu and Ming dynasty Buddhism will be provided in chapter 3.

After six years of what Jimmy Yu calls the "integrative years of his intellectual development,"[105] Sheng Yen received his doctor in literature from Rissho University. After receiving his doctoral degree, Sheng Yen accepted an invitation from an overseas Chinese Businessman in New York. In the US he served the Buddhist Association of the United States, a Chinese Buddhist organization, founded by his benefactor. In January 1977, Sheng Yen participated at a seven-day *nianfo* retreat in New York.[106] In November of the same year, Sheng Yen received Dharma transmission in the Caodong Chan lineage from his teacher Dongchu, making him the 51th Dharma heir.[107] Sheng Yen transitioned from being a scholar monk with interest in the vinaya, the Agamas and Ming dynasty Chinese Mahayana into a Chan master. According to Jimmy Yu, this change was triggered by Sheng Yen's encounters with several young Americans who wished to learn meditation.[108] Albeit, Jimmy Yu states that for Sheng Yen "Chan Buddhism was merely a gateway front for him to reconstruct a more effective form of Chinese Buddhism for the modern world."[109] For the rest of his life, Sheng Yen continued to travel back and forth between Taiwan and the US. In 1977, he led his first Chan retreat in the US. That same

[104] Sheng Yen, *A Journey of Learning and Insight,* 134.
[105] Yu, "A Tentative Exploration," 7.
[106] Lin, *Shengyan fashi qishi nianpu,* 291.
[107] Lin, *Shengyan fashi qishi nianpu,* 297.
[108] Yu, "A Tentative Exploration," 11.
[109] Yu, "A Tentative Exploration," 11.

year, his teacher Dongchu passed away, from whom he inherited the Chunghu-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Culture (中華佛教文化館) and Nung Chan temple (農禪寺). A year later he received Dharma transmission in the Linji Chan tradition from Lingyuan (靈源, 1902-1988 CE), making him a Dharma heir of both of the existing Chan lineages.[110]

2.2.3. United States and Taiwan

In 1979, he established a Chan meditation center in New York. Indeed, his time in the US was mainly characterized by his work as a Chan teacher. Sheng Yen began to regularly lead Chan meditation retreats in North America, Taiwan, and several European countries.

Though by now a lineage holder in both the Caodong and Linji traditions and after earning his reputation as a Chan monk, he still continued to conduct *nianfo* retreats in Taiwan. In 1982 the Merit and Wisdom Chanting society was established at Nung Chan Temple[111], and from around the same time on, Sheng Yen began to lead annual seven-day *nianfo* retreats in Taiwan.[112]

With the establishment of the Chung Hwa Institute of Buddhist studies (中華佛學研究所) in Beitou, Taiwan, in 1985, Sheng Yen made substantial progress in another matter

[110] Lin, *Shengyan fashi qishi nianpu,* 325.
[111] Hu, *Sharing Dharma Drum Mountain*, 170.
[112] Shengyan, *Shengyan fashi jiao jingtu famen,* 3.

that had been close to his heart since his early youth, namely the improvement of the education of the Sangha and Buddhist education in general. Two years later the institution finally received official recognition by Taiwan's Ministry of Education. In his analysis of the development of Sheng Yen's Chan teachings, Jimmy Yu calls this his fourth and final phase:

> "During the last phase, he began to apply his Chan teachings to other areas of interest such as Buddhist education, social and philanthropic programs for Taiwan, and the practical and social issues of contemporary life. The last phase of his teaching of Chan as Education appropriated the discourse of "Establishing a Pure Land on Earth"."[113]

2.2.4. Dharma Drum Mountain

In 1989, the foundation for his late work was laid with the founding of Dharma Drum Mountain, whose maxim was to Uplift the Character of Humanity and Build a Pure Land on Earth. According to Chiang Tsan-teng[114], education played a crucial role in the establishment of Dharma Drum. In comparison to Tzu Chi (慈濟) and Foguangshan (佛光山), Dharma Drum developed relatively late. To ensure its access to the religious market in Taiwan, Sheng Yen singled out the field of education as DDM's unique characteristic. Sheng Yen adopted the reputation he earned by receiving his PhD from an overseas university to promote the establishment of Dharma Drum College of Humanities and Social Science (法鼓文化社會大學). If Chinese Buddhism wanted to prosper it had to improve the education of the laity and the sangha. Thus, Sheng Yen successfully

[113] Yu, "A Tentative Exploration," 11.
[114] Jiang Canteng, *Renshi taiwan bentu fojiao* (Taibei: Taiwan shangwu, 2012), 110.

linked the future destiny of Buddhism with the development of his own organization. This strategy turned out to be immensely effective, especially from 1989 to 1992. Unfortunately, when the Ministry of Education in 1992 granted four Buddhist institutions the right to establish colleges, DDM wasn't one of them.[115] It took another six years, and in 1998, the Ministry of Education approved the application to establish the Dharma Drum College of Humanities and Social Science.[116] Today, in 2014 the College is finally under construction.

Besides promoting the enhancement of Buddhist education, Sheng Yen developed the concept of Spiritual Environmentalism (心靈環保) to advocate the Establishment of a Pure Land on Earth. Therefor he promoted the implementation of Chan meditation to the life style of the new emerging class of Taiwanese urban business people.[117] One way to do so was to hold meditation classes and retreats aimed at the Taiwanese social elite (e.g. 精英禪三). These persons, high ranking politicians, doctors, lawyers and representatives of the media and cultural institutions, were meant to serve as multipliers for Sheng Yen's vision. [118]

Thus, the following decades of Sheng Yen's work in Taiwan were characterized by the development of Dharma Drum Mountain, its public outreach campaigns, and its educational endeavors. In 1992, Sheng Yen proposed that the core of DDM's vision should be Protecting the Spiritual Environment. Based on this vision, Sheng Yen went on to launch several other campaigns during the 1990s and 2000s. Some of these campaigns,

[115] Canteng, *Renshi taiwan bentu fojiao,* 110.
[116] Hu, *Sharing Dharma Drum Mountain*, 181.
[117] Jiang Canteng, *Zhanhou taiwan hanchuan fojiao shi* (Taibei: Wunan, 2011), 116.
[118] Jiang Canteng, *Taiwan jindai fojiao de biange yu fansi* (Taibei: Dongda, 2003), 116.

such as the Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance campaign (心四五運動) and the Six Ethics of the Mind campaign (心六論) are discussed in detail in chapter 4.

In 1996 the construction of Dharma Drum's extensive building complex in Jinshan province in Northern Taiwan was completed and the new headquarters' inauguration took place. The presence of many high-ranking officials and celebrities at this occasion once again demonstrates Sheng Yen's interconnectedness with the leading class of the country.[119]

In addition to his efforts in Taiwan, Sheng Yen continued to be active in the West, mainly in the US. In 1997, Sheng Yen set up the Dharma Drum Retreat Center in Pine Bush, New York.[120] Finally, in 2001, after over a decade of effort promoting Buddhist education in Taiwan, he established the Dharma Drum Sangha University in Jinshan, followed by Dharma Drum Buddhist College in 2007. In 2006, he established his own Buddhist school, the Dharma Drum lineage (中華禪法鼓宗).[121] In his earlier writings, Sheng Yen was critical of Buddhist sectarianism and promoted Buddhism as a whole based on the Agamas.[122] Nevertheless, towards the end of his life he founded his own Buddhist school. According to Jimmy Yu, Sheng Yen did so as a response to a perceived crisis in Chinese Buddhism. For him "*zong* was a vehicle for the preservation, reformulation, and institutionalization of what he perceived as being the most useful aspects of Chinese Buddhism for modern society"[123]. Similarly, Lin Chihsien stresses

[119] Jiang Canteng, *Taiwan fojiao shi* (Taibei, Wunan, 2009), 116.
[120] Hu, *Sharing Dharma Drum Mountain,* 180.
[121] Jimmy Yu, "Revisiting the Notion of *Zong*: Contextualizing the Dharma Drum Lineage of Modern Chan Buddhism", *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 26 (2013): 113-151.
[122] Yu, "Revisiting the Notion of *Zong,"* 73.
[123] Yu, "Revisiting the Notion of *Zong,"* 144.

that Sheng Yen's school differs from those of the past. It may take Chan at the center but actually combines the different schools of Chinese Buddhism.[124]

Only three years later, in 2009, Sheng Yen passed away at the age of 79.

As can be surmised from the above, Pure Land has not received that much attention in Sheng Yen's work: no fewer than 24 of 102 of Sheng Yen's collected works concentrate on Chan, compared to only one book explicitly about Pure Land;[125] but neither can it be said that Sheng Yen rejected Pure Land. As early as 1960, long before his career as a Chan teacher started, Sheng Yen conducted a retreat in reciting the Buddha's name, while in 1982, his founding of the Merit and Wisdom Chanting Society and the commencement of annual *nianfo* retreats also demonstrate the importance of Pure Land, if not in Sheng Yen's thinking, then at least in his approach to practice. Even today, almost every branch of DDM in Taiwan conducts weekly group *nianfo* practice. This might be a reflection of the demographic situation of Buddhism in Taiwan, where today Pure Land is still the one of the most popular Buddhist practices,[126] but it also reveals Sheng Yen's ecumenical approach regarding the different Chinese Buddhist schools. Unlike, for example, Yinshun, who was highly critical of devotional Pure Land practices, Sheng Yen incorporated Pure Land into his endeavor to reform Chinese Buddhism. In fact, Sheng Yen considered Yinguang as one of the four great contemporary Buddhist masters, together with Hongyi (弘一), Xuyun (虛雲) and Taixu.[127] Just like Ouyi Zhixu, the

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[124] Lin, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang," 196.
[125] Yu Junfang, "Shengyan fashi yu dangdai hanchuan fojiao," *Shengyan yanjiu diyi ji* (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2010), 40.
[126] Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, 115.
[127] Shengyan fashi, *Shengyan fashi xuesi licheng* (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2014), 161.

Ming dynasty master who was the subject of his doctoral thesis, Sheng Yen tried to integrate the diverse traditions of Chinese Buddhism.

Sheng Yen's debt to Pure Land is more obvious in one other respect: in Dharma Drum Mountain's motto Building a Pure Land on Earth. Sheng Yen relates the establishment of Dharma Drum Mountain and its goal to build a Pure Land on Earth explicitly to the discourse of *Rensheng*/*Renjian* Buddhism (人間佛教/人生佛教). He sees his work as a continuation of a line from Yang Wenhui, through Taixu and Yinshun, to Dongchu. Yang distributed Buddhist literature, Taixu promoted *rensheng* Buddhism, Yinshun elaborated on it, Dongchu published the periodical *Rensheng*, and Sheng Yen founded DDM to establish a Pure Land on earth.[128]

As we can see, Sheng Yen aimed to implement a Pure Land on earth through the establishment of DDM. The means to reach this ambitious end is through education in a very broad sense. In order to provide a background for the understanding of Pure Land at DDM the next chapter turns first to the history of the concept in Chinese Buddhism.

[128] Sheng Yen quoted in: Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism,* 283-284.

3. Pure Land in Chinese Buddhism: Introduction into a General Concept in Chinese Buddhism

In order to understand Sheng Yen's notion of Pure Land and Pure Land practice at DDM, it would be useful to first understand the role of Pure Land in Chinese Buddhism. In China, Pure Land did not constitute an independent school, but was part of general Buddhist practice. Sheng Yen is a Chan monk, a Dharma heir of the Linji and Caodong traditions, and best known for promoting Chan practice and *Renjian* Buddhism. But despite this, Pure Land practices like *nianfo* and the notion of Pure Land play an important role at DDM. As previously noted, every branch of DDM in Taiwan holds weekly *nianfo* group practice, while seven-day *nianfo* retreats are held about twice a year. In addition to promoting *nianfo* as a form of religious cultivation, the organization also provides assistance with end of life chanting to the Taiwanese public. Thus we can see that Pure Land practices do indeed play a vital role at DDM. This is due to the role of Pure Land in Chinese Buddhism. This chapter provides a background for the inclusive approach towards Pure Land and Chan practice at DDM. It will first briefly summarize scholarly discussion of Pure Land in Chinese Buddhism, paying special attention to the relationship between Pure Land and Chan practice, and then highlight the links between lay Buddhism and Pure Land practice.

3.1. Understanding of Pure Land in Western scholarship

In the West, Pure Land Buddhism is still often perceived through the lens of Japanese Buddhism.[129] In Japan, Pure Land's identity is demarcated along the strict institutional lines separating Japanese Buddhism into different schools. In terms of its underlying beliefs, and especially of its religious practices, Pure Land in Japan is often presented as the antithesis of Chan (or more precisely, Zen), the former being a form of Buddhism that relies on faith in the power of Amitabha (他力), in contrast to the latter, an iconoclastic self-reliant form (自力). David W. Chappell writes:

> "Pure Land and Ch'an are often described as two major poles of Buddhist practice in East Asia. Pure Land devotees emphasize the inadequacies of their own capacities and the futility of their times; salvation can only be achieved at another time (in the next rebirth), in another place (the Western Pure Land), and through another power (Amitabha Buddha). By contrast, Ch'an affirms the completeness of the present moment and human capacities, collapsing the space-time distinctions of Pure Land symbolism into an existential challenge by arguing for the nonduality of oneself and the Buddha, as well as the identity of this realm and the Pure Land. Whereas Pure Land devotionalism calls upon an external power, Ch'an affirms self-reliance and rejects dependence upon external objects."[130]

However, several scholars have doubted the applicability to Chinese Buddhism of this narrative over recent decades. Possibly the first to do so was Yü Chün-fang, who, in her 1981 study of the Ming dynasty Buddhist monk Lianchi Zhuhong, already points to the fact that, in Chinese Buddhism, Pure Land was not an independent school, but a part of Buddhist practice in general.[131] In 1975, six years earlier, Sheng Yen received his

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[129] Jones, "Toward a Typology of Nien-fo," 219, 237.
[130] David W. Chappell, "From Dispute to Dual Cultivation: Pure Land Responses to Ch'an Critics," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986), p. 163.
[131] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 31.

doctorate for his dissertation, which dealt with another famous Ming monk, Ouyi Zhixu, also known for his nonsectarian approach to Buddhist practice. Over ten years later, in 1987, Sheng Yen published a scholarly introduction to late Ming Buddhism, which is renowned for its syncretism in general and the promotion of the dual practices of Chan and Pure land in particular. Given Sheng Yen's clear affinity with Ming period Chinese Buddhism, it seems appropriate to turn our attention in that direction if we wish to grasp Sheng Yen's perspective on Pure Land. But as notions of Pure Land were a part of Chinese Buddhism from its very beginnings[132] with its precursors already established in Indian Mahayana,[133] I will first provide a short sketch of scholarly discussion regarding the role of Pure Land in Chinese Buddhism before the Ming.

3.2. Issues regarding a Pure Land school and lineage

A question receiving particular attention in the scholarly literature is whether or not Chinese Pure Land should be considered an independent school (宗), especially with regard to issues of lineage. As Yü Chün-fang notes in her 1981 study, the Pure Land patriarchy was created retrospectively: there exists no direct historical relationship between the different Pure Land patriarchs, thus the Pure Land patriarchal tradition obviously meant something very different to the Chan patriarchal tradition; it does not emphasize a teacher-disciple lineage relationship between the patriarchs.[134]

[132] Sharf, "On Pure Land Buddhism," 286-387.
[133] Nattier, "The Indian Roots," 179–201.
[134] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 37.

Chen Chien-Huang similarly argues that the Pure Land Patriarchate differs from that of the Chan tradition. He states that it was created retrospectively to express esteem for the contribution of accomplished masters, who were looked up to as exemplars.[135]

Author	Text	1st patriarch	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
石芝宗曉 (1151-1214 CE)	樂邦文 (published 1200 CE)	慧遠(334-416 CE)	善導 (613-681 CE)	法照 (d.822 CE)	少康 (d. 805 CE)	省常 (959-1020 CE)	宗賾 (d.u.)
志盤 (fl. 1258-1269)	佛祖統紀 (published 1271 CE)	慧遠(334-416 CE)	善導 (613-681 CE)	承遠 (712-802 CE)	少康 (d. 805 CE	延壽 (903-975 CE)	省常 (959-1020 CE)
First attempt to create a Pure Land patriarchate by Song Tiantai monks[136]							

Yü determines that attempts to create a Pure Land patriarchal lineage began in the Song dynasty.[137] She relates these lineage construction attempts to competition between the Tiantai and Chan lineages that existed at the time. It was during the Song that Chan, the dominant school of Chinese Buddhism at the time, constructed its notion of a patriarchal lineage.[138] Since the monks who constructed the Pure Land patriarchate belonged to the declining Tiantai School, their attempts can be viewed as Tiantai's response to a precedent set by the construction of the Chan lineage.[139]

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[135] Chen Jianhuang, "Jindai queli huazong shisan wei zushi de jingguo jiqi shiyi," *Jingtu zong 4* (2013): 8-15.
[136] Chart based on: Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 36, and Sharf, "On Pure Land Buddhism," 291-292.
[137] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 36-37.
138 Morton Schlütter, *How Zen Became Zen: The Dispute Over Enlightenment and the Formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-Dynasty China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2010).
[139] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism*, 37.

Daniel Getz suggests that the construction of a Pure Land patriarchal lineage was a means used by Tiantai monastics to re-impose monastic control over flourishing lay Pure Land groups during the Southern Song.[140] He attests a close relationship between Tiantai and Pure Land communities at the time. Developing Stanley Weinstein's definition,[141] Getz defines school as possessing "a discrete self-contained doctrinal system, a continuous lineage, and/or some form of institutional autonomy."[142] Thus he too concludes that Chinese Pure Land doesn't constitute an independent Buddhist school.

In an article about Pure Land and Chan in medieval China, Robert Sharf argues that the wish to be reborn in a Pure Land was present in all Chinese (lay and monastic) forms of Buddhism from the beginning and has its precursors in Indian Mahayana. *Nianfo* practice, faith in Amitabha, and the so-called Pure Land sutras are common features of all Chinese Buddhists schools.[143] Sharf, too, claims that there was no independent Pure Land school in medieval China, in the sense that there is no historical lineage of Pure Land Patriarchs and no distinctively Pure Land approach to Pure Land scriptures or practice,[144] but rather that the notions of an orthodox Pure Land and an independent Chinese Pure Land school were first developed by Honen (法然) and further elaborated on by the Japanese Jodoshu (浄土宗) and Jodoshinshu (浄土真宗) schools.[145] Sharf believes that even the term Pure Land-Chan syncretism is misleading because it presupposes the

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[140] Daniel A. Getz, Jr., "T'ien-t'ai Pure Land Societies and the Creation of the Pure Land Patriarchate," in Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr., eds, *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 502.
[141] Stanley Weinstein, "Buddhism, Schools of: Chinese Buddhism," in Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987).
[142] Getz, Jr., "T'ien-t'ai Pure Land Societies," 477.
[143] Sharf, "On Pure Land Buddhism," 282-331.
[144] Sharf, "On Pure Land Buddhism," 302.
[145] Sharf, "On Pure Land Buddhism," 298-301.

existence of two independent entities which are to be combined,[146] and argues that there was never a particular Chan approach to Pure Land, but only different approaches, all based on Mahayana philosophy. [147]

On the other hand, however, Damian John Gauci claims that Chinese Pure Land can indeed be seen as an autonomous sect. He argues that Pure Land possesses its own doctrinal corpus, philosophical underpinnings and a historical lineage. Gauci refers to Jiacai's (唐迦才) oeuvre: his compiled biographies of the earliest devotees of the seventh-century Pure Land movement, and his philosophical work the *Jingtulun* (淨土論). Regarding religious practice, Gauci highlights the role of Shandao's (善導, 613-681 CE) Five Right Practices (五正行) and their emphasis on invocational *nianfo* (持名念佛).[148]

An in-depth discussion of this question falls outside the scope of this paper. But of interest for this study is the fact that there have always existed a variety of approaches to Pure Land in Chinese Buddhism. Regardless of whether or not Chinese Pure Land existed as an independent school, the truth remains that it was practiced by both Chan and Tiantai adherents and constitutes a part of Chinese mainstream Buddhism in general. Also noteworthy is the importance of Pure Land practices in lay Buddhism. I will therefore first discuss Pure Land's relationship to lay Buddhist practice, and then return to an examination of different approaches to Pure Land within Chinese Buddhism.

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[146] Sharf, "On Pure Land Buddhism," 285.
[147] Sharf, "On Pure Land Buddhism," 302.
[148] Damian John Gauci, "Chan-Pure Land: An Interpretation of Xu Yun's (1840-1959) Oral Instructions," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 24 (2011): 107.

3.3. Pure Land practices and lay Buddhism

Lay Buddhist organizations existed in China from the Tang onwards, but in the Song lay Buddhism became particularly closely linked to Pure Land practices.[149] Pure Land and lay Buddhism were (and continue to be) mainly linked in two aspects: religious practice and death/afterlife culture.

While meditation required lots of practice and effort, the practice of *nianfo* was perceived as easier and thus more accessible to lay Buddhists, who find invocational forms of *nianfo* particularly appealing.[150] Being more accessible than more complicated forms of visualization and meditation, invocational Pure Land practices constitute an alternative to elite literati and monastic forms of religiosity. Other forms of lay Buddhist practice include vegetarianism (齋), and the release of captured animals (放生).[151] Daniel Stevenson emphasizes the ability of these practices to meet the religious needs of the non- or semiliterate masses. For this reason, Pure Land also particularly appealed to women;[152] the Tiantai Pure Land societies founded by Chih-li (知禮, 960–1028 CE) did not purely consist of male elite members; there is evidence to suggest that they included people from all social strata, including women.[153]

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[149] Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism*, 30.
[150] Allan A. Andrews, "Lay and Monastic forms of Pure Land Devotionalism: Typology and History," *Numen* 40 (1993): 19.
[151] Daniel B. Stevenson, "Protocols of Power: Tz'u-yün Ysun-shih (964-1032) and T'ien-tai Lay Buddhist ritual in the Sung," in Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr., eds., *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 1999), p. 357.
[152] Daniel B. Stevenson, "Pure Land Worship in China," in Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Buddhism in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 360.
[153] Getz, Jr., "T'ien-t'ai Pure Land Societies," 496.

Seven-day Pure Land ritual retreats first appeared in the Song. They were usually free for the laity and held in monasteries. These retreats were led by monastics but attended by lay Buddhists, offering them access to the strict world of monastic practice.[154]

In addition to practicing invocational forms of *nianfo* in order to be reborn in the Pure Land, some lay Buddhists also practiced more elite forms of Pure Land practices. The Song dynasty also marks the first appearance of lay Buddhists renowned for their joint cultivation of Pure Land and Chan.[155]

The second important aspect linking lay Buddhism and Pure Land is Pure Land's relationship to the culture of death and afterlife in China.[156] It provided laymen with a means to ensure a better afterlife by promising rebirth in the Pure Land.

Ming dynasty Buddhism was not just characterized by monastics teaching the dual practice of Chan and Pure Land,[157] but also by a strong increase in the number of lay Buddhists. Ming lay Buddhist societies became much more institutionalized than their predecessors; they involved common people as well as the literati.[158] Buddhist reformers who were highly critical of their Chan monastic contemporaries sought greater lay involvement, and regarded *nianfo* as an integration of monastic and lay forms of practice.

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[154] Stevenson, "Pure Land Worship in China," 366.
[155] Shinko Mochizuki, "Pure Land History in China: A Doctrinal History Chapter 1: A general survey," trans. Leo Pruden, *Pacific World,* 3rd series, No. 3 (1999): 100.
[156] Daniel B. Stevenson, "Death-Bed Testimonials of the Pure Land Faithful," in Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Buddhism in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1995), p. 592; Andrews, "Lay and Monastic forms of Pure Land Devotionalism," 19.
[157] Mochizuki, "Pure Land History in China," 101.
[158] Edward T. Ch'ien, *Chiao Hung and the Restructuring of Neo-Confucianism in the Late Ming* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 22-24.

Nianfo here was not just perceived as *upaya* but as the most effective method to achieve Chan enlightenment.[159]

Lay Buddhist societies continued to flourish during the Qing dynasty,[160] when Pure Land teachings were followed by an even larger number of lay Buddhists.[161]

Today, in China as well as in Taiwan, Pure Land practices continue to play a central role in lay Buddhism.[162] In terms of practice, Pure Land methods dominate Taiwanese Buddhism today; even in Chan temples, the highest attendances are for Buddha recitation events.[163] As Raul Birnbaum states, devotional practices are the "meeting point that united practitioners across the range of Buddhist China, from the least educated to the most sophisticated traditional adherents."[164]

Finally, there is one other respect in which the importance of lay Buddhists has increased dramatically. While in the past, Chinese Buddhist monasteries acted as landlords and thereby acquired the financial base to ensure their existence, today's monasteries mainly rely on the donations of their lay followers.[165] Thus since many lay Buddhists are inclined towards Pure Land practices, Buddhists groups today make a point of integrating those practices into their approaches.

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[159] Sharf, "On Pure Land Buddhism," 321-322.
[160] Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism,* 33.
[161] Mochizuki, "Pure Land History in China," 102.
[162] Fisher, "Buddhism in China and Taiwan," 80-81.
[163] Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, 115.
[164] Raul Birnbaum, "Buddhist China at the Century's Turn," *The China Quarterly* 174 (2003): 434.
[165] Birnbaum, "Buddhist China at the Century's Turn," 447.

3.4. *Nianfo* (念佛)

Scholars have developed a variety of different typologies of *nianfo* practices. Yü Chün-fang[166] and Allan A. Andrews[167] perceive a bifurcation of approaches to *nianfo*, while Shih Heng-ching (釋恆清) proposes a threefold model[168] and Charles B. Jones has developed a fivefold typology.[169] To provide a brief overview, Yü and Jones' models are summarized below.

3.4.1. Yü Chün-fang's twofold model of *nianfo*

Yü detects two distinct traditions within Pure Land: one is based on the *Pratyutpanna-samadhi sutra* (般舟三昧經), stressing meditation on and visualization of Amitabha, and the resulting state of *samadhi*. This tradition is represented by Huiyuan (慧遠, 334–416 CE). The other tradition is based on the three Pure Land sutras and the practiced oral invocation of Amitabha. Its most well-known early proponents are Shandao, Tanluan (曇鸞, 476-542 CE) and Daochuo (道綽, 562-645 CE). Both traditions aim for rebirth in

[166] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 38.
[167] Andrews, "Lay and Monastic forms of Pure Land Devotionalism," 17. Andrews links the invocational approach based on the three Pure Land sutras to lay Buddhism and meditative forms of *nianfo* to monastic Buddhism.
[168] Shih Heng-ching, *The Syncretism of Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism* (New York: Asian Thought and Culture, 1992), p. 152. Basically adds a syncretic version of the first two categories developed by Yü.
[169] Jones, "Toward a Typology of Nien-fo."

Sukhavati, but the former also stresses the importance of seeing the Buddha in this life while in a state of *samadhi*.[170]

The concept of *nianfo samadhi* (念佛三昧) appears in the *Pratyutpanna-samadhi sutra* and the *Amitayurdhyana sutra* (佛說觀無量壽佛經). According to the former, *nianfo samadhi* is attained by contemplating the Buddha from one day and night up to seven-days. Thereby one will be able to see the Buddha, all the Buddha lands and Mt. Sumeru will become accessible. One can sit at the feet of the Buddha and listen to his preaching. Contemplating the marks of the Buddha, one will attain the *samadhi of emptiness* (空三昧), reaching the realization that one's mind is no different from the Buddha's mind.[171] The sutra gives practical recommendations on how to achieve this *samadhi* speedily. According to the sutra Buddha contemplation is a two-step process. Although it does not mention invocation, Zhiyi (智顗, 538-597 CE) based his Always-Walking Samadhi (常行三昧), which does involve invocation, on this sutra. Through this *samadhi* one realizes that Buddhahood can be obtained through one's own mind and body, then one realizes Buddhahood cannot be obtained through the mind or the body. Eventually one realizes that one cannot obtain the Buddha's form through mind or the Buddha's mind through form. Enlightenment is achieved when one understands that there is originally not a thing. According to Yü, this realization is very similar to Chan awakening.[172]

Another *nianfo* model is provided by Charles B. jones:

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[170] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 38.
[171] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 49.
[172] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 49-51.

3.4.2. Charles B. Jones' fivefold model of *nianfo*

Charles B. Jones identifies not two but five different approaches to *nianfo* within Pure Land. The main focus of his typology is the relation between *nianfo* and other practices. (1) *Nianfo* as one practice among many; (2) *Nianfo* as the only practice but in many forms; (3) *Nianfo* as a single practice; (4) *Nianfo* subordinated to other practices; (5) *Nianfo* not to attain rebirth but for other ends.[173]

(1) According to Jones, the first Pure Land patriarch Huiyuan, as well as Zhiyi promote *nianfo* as one practice among many. Huiyuan's practice is based on *the Pratyutpanna-samadhi sutra* and contains many other elements in addition to those focusing on Pure Land that are largely ignored by later proponents of the tradition. Likewise, for Zhiyi, *nianf*o is only one of four different kinds of practices (四種三昧) that further contain other subtypes and include a broad range of practices.[174]

(2) Jones provides two models for *nianfo* as the only practice but in many forms. The first is represented by Yinguang. Yinguang never developed a systematized approach to *nianfo*. He emphasized constancy of practice and aspiration but described *nianfo* as having differing goals, such as rebirth, attaining Samadhi, or even curing illness.[175]

[173] Jones, "Toward a Typology of Nien-fo."
[174] Jones, "Toward a Typology of Nien-fo," 221-222.
[175] Jones, "Toward a Typology of Nien-fo," 222-224.

The second form of *nianfo* as the only practice but in many forms, a more systemized approach, is exemplified by Guifeng Zongmi (圭峰宗密, 780–841 CE) and Zhuhong. Guifeng Zongmi, who tried to harmonize Chan and Huayan (華嚴) in the early ninth century,[176] developed a graded fourfold path approach to *nianfo*, from easy to most profound. He defined four categories of *nianfo*: (a) reciting Amitabha's name as described in the Amitabha sutra (稱名念佛); (b) concentrating one's attention on a statue of Amitabha (觀像念佛); (c) contemplating the miraculous characteristics of Amitabha as described in the *Amitayurdhyana sutra* (觀想念佛); (d) contemplating Amitabha as no different from one's self nature (實相念佛).[177] Yü calls this the four traditional kinds of *nianfo*. The first corresponds to Buddha invocation while the latter three correspond to Buddha contemplation.[178]

According to Jones, Zhuhong's model is a dual approach, combining Mind-Only Pure Land, with an approach based on the three Pure Land sutras. But Jones stresses that in Zhuhong's view, practitioners have to choose between either one of these approaches, since an unenlightened being cannot fully grasp both at the same time. Thus, for most practitioners, he recommends the approach based on the Pure Land sutras.[179]

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[176] Peter N. Gregory, "The Vitality of Buddhism in the Sung," in Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr., eds., *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), p. 9.

[177] Jones, "Toward a Typology of Nien-fo," 224-226.
English translations for the Chinese terms adopted from Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 45.

[178] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 45-46.

[179] Jones, "Toward a Typology of Nien-fo," 226-228.

(3): Jixing Chewu (際醒徹悟, 1741-1810 CE) practiced nianfo as a single practice, not as a graded path or even a heterogeneous variety of practices, but a practice that not only leads to rebirth in the Pure Land, but to the achievement of all the various goals of Buddhist practice.

The practitioner has to generate *bodhicitta,* faith in the Pure Land path and an aspiration to be born in the Pure Land. Furthermore, one should possess four kinds of mind (心): "a sense of shame at past wrongdoing, joy at having learned of the Pure Land path, sorrow at the weight of one's karmic obstructions, and gratitude for the Buddha having taught this path."[180]

(4): The fourth model is *nianfo* subordinated to other practices. Hanshan Deqing (憨山德清) saw *nianfo* as a practice inferior to Chan, but a practice that still had its place. Similarly, Xuyun (虛雲) subordinated Pure Land under Chan practices by applying a Mind-Only understanding to the Pure Land concept.[181]

(5): Jones last category is nianfo not to attain rebirth but for other ends. Some people practiced *nianfo* explicitly for other reasons than rebirth, such as attaining wealth, improving health, extending the emperor's life, or contributing to the prosperity of the people. This category includes modes of reciting the Buddha's name in (Japanese) folk religion.[182]

[180] Jones, "Toward a Typology of Nien-fo," 229.
[181] Jones, "Toward a Typology of Nien-fo," 230-231.
[182] Jones, "Toward a Typology of Nien-fo," 234-235.

Thus we can see that in the history of Chinese Buddhism a broad variety of approaches towards Pure Land exists, ranging from oral invocation in order to achieve rebirth in the Western Pure Land to meditational Mind-Only notions of Pure Land. The next section turns to syncretic forms of Chan and Pure Land.

3.5. Yongming Yanshou (永明延壽)

Traditionally, syncretic forms of Chan and Pure Land are traced back to Yongming Yanshou (永明延壽, 904-975 CE).[183] Yongming Yanshou was a Chan monk with a strong inclination towards Huayan. He is known for his syncretic approach towards doctrine and meditation (禪教), as well as Chan and Pure Land. Heng-ching Shih argues that, due to a strong antagonism prevalent at his time between adherents of Chan and Pure Land, Yongming Yanshou developed a syncretic approach towards Chan and Pure Land based on traditional Chinese concepts of harmony.[184] Some Chan monks perceived Pure Land adherents as simple minded, while Pure Land followers criticized Chan monks for being arrogant and undisciplined.

Additionally, lay Buddhism was growing in Yongming Yanshou's time, but due to very unstable socio-political conditions, many found Chan practice quite difficult to maintain.

[183] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 48.
[184] Heng-ching, *The Syncretism of Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism*, 153.

Pure Land practices on the other hand seemed to meet the needs of the people and provide an accessible soteriological means.[185]

3.6. Mind-Only Pure Land (唯心淨土)

Yongming Yanshou managed to combine these different practices by developing his Pure Land thought from the theory of Mind-Only Pure Land, which contrasts, for example, with Shandao's notion of *Zhifang* Pure Land (指方淨土), a term that denotes the actual physical existence of the Pure Land in the west. Mind-Only Pure Land on the other hand identifies the Buddha and the Pure Land with the purified mind. If one completely purifies one's mind through Buddhist practice, one attains the Pure Land.[186] This idea is based on a concept from the *Vimalakirti sutra* (維摩經): When the mind is purified, the Buddha lands will be purified.[187] In terms of practice, this kind of *nianfo* is to be applied with a "single-pointed concentration (一心不亂)."[188] Despite possessing this more philosophical understanding of the Pure Land, Yongming Yanshou nevertheless promoted the more literal notions of Pure Land mentioned above.[189] In order to harmonize literal and Mind-Only conceptions, he applies the Madhyamika concept of the two truths, expressed in Huayan terms, which determines two levels of truth: *li* (理) and

[185] Heng-ching, *The Syncretism of Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism*, 154.
[186] Heng-ching, *The Syncretism of Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism*, 146.
[187] T.14, P.538 c
[188] Heng-ching, *The Syncretism of Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism*, 161.
[189] Heng-ching, *The Syncretism of Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism*, 151.

shi (事). *Li* represents the higher level of principle, while *shi* represents the level of phenomena, the diverse ways in which *li* actualizes itself.[190] According to this model the Mind-Only Pure Land corresponds to the level of *li*, while a more literal understanding of the Pure Land would operate on the level of *shi* or conventional truth.[191]

Even though, as we have seen, syncretic approaches towards Chan and Pure Land have a long history in China, the Ming dynasty came to be era known for its syncretism within Buddhism as well as between Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism.[192] Ming dynasty Buddhist discourse continues to influence contemporary Buddhism in Taiwan and China,[193] and in fact two of Sheng Yen's scholarly books deal with this era. In the next section, we therefore turn our attention toward late Ming Buddhism.

3.7. Syncretic forms of Pure Land during the late Ming

For a long time, Ming dynasty Buddhism was a neglected research topic. When scholars of Chinese history studied the Ming dynasty, they mainly focused on Confucian literati culture, while scholars of Chinese Buddhism concentrated on the so-called golden age of Buddhism, the Tang dynasty. However, the late 1970s saw the publication of the first of three English language studies on the Four Eminent Monks of the Wanli Era (萬曆四高

[190] Heng-ching, *The Syncretism of Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism*, 152.
[191] Heng-ching, *The Syncretism of Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism*, 152.
[192] William Chu, "Syncretism Reconsidered: The Four Eminent Monks and Their Syncretistic Styles," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* (2006): 43-86. See also Mochizuki, "Pure Land Buddhism in China," 101.
[193] Birnbaum, "Buddhist China at the Century's Turn," 432.

僧), who are as follows: Hanshan Deqing (憨山德清, 1546-1623 CE), Daguan Zhenke (達觀真可, 1543-1603 CE), Zhuhong, and Ouyi Zhixu. The first of these studies to appear was Sung-peng Hsu's book *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Han-shan Te-ching.*[194] This was followed by Yü Chün-fang's 1981 study, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis,* and later by J. C. Cleary's English translation of Guoxiang's (釋果祥) 紫柏大師研究, published in 1989 under the English title: *Zibo: The Last Great Zen Master of China*.[195]

Some years earlier, in 1975, Sheng Yen had published his doctorate thesis in Japanese, which discussed late Ming dynasty Buddhism with a special focus on Ouyi Zhixu.[196] In 1987, he published another book, a more general study on late Ming dynasty Buddhism.[197] In the 1980s and 1990s, the two most influential scholars of sixteenth and seventeenth Buddhism were Chiang Tsan-teng and Araki Kengo (荒木見悟).[198]

There were an abundance of monastics in the late Ming who had a syncretic approach towards Buddhist practice, so many that a comprehensive discussion of them all here is not possible. I have chosen two of them in order to provide some context for Sheng Yen's approach. Sheng Yen categorized both Zhuhong and Zhixu as late Ming advocates of

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[194] Sung-peng Hsu, *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Han-Shan Te-Ch'ing* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979).
[195] J. C. Cleary, trans., *Zibo: The Last Great Zen Master of China* (Fremont: AHP Paperbacks, 1989).
[196] Sheng Yen, *Minmatsu Chugoku Bukkyo no kenkyu: toku ni Chigyoku no chushin to shite* (Tokyo: Sankibo busshorin, 1975).
[197] Shengyan, *Mingmo fojiao yanjiu* (Taibei, Dongchu, 1987).
[198] Jennifer Eichman, "Humanizing the Study of Late Ming Buddhism," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 26 (2013): 159.

Pure Land.[199] Below I provide brief sketches of Zhuhong and Zhixu's understanding of *nianfo* as a background for examining Sheng Yen's Pure Land thought and practice.

3.7.1. Lianchi Zhuhong (蓮池袾宏)

Zhuhong played a major role in the popularization of the dual practice of Chan and Pure Land. Yü argues that in the Ming context there was no clear distinction between orthodox Chan and popular Pure Land thought and practices.[200] The monastic tradition of the time was perceived as being in decline. Late Ming Chan was characterized as being plagued with unnecessary sectarian debates on lineage transmission.[201] Linji monks like Hanyue Fazang (漢月法藏, 1573-1635) and Miyun Yuanwu (密雲圓悟, 1566-1643) endlessly attacked monks of not only the Caodong tradition, but also other Linji monastics.[202] Though most Chan monks who promoted Pure Land practices belonged to the Caodong School,[203] some, like the Four Eminent Monks of the Wanli Era, did not have any lineage affiliation.[204] Monks like Zhuhong and Zhixu rejected rigid sectarianism and stressed a free creative synthesis of Chan, Pure Land and Vinaya.[205]

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[199] Eichman, "Humanizing the Study of Late Ming Buddhism," 165.
[200] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 30-31.
[201] Eichman, "Humanizing the Study of Late Ming Buddhism," 162.
[202] Wu Jiang, *Enlightenment in Dispute: The reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventh-century China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[203] Eichman, "Humanizing the Study of Late Ming Buddhism," 165.
[204] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 33.
[205] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 35-36.

Zhuhong's understanding of Chan and its relationship to Pure Land is described in his two works *Changuan cejin* (禪關策進) and *Huangming mingseng jilüe* (皇明名僧輯略). To Zhuhong, *nianfo* based on a dual approach to Chan and Pure Land meant a form of meditation. It was supposed to have the same effect as *gongan* (公案) did for Chan practice.[206] Reciting Amitabha's name (阿彌陀佛) functioned as a *huatou* (話頭) or *gongan*. Zhuhong emphasizes that *nianfo* is the best method for reaching salvation and enlightenment in the Dharma Ending Age (末法).[207] According to him, even ordinary people can become Buddhas by "single-mindedly chanting the Buddha's name (一心念佛)."[208] The proper method to do so is to is to 'hold (執持)' the name, which thereby enables the practitioner to attain "single-pointed concentration." For Zhuhong, "holding the name" has two meanings: to keep and accept the name and to constantly recollect the name. It can be invoked in a clear voice, secretly in silent, or by moving ones lips without making a sound. There are two kinds of "holding the name", which he expresses in Huayan terminology. One equates to *shi*, the other *li*, the latter being achieved by means of the former.[209] He uses this twofold model of Buddha invocation to harmonize the four traditional categories of *nianfo* mentioned above. To Zhuhong the link between Chan meditation and *nianfo* is the attainment of one mind (一心).[210]

Yü concludes that Zhuhong considered *nianfo* as (1) not inferior to Chan, (2) enabling the practitioner to attain the same goal as Chan, i.e. the realization of one's self nature or

[206] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism*, 53.
[207] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 56-57.
[208] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 58.
[209] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 59-60.
[210] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 61-62.

original mind, (3) more effective than Chan in the Dharma Ending Age. Yü argues that Zhuhong incorporated Chan within the Pure Land approach. He combined the two forms of nianfo as recognized by Yü above: meditational and invocational *nianfo*.[211]

3.7.2. Ouyi Zhixu (藕益智旭)

Zhixu similarly tried to combine different approaches, not just within Buddhism, but also to reconcile Buddhism with Daoism and Confucianism. He cultivated many different practices during his life: meditation (靜坐), divination (卜筮), writing with blood (寫書), redemption (贖非), chanting (持咒), repentance ceremonies (禮懺) and burning his arms and head (燒香).[212] These practices characterized different phases of his life, but Pure Land practices occupied a central place.[213] Particularly towards the end of his life, Pure Land practices gained more prominence.

From the age of 23, Zhixu started to practice *nianfo* in a devoted and concentrated manner (專志念佛). That year, on the day traditionally observed in China as the birthday of the Bodhisattva Dizang (地藏王菩薩), Zhixu took the 48 vows of the *Infinite Life sutra* (無量壽經). According to Sheng Yen, Zhixu's early understanding of Buddhism is still characterized by folk Buddhist ideas.[214] Additionally he practiced Chan meditation

[211] Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism,* 62.
[212] Shengyan, *Mingmo zhongguo fojiao zhi yanjiu*, 362.
[213] Shengyan, *Mingmo zhongguo fojiao zhi yanjiu*, 374.
[214] Shengyan, Mingmo*zhongguo fojiao zhi yanjiu*, 496.

based on the *Surangama sutra* (楞嚴經). Sheng Yen distinguishes Zhixu's Chan approach from that common of his time, calling the latter, based on *gongan* practice, lineage-Chan, while referring to Zhixu's approach, based on the Buddhist sutras, as Tathāgata-Chan (如來禪).[215]

From the age of 28, Zhixu cultivated a dual practice of Chan and Pure Land (有禪有淨土), an approach that had been developed by Yongming Yanshou.[216] By the age of 31, severe sickness forced Zhixu to give up Chan entirely, and focus on the invocation of Amitabha's name, which Sheng Yen relates to Tiantai. His practice at this time was influenced by the Tiantai monks Zhili and Youxi Zhuandeng (幽溪傳燈, 1554-1628 CE).[217]

He wrote two texts, in which he sets out his Pure Land thought: the *Amituojing yaojie* (阿彌陀經要解) and the *Lengyanjing wenju* (楞嚴經文句). He stresses the importance of self-power and *nianfo samadhi* and sees this as compatible with meditation (禪), teaching (教), and *vinaya* (律), which for him are all means to achieve rebirth in the Pure Land.[218] Zhixu's dual practice of Chan and Pure Land was influenced by the ideas of Zhuhong.[219] However, Sheng Yen identifies several substantial differences between the two. Sheng Yen identifies Zhuhong with Huayan, and Zhixu as belonging to Tiantai.[220]

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[215] Shengyan, Mingmo*zhongguo fojiao zhi yanjiu*, 496.
[216] Shengyan, Mingmo*zhongguo fojiao zhi yanjiu*, 496.
[217] Shengyan, Mingmo*zhongguo fojiao zhi yanjiu*, 475.
[218] Shengyan, Mingmo*zhongguo fojiao zhi yanjiu*, 497.
[219] Shengyan, Mingmo*zhongguo fojiao zhi yanjiu*, 474.
[220] Eichman, "Humanizing the Study of Late Ming Buddhism," 167. See also: Shengyan, *Mingmo zhongguo fojiao zhi yanjiu*, 374-375.

Here, Sheng Yen detects differences in their evaluation of Pure Land practices based on differing (Huayan and Tiantai) *panjiao* (判教) systems. The main sutras Sheng Yen links with Zhixu's thought are the *Surangama Sutra* and the *Brahmajala Sutra* (梵網經).[221]

3.8. Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen that understandings of Chinese Pure land as an independent school are based on the sectarian nature of Japanese Buddhism.

In Chinese Buddhism, Pure Land didn't constitute an independent school; rather, the notion of a Pure Land, the wish to be reborn in the Western Pure Land of Amitabha, and Pure Land practices like *nianfo* belonged to the general repertoire of Chinese Buddhism. Thus, at least from the Song dynasty, and even more so from the Ming dynasty on, syncretism, understood as an inclusive approach of a broad range of practices and concepts, became a defining characteristic of Chinese Buddhism in general and of Chinese Buddhism's relationship with Pure Land in particular.

Furthermore, Pure Land practices have strong connections to lay Buddhism. While meditation and visualization require lots of practice and commitment, invocational *nianfo*, and ethical practices like vegetarianism and the release of captured are more accessible to lay Buddhists. Besides, Pure Land and *nianfo* are strongly connected to Chinese death and afterlife culture.

[221] Shengyan, *Mingmo zhongguo fojiao zhi yanjiu*, 472.

Especially from the Ming onwards, Lay Buddhists grew in number, and in twenty and twenty-first century China and Taiwan have played a crucial role as financial supporters of monastic Buddhism.

With regard to the practice of *nianfo*, there are at least two basic approaches. The first is based on the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra*, stressing meditation on and visualization of Amitabha, and the state of *nianfo samadhi* attainable by these practices.

The second approach is based on the three Pure Land sutras, and stresses oral invocation of Amitabha. Both approaches aim for actual rebirth in *Sukhavati*.

In addition to these literal understandings, there also exists a more complex Mind-Only understanding of the place of the Pure Land: not regarding the Pure Land as an actual place somewhere outside of oneself, but rather equating the Pure Land with the purified mind. These understandings of Pure Land were held amongst others by Yongming and Zhuhong, stress the importance of single-pointed concentration in *nianfo* practice, and are based on concepts from the *Vimalakirti sutra*.

4. Constructing a Buddhist Utopia: Pure Land Practice at Dharma Drum Mountain

4.1. Building a Pure Land on earth

In 1989 Sheng Yen founded Dharma Drum Mountain in the Jinshan province of northern Taiwan. Its maxim is Uplifting the Character of Humanity and Creating a Pure Land on Earth. This maxim reflects the discourse of *Rensheng/Renjian* Buddhism of Taixu and his student Yinshun. The term Pure Land on Earth diminishes the otherworldly elements in traditional Buddhism in favor of a modernist version of the religion, which is more affirmative of worldly matters. It, Pure Land on Earth, is not just linked with DDM, but a popular concept in Taiwanese Buddhism today. Foguangshan, Tzu Chi and many other groups identify with *Renjian* Buddhism.[222]

Sheng Yen explicitly states, that he established Dharma Drum Mountain in order to establish a Pure Land on Earth.[223] To realize such an ambitious goal, Sheng Yen has to reach a wider audience than he did with his activities as a Chan teacher. Thus, from the late 80s on, Sheng Yen's focus shifted from Chan to the field of education.[224] Sheng Yen understands education in a very broad sense; it includes academic forms of education, religious education through formal Buddhist practice, as well as education of the general public through public outreach campaigns; notably, campaigns, like the Four Kinds of

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[222] Scott Pacey, "A Buddhism for the Human World: Interpretations of Renjian Fojiao in Contemporary Taiwan," *Asian Studies Review* 29 (2005): 445.

[223] Shengyan, *Shengyan fashi xuesi licheng,* 46.
"我自己在台灣創立「法鼓山」，目的是在「建設人間淨土」"

[224] Yu, "A Tentative Exploration," 29.

Environmentalism and the Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance Campaign which are aimed at a non-Buddhist general public.[225] Dharma Drum quotes Sheng Yen on one of their English web sites:

> "The intention of building a pure land on Earth is not to move the pure lands of the Buddhas in other parts of the universe to Earth, nor does it set out to manifest on Earth of today the scenery of pure lands as described in the Amitabha Sutra, the Medicine Buddha Sutra, the Akshobhya Buddha's Land Sutra, and the Sutra of Maitreya's Descending to Our World. Instead, it applies the concepts of the Buddhadharma to purify people's minds, and applies the exemplary lifestyle of Buddhists to purify our societies. By means of purifying our thoughts, life, and minds and by putting in step-by-step, persistent endeavor, we work to achieve the purification of the social and natural environment."[226]

As we can see here, DDM doesn't aim to transform the world into a replica of *Sukhavati*, the Pure Land of Amitabha, but its vision is to improve the world through the notion of purification. It is based on the assumption that the human mind is polluted and by purifying the mind one can purify society.[227] DDM strives to achieve this vision through the promotion of several campaigns and activities, directed both towards a Buddhist, as well as a non-Buddhist audience.[228] On the core of them are the concepts of Spiritual Environmentalism[229] and the Threefold Education (三大教育)[230] program. The next section turns first to the Threefold Education program in order to introduce the full range

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[225] Lin Qixian, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang yu shijian yu hongyang," in *Shengyan yanjiu diyi ji* (Taibei: fagu wenhua, 2010), 177.
[226] http://www.shengyen.org/e_content/content/about/about_02_1_1.aspx accessed March 4, 2014.
[227] Shengyan fashi, *Shengyan fashi xinling huanbao* (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2004), 24-25.
[228] Fagu wenhua bianjibu, *1989~2001 fagushan nianjian: zonglun (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2014), 10.*
[229] *Fagushan nianjian: zonglun,* 14.
[230] *Fagushan nianjian: zonglun,* 52-55.

activities provided by DDM to demonstrate how Sheng Yen intends to practically create a Pure Land on Earth.

4.1.1. Threefold Education program (三大教育)

A brief overview of Sheng Yen's Threefold Education program is provided here. It illustrates the full range of activities of DDM, through which Sheng Yen practically aims to implement a Pure Land on earth. In 1994 Sheng Yen articulated a Threefold Education program.[231] It consists of (1) extensive academic education (大學院教育); (2) extensive public Buddhist education (大普化教育); (3) and extensive social care education (大關懷教育).[232]

The first (1) one refers to the establishment of secular and Buddhist universities, to foster researchers on Buddhism and leaders in various other fields rooted in the value system of DDM. Thus, in 2007 DDM establishes Dharma Drum Buddhist College, a Buddhist university program providing undergraduate, graduate and PhD education in the field of Buddhist studies.[233] A secular liberal arts college received approval by the Ministry of Education in 1998. It is now in the process of construction. Additionally, in 2001, the

[231] http://www.shengyen.org/e_content/content/about/about_02_2.aspx accessed March 4, 2014.
[232] http://www.shengyen.org/e_content/content/about/about_02_1_2.aspx accessed March 4, 2014.
[233] http://www.dharmadrum.org/content/about/about2.aspx?sn=44 accessed March 4, 2014.

Buddhist Seminary of Dharma Drum Sangha University was founded.[234] It provides a systematized education for DDM's growing monastic community.

The second (2) refers to formal Buddhist practice, like Chan meditation classes, Chan retreats, seven-day *nianfo* retreats, *nianfo* group practice, repentance ceremonies, and Dharma assemblies. Furthermore it includes cultural activities like publishing, media production, and the organization of exhibitions.[235]

Extensive social care education (3) finally refers to social services, disaster relief work, and service for the terminal ill. To this end, the DDM Social Welfare and Charity Foundation (關於慈善基金會) was established in 2001.[236]

The activities described above are based on Sheng Yen's concept of Spiritual Environmentalism. The following section examines how Sheng Yen understands the programs mentioned above to be beneficial to the creation of a Pure Land on Earth.

4.1.2. Spiritual Environmentalism Campaign

In 1990, Sheng Yen developed the two sentences long maxim of DDM, Uplifting the Character of Humanity and Creating a Pure Land on Earth, further into The Common

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[234] Fagushan bianjibu, *1989~2001 fagushan nianjian: dashiji (Taibei: fagu wenhua, 2004), 267.*

[235] *Fagushan nianjian: zonglun,* 54.

[236] http://charity.ddm.org.tw/main/page_view.aspx?mnuid=1327&modid=228 accessed March 5, 2014.

Endeavor of Buddhists (四眾佛子共勉語) and, a year later, The Common Ethos of Dharma Drum Mountain (法鼓山的共識).[237]

Then, in 1992, DDM launched the Spiritual Environmentalism campaign.[238] This campaign represents the main concept of DDM, which remains till this day. Sheng Yen chose to use non-Buddhist language for the wording to reach a broader Taiwanese public. The English term "environmentalism" as well as the Chinese "環保" are both reminiscent of eco-protection more than of Buddhism. Seth Clippard, who wrote his dissertation about the Buddhist use of this rhetoric[239], describes Sheng Yen's interpretation of the term Spiritual Environmentalism as simply "the practice of Buddhist meditation and ethics".[240] Clippard suggests a bifurcation in Sheng Yen's usage of the term: a Buddhist and a non-Buddhist contemporary interpretation. Starting in the 1980s, and due to Taiwan's rapid development, environmental pollution became a pressing issue in contemporary Taiwan. Thus, environmentalism became a popular concept in the public discourse.

Sheng Yen took advantage of the popularity of the term to promote Buddhist concepts. He aimed to use contemporary language to represent sound Buddhist doctrine in order to make it applicable and reach a wider not exclusively Buddhist audience.[241] Depending on this audience Sheng Yen may phrases his concepts very differently. Talking about environmental protection for instance, he recommends Buddhists to start with purifying one's mind through Buddhist practice and then go further to purify ones environment,

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[237] Lin, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang yu shijian yu hongyang," 158.
[238] Lin, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang yu shijian yu hongyang," 177.
[239] Clippard, "Protecting the Spiritual Environment."
[240] Clippard, "Protecting the Spiritual Environment." 312.
[241] *Fagushan nianjian: zonglun,* 12-13.

while for non- Buddhists he advocates to start with protecting the material environment and then eventually to go to the spiritual level.[242]

Sheng Yen's Buddhist interpretation of environmentalism is based on Mind-Only notions of Pure Land: As long as one practices Buddhism, one is able to experience the Pure Land. By purifying one's self one purifies one's environment.[243] He often quotes a sentence from the *Vimalakirti sutra,* "If the mind is pure, the Buddha lands are pure." (隨其心淨，則佛土淨). Similarly, Guojing, director of the research center at Dharma Drum Buddhist College detects the source of Sheng Yen's concept of Spiritual Environmentalism in the *Vimalakirti sutra*:

> "Ven. Sheng Yen, from the perspective of the Vimalakirti-sutra, believes that the process of protecting the spiritual environment has to begin from the way one interacts with other people, and mindfulness at any time of everyday life. The process of protecting the spiritual environment has to begin from the perspective of a self-centered, self-reliant body and mind and then gradually expand to the state of no-self."[244]

Additionally Guojing relates the concept to the Diamond sutra, but also states that Sheng Yen further includes certain elements of Confucianist and Daoist philosophy into his

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[242] Transcript of a presentation to a Western audience: http://www.chancenter.org/chanctr/newscap/b083100a.html accessed March 5, 2014.
[243] *Fagushan nianjian: zonglun,* 19.
[244] Shi Guojing, "Shengyan fashi jingtu sixiang zhi yanjiu – yi renjian jingtu wei zhongxin" in *Shengyan yanjiu diyi ji* (Taibei, Fagu wenhua, 2010), 91. "綜而言之，聖嚴法師從《維摩經》的角度，認為心靈環保的著手工夫，是從待人接物，日常生活的起心動念處隨時做起；心靈環保的過程，是從自私自力的自我身心觀照漸漸淨化，而至於無病無我的境界."

concept of spiritual environmentalism. Namely Confucianism's appreciation of benevolence (仁) and Daoism's simplicity.[245]

In DDM's vision there are three aspects of a Pure Land in the human realm: material, political, and spiritual ones. The first two relate to the fields of law, politics and science, while the third is of major importance from a Buddhist perspective. Here a Pure Land can be achieved through Buddhist concepts and practice.[246] DDM's political analysis is based on a rather vague conservatism. Contemporary society is in turmoil (亂), but through Buddhist practice of purification an ideal society (Pure Land) can be achieved.[247] Therefore, in 1994, DDM's core concept of Spiritual Environmentalism got further developed into the Four Kinds of Environmentalism. Spiritual Environmentalism is the first, the other three are Social (禮儀), Living (生活), and Natural (自然) Environmentalisms.[248] While the first one refers to the assumption that in order to reduce the pollution of the outer environment one has to purify one's mind first. The second one, Social Environmentalism (禮儀環保), refers to the social realm. It is concerned with the individual's behavior toward others. It stresses the importance of etiquette and rules in the way people interact. By maintaining a respectful attitude in speech, action, and mind, a harmonious society is to be achieved. This concept as well as the Chinese term 禮儀 (social etiquette), have strong Confucian connotations. But Sheng Yen sees them grounded in Buddhist culture as well.

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[245] Guojing, "Shengyan fashi jingtu sixiang zhi yanjiu," 91 and p. 93.
[246] *Fagushan nianjian: zonglun*, 20.
[247] *Fagushan nianjian: zonglun*, 24-25.
[248] http://www.ddm.org.tw/page_view.aspx?siteid=&ver=&usid=&mode=&mnuid=1112&modid=63&cid=68&noframe= accessed February 28, 2014.

> "As for the protection of the social environment, Buddhism places great emphasis on etiquette, including following the vinaya, maintaining deportment, and keeping precepts. It can even be said that observing rules and etiquette is the basic foundation of Buddhism."[249]

The third concept, Living Environmentalism (生活環保), is an appeal to live a simple life and to practice Buddhism in one's daily life (修行在行住坐臥間).

Natural Environmentalism (自然環保), reminds on more secular forms of environmentalism, like protecting the wildlife and using natural resources sparingly, but Sheng Yen also provides a more Buddhist definition:

> "Turning to protection of the natural environment, we find that, according to Buddhism, a person's body and mind are direct karmic retribution and the environment she lives in is circumstantial retribution. Direct and circumstantial retribution form one's place of practice. Every person uses her direct retribution to practice within her circumstantial retribution. Thus one must care for the environment just as one would for her own body."[250]

As we can see Sheng Yen's concepts still allow for a Buddhist interpretation, which is meaningful to members of DDM and Chinese Buddhists in general.

The defining characteristic of the Spiritual Environmentalism campaign is its intended openness. By using contemporary secular language it aims to promote Buddhist concepts to a wider non-Buddhist audience. But in a concluding step, this wider audience is then invoked to purify themselves and thereby society. Jen-Chieh Ting (丁仁傑) sees the transformation of laymen as the main focus of DDM. Instead of the classical "division of labor" in Buddhism, where the laity mainly accumulates merit and only monastics aim

[249] http://www.dharmadrum.org/content/about/about.aspx?sn=112 accessed February 28, 2014.
[250] http://www.dharmadrum.org/content/about/about.aspx?sn=112 accessed February 28, 2014.

for enlightenment, DDM includes the laity into that quest for religious transformation. [251] Sheng Yen aims to purify society through the transformation of ordinary people's lives. He uses public outreach campaigns to reach the Taiwanese public. Jimmy Yu describes how after the establishment of DDM, Sheng Yen's "teachings began to take the form of socially engaged moral education".[252] He understands this discourse of moral education as deeply rooted in Confucian traditions. Yu writes:

> "In the Confucian system of values, education has always meant much more than purely intellectual training and the development of skills. True Confucian education cannot be separated from the moral improvement of the individual as a social being. […] Education had a comprehensive ideal of moral training and an ideological-pedagogical aim for the masses. In this sense, traditional Confucian "education" meant education for all levels of the population."[253]

This is the context to understand Sheng Yen's public outreach campaigns. In addition to its promotion of Buddhist practices, like meditation, Dharma assemblies (法會), or *nianfo* practice, DDM aims to establish a Pure Land on earth through the promotion of Buddhist values embedded in a Confucian discourse, thereby aiming to reach a wider audience which includes non-Buddhists. Scott Pacey writes in his article about Taiwanese Buddhism:

> "Chinese Buddhism has traditionally incorporated Chinese Confucian elements and in this sense, Cheng Yen, Hsing Yun and Sheng Yen do not differ from previous Chinese Buddhist figures. However, in the views of these three leaders, Confucian elements are made salient as a part of a return to tradition in face of a changing society. Like Buddhism itself, these Confucian elements are redirected and gain new agency through their application to the establishment of a *renjian jingtu.*"[254]

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[251] Jen-Chie Ting, "Renjian Buddhism and its Successors", in *Development and Practice of Humanitarian Buddhism* (Hualien: Tzu Chi University Press, 2007), 254-5.
[252] Yu, "A Tentative Exploration," 27.
[253] Yu, "A Tentative Exploration," 27.
[254] Pacey, "A Buddhism for the Human World," 455.

This is not just true for Spiritual Environmentalism but of course equally the case with the Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance Campaign and the Six Ethics of the Mind Campaign. While the Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance Campaign still mainly focuses on the mind, and therefore allows for a more Buddhist interpretation, Guojing argues, that it is based on the four practices (四行) in Bodhidharma's (菩提達摩, 440?-528? CE) *erru sixing lun* (二入四行論)[255]. The latter however, consisting of family ethics, living ethics, school Ethics, environmental ethics, workplace ethics, and ethics for the behavior between different ethnic groups has already a very distinct Confucian flavor.

In the next section, we turn our attention toward traditional Pure Land practices at DDM.

4.2. Traditional Pure Land practice at DDM

4.2.1. *Nianfo* practice at DDM

All DDM branches in Taiwan, although emphasizing on Chan practice, still uphold *nianfo* group practice on a weekly basis. Before the foundation of DDM there were two main practice societies at Nung Chan temple: The Merit and Wisdom Chanting Society and the Prajna Meditation Society (般若禪坐會). While the Prajna Meditation Society was (and still is today) in charge of Chan meditation at DDM, the organizational body responsible for the organization of *nianfo* practice is the Merit and Wisdom Chanting Society. Now, every DDM practice center has its own Merit and Wisdom Chanting

[255] Guojing, "Shengyan fashi jingtu sixiang zhi yanjiu," 98-100.

Society and over the years several other societies were founded at DDM. The Merit and Wisdom Chanting Society was founded in 1982. It is led by a monastic (輔導法師) that oversees the society officially. Below are the society's chairperson (會長), who is actually occupied with the administrative work; the second chairperson (副會長), and more assistants (會務). Since 2008 it has been internally subordinated to the *Honghuayan* (弘化院). In addition to organizing and carrying out nianfo group practice and retreats the society holds two annual trainings for their volunteers (年兩次梵唄成長營), one annual group excursion (聯誼), occasional meetings and organizes two annual nianfo group practices in retirement homes.[256] On their homepage, DDM promotes the advantages of regular *nianfo* practice, which includes the erasure of bad karma, a long life, and good health.[257] In addition it provides an article that recommends using the nianfo practice to cure insomnia.[258] Thus we can see that *nianfo* practice besides being used as a tool for salvation also serves more worldly matters.

DDM Taiwan usually offers nianfo retreats about twice a year in addition to the *nianfo* group practice, which is already provided weekly at each DDM practice center. One is the Amitabha seven-day nianfo retreat (彌陀佛七), hold on the Buddha's birthday. The

[256]http://web.ddm.org.tw/main/page_view.aspx?chapid=87&mnuid=1552&modid=441, accessed June 8, 2014.
[257]http://web.ddm.org.tw/main/news_in.aspx?mnuid=1560&modid=433&chapid=87&nid=3084, accessed June 8, 2014.
[258]http://web.ddm.org.tw/main/news_in.aspx?mnuid=1560&modid=433&chapid=87&nid=3083, accessed June 8, 2014.

other (清明佛七) is the hold on Tomb Sweeping Day, the anual day when the Chinese go to the family grave and visit their ancestors.

In addition DDM organizes *nianfochan* (念佛禪) retreats. Here *nianfo* is practiced as a Chan method. On the surface they look almost identical to the regular *nianfo* retreat, attendants recite *Amituofo* (阿彌陀佛) while sitting and circumambulating in the Chan hall, however, the motive for each is different. Participants of the Pure Land *nianfo* retreat wish to ensure rebirth in the Pure Land. Some come to send merit to their deceased or because they hope to receive merit for themselves. The *nianfochan* retreat functions differently: Participants use *nianfo* as a meditation method. Instead of requesting something in response for their practice, they just single-mindedly recite the Buddha's name. A more detailed description about the doctrinal difference can be found in chapter 5.

According to my own observations and conversations with participants and monastics, nianfo retreats, although not as numerous as Chan retreats are very popular and attract a very large number of people attending. In fact, Guojing states that the number of participants at *nianfo* retreats can range from 1000 up to 2000 while at Chan retreats attendance ranges from 100 to 200.[259] Participants of the *nianfo* classes are generally older than those who attend Chan classes.

[259] See Appendix: Interview Guojing p. 120.

4.2.2. End-of-Life Chanting Group

The End-of-Life Chanting Group developed out of the Merit and Wisdom Chanting Society. It was originally founded to provide deathbed chanting for DDM members, but in 1993 it expanded its service to the general public. It sees to the needs of the dying and their family members and offers end of life care, assists in chanting for the deceased to ensure his or her rebirth in the western Pure Land, and encourages Buddhist style funeral services. In case of disasters, the group organizes dharma assemblies for the deceased.[260] The group has a service center (大事關懷服務中心) at Rising Cloud Temple (雲來寺) in Beitou, Taipei. Its organizational structure is similar to other DDM societies: It is led by a monastic (輔導法師) and a lay chairman (團本部設團長) with the support of his or her second chairman (副團長數位). The group is organized into several sub departments, responsible for: volunteer training (訓練服務), organization of activities (活動企劃), promotion (關懷推廣), and "customer" service for family members of the deceased (檔案管理). It provides training seminars for its volunteers (助念團北區悅眾成長營). Now every region in Taiwan has its own group of volunteers to provide quick help in case of death[261].

In addition to providing the services mentioned above, the End-of-Life Chanting Group is also used as an opportunity to share the DDM version of Buddhism. In my conversations

[260] E.c.: 1995 Nian kuaile song KTV huozai linanzhi chaodu fahui (年快樂頌 KTV 火災罹難者超渡法會), 1998Nian kongnan quanguo aidao dahui (年空難全國哀悼大會), 1999 nian jiueryi dizhen linanzhi mituo fahui (年九二一地震罹難者彌陀法會), etc.
[261] All information here is obtained from the group's website: http://elc.ddm.org.tw/, accessed June 8, 2014.

with DDM monastics and lay members, it was often mentioned that people who face the death of a family member, are touched when they experience the caring support of DDM End-of-Life Chanting Group volunteers. Under these circumstances they are open to learn more about Buddhism[262]. The End-of-Life Chanting Group provides free counseling and care in times of crisis, but also presents an occasion to promote DDM style Buddhism.

4.2.3. Ethnographic description of a *nianfo* group practice

The group practice of *nianfo* is not unique to DDM; in fact, other more Pure Land oriented groups in Taiwan also follow a similar process.[263]

On March 17, 2012 I attended my first *nianfo* group practice at the DDM main monastery in Jinshan. From then on I occasionally attended the practice at other DDM branches. During the fall term of 2013/2014, I attended the DDM Anhe branch (安和分院) on a weekly basis. In order to illustrate *nianfo* practice as practiced at DDM, this section provides a "thick description"[264] of *nianfo* group practice at DDM Anhe branch. The section below gives an account of the typical process of the practice at the DDM Anhe branch (安和分院) based specifically on my observations from November 11, 2013.

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[262] See Appendix: Interview Guojing, pp. 128-129, but also http://elc.ddm.org.tw/.
[263] See Charles B. Jones, "Buddha One: A One-Day-Buddha-Recitation Retreat in Contemporary Taiwan", in Richard K. Payne and Kenneth T. Tanaka, ed., *Approaching the Land of Bliss,* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press 2004), pp. 264-280.
[264] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*.

The group practice is held regularly every Tuesday evening, in a modern office building in a business district of Taipei City. Visitors take the lift to the tenth floor. When the door opens, friendly volunteers, mostly middle-aged women, some in their thirties, welcome the visitor. They fold their hands in front of their chest in the fashion of a traditional Buddhist greeting. There are separate entrances for the sexes as well as separate seating areas in the Chan hall for men and women. The volunteers gently direct visitors to their assigned entrance. At each entrance to the Chan hall is a place to remove shoes. Some participants put on their *haiqing* (海青), the Chinese Buddhist black ritual robe, others just enter the hall in their regular street wear.

After entering the hall, one bows to the five Buddha statues in the front of the hall. Inside there are more volunteers waiting, both male and female, who lead the participants to their respective seat. Here the participant does three prostrations to the Buddha statues and takes a seat facing the center of the room. People wearing a *haiqing* sit in the front rows, while those wearing street wear sit behind. Those in the first two rows, wear a stole above their *haiqing.* The fragrance of Chinese incense, the dim light and the Buddha statues create a solemn and peaceful atmosphere.

There are about two hundred people in the room. Most sit on the floor on meditation mats, a few people, mostly elderly sit at the sides and in the back of the hall on simple chairs. There is a corridor in the center of the hall that is left empty. It stretches from the Buddha statues to the back of the room. Men and women on each side of the corridor face each other. Most participants are middle aged and older; however, almost three quarters of them are female, so there is some overflow from the women's side of the room to the

men's side. Even so, the sexes remain segregated. Many regular participants sit in the front, they attend the ritual as a part of their Pure Land practice. Of those in the back, some have recently lost family members. They partake in the ritual to gain merit, which they then transfer to their deceased.

The sound of a drum, on the stroke of seven, signifies the beginning. Two nuns enter the room and bow to the statues. One takes a seat in the first row; the other one stands in front to lead the ritual. She welcomes the visitors, and then proceeds by explaining the meaning of the ritual. Her explanations are read from a paper, they are excerpts of Sheng Yen's writings. On this particular day it is a short excerpt from the *Introduction into Buddhism* (佛教入門).[265] Following this, the participants rise, bow to each other, then they face the Buddha statues in the front for three prostrations. The chanting begins. It starts with a praise of the Buddha Amitabha (讚佛偈), a short repentance (拜懺), the three refuges (三皈依), and a vow to be born in Amitabha's Western Pure Land and to transfer the acquired merit (回向偈). Next the assembly turns back to face each other and begins to recite monophonically praise the Buddha Amitabha (南無阿彌陀佛). Accompanied by the sound of a wooden fish and a bell they begin to circumambulate (繞佛). Since there are many people in the room, and the space is limited, the participants move in a serpentine fashion among the sitting mats. After a while, the first part of the chant is dropped, people only very slowly chant Amitabha Buddha (阿彌陀佛). With each step they chant one syllable, the whole assembly of two hundred people thereby moves in complete concord. Finally, everyone stops back at their seats and sits down,

[265] Shengyan fashi, *Fojiao rumen* (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2002).

again facing each other. Now the speed rises slowly but surely, until after over twenty minutes it gets so fast, that one can hardly differentiate between the different syllables. Suddenly, with three blows of the wooden fish, everyone stops and continues to chant silently in his mind. Ten to fifteen minutes later the silent recitation is over. After a short period where everyone massages him or herself, everyone rises, and some people, those who recently lost family members, kneel down at the corridor in the center of the hall. They take refuge to the Buddha, the dharma, and to the sangha to transfer their acquired merit to the deceased. The leading nun concludes then the ritual, she reads aloud the names of the deceased, everyone transfers merit to them and, as was the case at the time, to the victims of typhoon Hayan, which had struck the Philippines. Then she makes some announcements and after two hours, at nine o'clock sharp, the ritual is over. Everyone collectively tidies up the Chan hall and leaves.

4.3. Conclusion

Even before the establishment of DDM, nianfo constituted a significant part of the religious practice at Nung Chan temple. The Merit and Wisdom Chanting Society and the Prajna Meditation Society are the two big societies, which existed prior to the establishment of DDM. With the establishment of Dharma Drum Mountain, Sheng Yen's attention turned from his work as a Chan master to the field of education. By doing so he intended to realize his ambitious goal of Establishing a Pure Land on Earth. Scott Pacey writes:

> "The notion in the "Protection of the Spiritual Environment" and the "Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance Campaign" is that the problems and conflicts faced by humanity on international, social and individual levels all have their origin in the mind. By purifying peoples thoughts and actions, society itself will become purified."[266]

The means to implement this goal are academic programs, public outreach campaigns, and the promotion of formal Buddhist practice. The target audience for this endeavor consists not only of Buddhists, but also the general Taiwanese public.

Nianfo at DDM represents one means to realize DDM's final goal of the establishment of the Pure Land on earth. It serves as one form of formal Buddhist practice, together with Chan meditation, Buddhist precepts and others. However is very popular with the Buddhist laity and therefore *nianfo* retreats attract a significant high attendance.

In addition to Pure Land *nianfo* DDM offers *nianfochan* practice. Practicing the former, the practitioner aims to achieve rebirth in the western Pure Land, while the latter is practiced as a form of Chan meditation. Additionally, the End-of-Life Chanting Group provides end of life care and assists family members in chanting for their deceased. Its free of charge services further are an occasion to spread DDM's version of orthodox Buddhism and to promote the establishment of a Pure land on Earth.

Sheng Yen's concepts to promote the creation of a Pure Land are rooted in Buddhist doctrine, like the *Vimalakirti sutra*, but phrased in a secular language with references to issues in contemporary society, like environmental pollution, to reach a wide Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist audience. The idea of educating the population through

[266] Pacey, "A Buddhism for the Human World," 453.

ideological/pedagogical campaigns is rooted in the Confucian tradition. Through these campaigns Sheng Yen intended to make Buddhists' practice and values more attractive to a wider audience. These practices are then to be utilized in order to purify one's mind and thereby purifying society.

5. Sheng Yen's Pure Land Thought: Pure Land from a Contemporary Chan Perspective

According to Lin Chihsien, Sheng Yen's intellectual oeuvre can be characterized by five rather odd composites (奇特的組合), the first of them being the combination of the promotion of the establishment of a Pure Land on Earth and the advocacy of rebirth in the western Pure Land.[267] This chapter examines both concepts in Sheng Yen's writings. Sheng Yen addresses the topic from two perspectives: from an academic point of view and in relation to practice. However, these two approaches are not necessarily completely distinct. His early writings that touch upon Pure Land are his doctoral thesis, a study on the life and work of Ouyi Zhixu,[268] and a book-length general overview of late Ming Buddhism (明末佛教研究).[269] In addition there are two shorter length pieces, an article, *Examination of Pure Land Thought* (淨土思想之考察),[270] and a little booklet entitled *Nianfo and Deathbed Nianfo* (念佛與助念).[271] The former discusses different Pure Land concepts in the Buddhist sutras, while the latter is addressed to a more popular audience. The term Pure Land on Earth is first mentioned in the *Examination of Pure Land Thought* and appears many times in Sheng Yen's writings after 1982.[272]

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[267] Lin, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang," 155-156.
[268] Reprint of the Chinese translation: Shengyan, *Mingmo zhongguo fojiao zhi yanjiu*.
[269] Shengyan, *Mingmo fojiao yanjiu.*
[270] Shi Shengyan,"Jingtu sixiang zhi kaocha," *Huagang foxue xuebao diliu qi* (1983), 5-48.
[271] Shi Shengyan, *Fagu foxue xiao congkan: nianfo yu zhunian* (Taibei: fagushan nongchan si, 1987).
[272] For a detailed examination about the appearance of the term in Sheng Yen's writings see: Lin, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang," 165-168.

Sheng Yen published another book exclusively on Pure Land in 1997: *Nianfo in order to be born in/ to create a Pure Land* (念佛生淨土).[273] It is mainly directed towards practitioners but also discusses different concepts of Pure Lands in the sutras. Another book published in 2010, *Master Sheng Yen Teaches the Pure Land Approach to the Dharma* (聖嚴法師教淨土法門), is compiled of talks Sheng Yen gave while leading *nianfo* retreats.[274] Additionally, on display at most DDM centers in Taiwan is a little booklet aimed at visitors entitled *Amitabha and the Pure Land approach to the Dharma* (阿彌陀佛與淨土法門), which mainly consists of excerpts from the above two books.

If one compares Sheng Yen's earlier publications with those published since the 1990s, one can see that most of his views are unchanged. However, there exist some important differences: In *Examination of Pure Land Thought*, Sheng Yen describes a threefold model of Pure Lands, which he develops into a fourfold model in later works. This chapter mainly focuses on Sheng Yen's later two books.

The first part of this chapter provides a general introduction to Sheng Yen's Pure Land thought, focusing mainly on his take on traditional Pure Land concepts, while the second part discusses the notion of establishing a Pure Land on Earth. The reader must bear in mind, however, that since both concepts are closely related in Sheng Yen's thinking, a clear separation cannot always be maintained.

[273] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu.*
[274] Shengyan, *Shengyan fashi jiao jingtu famen*.

5.1. Sheng Yen's perspective on *nianfo* and the Pure Land

As mentioned above, Sheng Yen led his first seven-day *nianfo* retreat as early as the 1960s. Then, in the early 1980s, he began annually leading these retreats at Nung Chan monastery in Beitou.[275] In one of his English books, *Zen Wisdom,* Sheng Yen writes:

> "Is there a great difference between Chan and Pure Land? There is in Japan. Chan and Pure Land were transmitted to Japan from China just as Buddhism was transmitted to China from India. In the process changes occurred, and the sects that emerged in Japan were flavored by the distinctive personalities of the particular Dharma masters who founded them. So in Japan, Chan and Pure Land are distinctively different schools … Actually, Chan and Pure Land developed together in China. During the Tang dynasty they were distinct schools, but by the end of the Song dynasty Chan and Pure Land had blended together. Today, Pure Land Buddhists use Chan methods, just as Chan teachers are not opposed to Pure Land methods."[276]

Sheng Yen stresses the compatibility of Chan and Pure Land in Chinese Buddhist history. According to him, Chan and Pure Land approaches are both part of orthodox Mahayana (正確佛教).[277] For Sheng Yen, Chan and Pure Land are not opposites, just different approaches (法門) to the same goal (離苦得樂，消業除煩惱).[278] Hence Guojing writes that Sheng Yen "applies Chan practice as the core approach for delivering sentient beings, with recitation of Buddha's name as a supportive means."[279]

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[275]Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu*, 3.
[276] Shi Sheng-yen, *Zen Wisdom: Conversations on Buddhism* (Taipei: Dharma Drum Publications, 2001), 8.
[277] Shengyan, *Shengyan fashi jiao jingtu famen,* 187.
[278] Shengyan, *Shengyan fashi jiao jingtu famen,* 188.
[279] Guojing, "Shengyan fashi jingtu sixiang zhi yanjiu," 110.

For Sheng Yen, *nianfo* practice is not merely a Mahayana approach, instead he even traces its origins to the first of the Six Kinds of Mindfulness (六念法門) in the Agamas (阿含經). The six kinds of mindfulness are: (1) awareness of the Buddha (念佛); (2) awareness of the Dharma (念法); (3) awareness of the Sangha (念僧); (4) awareness of alms giving (念施); (5) keeping the precepts (念戒); and (6) practicing the ten wholesome actions to create heaven (念天).[280]

5.1.2. Two Methods of *Nianfo*

Sheng Yen describes two methods of *nianfo*: the Pure Land approach and the Chan approach. The main difference between the two approaches is an emphasis or de-emphasis on objects outside of oneself (無相或是有相). Applying the Pure Land approach (有相), one requires a miraculous response (感應) from Amitabha, in order that one may be reborn in his Pure Land. Therefore one strives to see/imagine the appearance (觀像) of Amitabha or contemplate the concept of him (觀想). On the other hand, the Chan approach (無相) is not to ask for a miraculous response, but to single-mindedly recite the Buddha's name. Even if one is really able to see Amitabha, lotus flowers, Guanyin, or hear any mysterious sounds, one should not pay any attention to them.[281]

[280] These are the six kinds of mindfulness, as defined by Sheng Yen (and translated by the author) Shengyan, *Shengyan fashi jiao jingtu famen,* 188-189.
[281] Shengyan, *Shengyan fashi jiao jingtu famen,* 196.

Thus we can see that Sheng Yen's approach to *nianfo* differs from those discussed in chapter 3. If we compare Sheng Yen's model with the twofold system suggested by Yü Chün-fang, we can see that he equates the invocational approach, related to Shandao with Huiyuan's approach which strives for a vision of Amitabha. He adds an additional third "Chan" approach, which, though seemingly identical on the surface, in the respect that one recites Amitabha's name, in fact differs in its intention, which is to just completely stay in the present moment (現在心). The methods are the same, but the goals aspired to differ. The Pure Land approach is a means by which one can gain rebirth in the Amitabha's Pure Land, while the Chan approach is to use the *nianfo* method to fulfil its own goals.[282] Concerning the latter, Sheng Yen stresses that one should not even enter into a meditative state (入定) where recitation stops,[283] but just continue reciting, in order to become one with the name of Amitabha (與佛號合而為一). Should doubt (疑情) arise as to who is reciting Amitabha's name (念佛是誰), then one can contemplate this as a *huatou* (參話頭); otherwise one should just continue to *nianfo*.[284]

Thus this incorporates the practice of *nianfo gongan*, practiced by Zhuhong amongst others, but this is not necessarily what is desired. The main goal is just to become one with the Buddha's name.

In his book, *Introduction to Buddhism* (佛教入門), Sheng Yen links this Chan approach towards *nianfo* to Huineng (慧能, 638-713 CE), the sixth patriarch of Chan. He refers to

[282] Shengyan, *Shengyan fashi jiao jingtu famen,* 197.
[283] Shengyan, *Shengyan fashi jiao jingtu famen,* 197.
[284] Shengyan, *Shengyan fashi jiao jingtu famen,* 198.

Huineng's famous quote about *nianfo* in the Platform sutra: "People from the East recite the Buddha's name to be born in the West, but people from the West recite the Buddha's name to go where? (東方念佛求生西方，西方人念佛 到哪裡去)." For Sheng Yen, this quote does not mark Huineng as a critic of Pure Land practice, but as possessing a more advanced (Chan) understanding. People have different karmic roots, people with lower karmic roots as well as people with higher karmic roots can all practice the Pure Land method; they just differ in their attitude towards it. For most people, the Chan approach is more difficult, because it does not involve strong faith (信心), making it easy to give up. For beginners, he especially recommends practicing the recitation of the Buddha's name method with a Pure Land approach, maintaining a strong faith in Amitabha's vows and in the literal existence of the western Pure Land.[285]

As we can see, Sheng Yen proposes a hierarchical model for Chan and Pure Land approaches to *nianfo*, reflecting practitioners' different levels of understanding, advanced or basic, and different karmic roots. He recommends the Pure Land approach as a starting point, then one can eventually progress to a Chan understanding. Thus, Sheng Yen recommends literal faith in the Buddhist sutras; if one wholeheartedly believes in them, one most definitely will be reborn in the Pure Land.[286]

[285] Shengyan, *Fojiao rumen*, 253.
[286] Shengyan, *Fojiao rumen*, 253.

5.1.3. The four mental states of *nianfo*

Sheng Yen states there are four mental states involved in *nianfo* practice (念佛法門四個心): faith (信心), sincerity (至識心), penetration into the method (深心), and determination (發願心).[287] Sheng Yen declares faith to be the starting point. A strong belief in the existence of the Pure Land, and especially in Amitabha's vow to save all those who put faith in him, is the most important precondition.[288]

Sincerity means single-mindedness in reciting the Buddha's name. One's mouth and one's mind are supposed to become one.[289] In the next mental state, penetration into the method, one continues to nianfo whole-heartedly all the time.[290]The last mental state is determination. One should vow to apply one's merit (功德) to be born in the Western Paradise, while at the same time vowing to help all sentient beings to become a Buddha.[291] Here again, Sheng Yen emphasizes the importance of faith and determination in the Pure Land Dharma approach.

[287] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 15.
[288] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 18.
[289] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 19-20.
[290] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 20.
[291] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 21-22.

5.1.4. Sheng Yen's perspective on the three Pure Land sutras

The three main sutras traditionally connected with Pure Land are the *Amitabha sutra* (阿彌陀經), the *Infinite Life sutra*, and the *Amitayurdhyana sutra*.[292] According to Sheng Yen, Chinese Buddhists, especially since the early modern period (近世) have tended to give preference to the *Amitabha sutra*. The *Amitabha sutra* stresses that single-mindedly reciting the Buddha's name is a requirement for obtaining rebirth in the Western Pure Land. In contrast, the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha sutra*, which in Japanese Pure Land Buddhism is the most popular of the three sutras, emphasizes faith in Amitabha's other power and his vows (他力本願). Interestingly, Sheng Yen prefers the Japanese approach, since he sees the danger of a person completely neglecting all worldly affairs if all he does is to focus on reciting the Buddha's name.[293]

Here, Sheng Yen seems to differ with the Chinese tradition. As we have seen above, others before him who promoted a dual Chan/Pure Land approach stress single-pointed concentration in *nianfo*. While Sheng Yen advocates absorbing oneself in the practice of *nianfo* during retreats, he doesn't recommend it in general, thereby combining religious concerns with modern worldly ones. In order to contribute to society one has to avoid an escapist attitude. This view in addition to a perception of faith as modern seems to be influenced by twenty-century criticism of Buddhism. Some Chinese intellectuals joined Christians in criticizing Buddhism as being superstitious and escapist. On the other hand, they promoted (Protestant) Christianity as world affirming, modern and concerned with

[292] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 16.
[293] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 17.

charity. As we have seen above, *Renjian* Buddhism developed as a response to these criticisms. This stress on faith as an element, which prevents escapism and reconciles religious practice with the requirement to contribute to society may very well be a reflection of Sheng Yen's historical experience.

As we can see, Sheng Yen's Pure Land thought takes the so-called three Pure Land sutras into account; however, they are not his only sources. The section below discusses Sheng Yen's fourfold Pure Land model. It will become apparent that other sutras, such as the *Vimalakirti sutra*, may play an even more important role in his Pure Land thought.

5.1.5. Four Pure Lands

Sheng Yen describes four different understandings of the term Pure Land; The Pure Land on Earth or literally the human realm Pure Land (人間淨土), the heavenly Pure Land (天國淨土), the Buddha realm Pure Land (佛國淨土), and the Inner Pure Land (自心淨土).[294]

(1) The Pure Land on Earth is present in this *saha-world* (娑婆世界). Even though the main characteristic of the *saha-world* is the existence of suffering, as long as one person practices the Dharma (修行), one is able to see the Pure Land. If one's mind is still

[294] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 25-36.

because of one's practice, one experiences the Pure Land on Earth.[295] Here we can see that Buddhist practice is the means to establish the Pure Land on Earth.

(2) The heavenly Pure Land refers to the Chinese threefold division of the world in hell, earth and heaven. Humans attain admission to heaven because of their good karma. But their residence is only temporary. After a certain time, when one's good karma is exhausted, one eventually sinks back into the lower realms. Sheng Yen also identifies the concept of heaven in other religions, like Christianity for example, with this kind of heavenly Pure Land. Another kind of heavenly Pure Land is the *tusita* heaven (兜率天), where Maitreya (彌勒佛), the future Buddha of our world, resides. Both heavens belong to our world-system.[296]

(3) The Buddha realm Pure Lands are the Pure Lands spoken of in the Pure Land sutras, like the *Sukhavati*, the abode of Amitabha Buddha. Rebirth in this Pure Land is the main goal of traditional Pure Land practice. There are unlimited Pure Lands in the ten directions. But the one most closely linked (有緣) to our world system is *Sukhavati*, the Western Pure Land of Amitabha.[297]

(4) Lastly, there is the Inner Pure Land. The Inner Pure Land exists in everybody's mind. Since we all possess Buddha nature (佛性), everyone's mind (in its pure/purified state) is identical with the Buddha's mind (佛心即是自心). If one actualizes his Buddha nature, one sees the *saha-world* as identical with the Pure Land. Sheng Yen merges the Pure Land concepts of different Buddhist sutras. He refers to the *lotus store world* (華藏世界)

[295] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 25-26.
[296] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 28-29.
[297] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 29-31.

in the *Huayan sutra* (華嚴經), the *Dharma approach of the Bodhisattva's mind* (菩薩心地法門) in the *Brahmajala sutra*, the *Grdhrakuta-parvata* (靈山淨土) from the *Lotus Sutra* (法華經), and two concepts from the *Vimalakirti sutra*: (1) the *true mind* (真心) and the *profound mind* (深心) constitute the Bodhisattva Pure land (菩薩淨土) and (2) *when the mind is purified, the Buddha lands will be purified*. Sheng Yen classifies all these notions as *Inner pure Land*. He links them with Zhili and Yuanzhao's (元照, 1048-1116 CE) concept of *Mind-Only Pure land*, and Weize (惟則, 1280-1350 CE) and Ouyi Zhixu's concept of *the mind is the Buddha, the mind creates the Buddha* (是心是佛是心作佛) to achieve *nianfo samadhi* in order to leave the three realms and to see the Mind-Only Pure Land. [298]

But Sheng Yen recognizes that this understanding of Pure Land is difficult for most ordinary people (凡夫) to realize, therefore he recommends that practitioners apply *nianfo's* four mental states described above. If one maintains faith in Amitabha's vow and a determination to be reborn in his Pure Land, one will be easily able to practice diligently and will eventually achieve the state of *nianfo samadhi* and see the inner Pure Land.[299]

Chen Chien-Huang states that instead of describing different locations, the four Pure Lands constitute different levels. The Pure Land on Earth is the most fragile (脆弱) but at the same time it constitutes the starting point for the others. The Pure Land on Earth is the

[298] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 32.
[299] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 33.

starting point, while the highest goal is the inner Pure Land. But once reached by the practitioner, he or she will realize that in fact the inner Pure Land and the Pure Land on Earth are actually one and the same. In other words, the Pure Land on Earth serves as an *upaya* (方便), but also as the ultimate goal.[300]

Thus Sheng Yen's *nianfo* practice allows for different understandings and motives: the concrete aim of rebirth in the Western Pure Land of Amitabha, with or without attaining *nianfo samadhi*, or a *nianfochan* approach corresponding with Mind-Only. Furthermore, these different approaches are organized in a layered model, allowing the practitioner to begin with a particular understanding and later proceed to higher levels.

5.2. Sheng Yen and the establishment of a Pure Land on Earth

When Sheng Yen founded DDM in 1989, he proposed the maxim: Uplifting the Character of Humanity and Building a Pure Land on Earth. The idea of Building a Pure Land on Earth was not first conceived by Sheng Yen, but is one central to other *Renjian* Buddhist groups, and in fact can be traced back to Taixu and Yang Wenhui.[301] Although Sheng Yen began to promote the concept of a Pure Land on Earth relatively late in life—he was almost sixty when he founded DDM—he had already been influenced by Taixu and Yinshun when he was much younger.[302]

[300] Chen Jianhuang, "Shengyan fashi「jianshi renjian jingtu」yu「yinian xinjing」zhi yaoyi," *Shenyan yanjiu di'er ji* (Taibei: Fagu wenhua, 2011), 214.
[301] Lin, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang," 158.
[302] Lin, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang," 160.

As early as the 1950s, he began to advocate a more this-worldly Buddhism that contributes to society. He writes in an article in *Humanity* in 1957: "To leave the world is the aim of studying the Buddha dharma, but to enhance the world is a measure towards this end […] To beautify the life of humanity is the foundation of the Buddhist Pure Lands, the Buddhist Pure Lands [at the same time] are the manifestation of the beautification of the life of humanity."[303]

In another article a month later, he expresses himself in even more specific terms. He recommends Buddhist practice, and particularly upholding Buddhist precepts, as a means to construct a Pure Land on Earth, which again he regards as a step towards achieving the ultimate goal: liberation from the Three Realms.[304] Thus, by the late 1950s, Sheng Yen had already linked traditional and modernist notions of Buddhism. In terms of doctrine he already bases his approach on the *Vimalakirti sutra*. To establish a Pure Land one has to begin with the existing world and start with oneself. Thereby one can influence others who in turn influence others, until finally the Buddhist Pure Land appears.[305]

But it would take Sheng Yen until 1982 to elaborate on the concept in detail in an article called "Examination of Pure Land Thought" (淨土思想之考察).[306] From that time on, the concept would appear regularly in his writings.[307]

So how did Sheng Yen aim to create a Pure Land on Earth? According to Chen Chien-Huang the answer is reflected in DDM's maxim of "Uplifting the Character of Humanity

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[303] Quoted from: Lin, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang," 163. 離開這個世界是學佛的目的，建設這個世界才是學佛的 手段 。[…] 美化人生是佛國淨土的基礎，佛國淨土是美化人生的表現。

[304] Lin, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang," 163-164.

[305] Lin, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang," 164.

[306] Lin, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang," 165.

[307] Lin, "Shengyan fashi renjian jingtu sixiang," 165-168.

and Building a Pure Land on Earth." DDM aims to establish a Pure Land on Earth by uplifting the character of humanity. It aims to do so by promoting Buddhist practices, such as *nianfo*, the Buddhist precepts, and Chan meditation, etc.[308] Though many of these practices, especially Chan meditation, were historically reserved for monastics, Sheng Yen now began to popularize them as a means to improve society.[309] We can see that in his early writings of the 1950s, Sheng Yen mainly stressed the Buddhist precepts as a way in which the laity could contribute to the betterment of society. In a later phase, Sheng Yen recommends the whole range of Buddhist practices, with especial emphasis on Chan meditation, as means for lay individuals to help improve society. According to Li Yu-Chen, Sheng Yen's decision to open up monastic Chan halls in Taiwan to the laity reflects his earlier experiences with meditational lay Buddhism in the US.[310]

In addition to these Buddhist methods, Sheng Yen promotes the establishment of the Pure Land on Earth through more secular methods, first and foremost by promoting environmentalism,[311] but also through the provision of social services by the DDM Social Welfare and Charity Foundation.[312] He also communicates Buddhist values in secular language, as discussed in chapter 4, in order to reach a wider, non-Buddhist audience. For Chen Chien-Huang, campaigns like the Four Kinds of Environmentalism (四環) and Four Fields for Cultivating Peace (四安) represent tools that can be utilized to popularize a

[308] Guojing, "Shengyan fashi jingtu sixiang zhi yanjiu," 79.
[309] Jiang, *Zhanhou taiwan hanchuan fojiao shi,* 116.
[310] Li, "Chanxiu," 29.
[311] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 69.
[312] Shengyan, *Nianfo sheng jingtu,* 70.

Buddhism for modern life in accordance with Dharma principles and human dispositions (契理契機).[313]

He traces Sheng Yen's Pure Land thought back to Yongming Yanshou's concept of Becoming a Buddha in a Single Thought (一念成佛論)[314] and Ouyi Zhixu's concept of a Single Manifest Thought" (現前一念心).[315] By combining their approaches Sheng Yen synthesizes Huayan and Tiantai teachings to create the Establishing the Pure Land on Earth movement.

5.3. Conclusion

As we have seen, Sheng Yen advocates a two-way approach to *nianfo*. Yü Chün-fang differentiates between two methods *within* Pure Land, invocation, aiming at gaining rebirth in the Pure Land, and meditation, which in addition to rebirth in the Pure Land, the practitioner seeks to experience a vision of Amitabha in this world.

Sheng Yen's twofold model, on the other hand, combines these two into a single Pure Land approach, in which they correspond to different levels of attainment, more or less advanced, depending on the skill of the practitioner. Both require a strong faith and determination and emphasize an object outside of oneself (有相). Yet somewhat diverging from the Chinese tradition, Sheng Yen deemphasizes single-minded recitation

[313] Chen, "Shengyan fashi「jianshi renjian jingtu」," 232.
[314] Chen, "Shengyan fashi「jianshi renjian jingtu」,"216-224.
[315] Chen, "Shengyan fashi「jianshi renjian jingtu」," 224-231.

of the Buddha's name as advocated in the *Amitabha sutra*, recommending instead the *Infinite Life sutra* approach of faith in Amitabha's vows and other power (他力本願). Sheng Yen's justification for this is not doctrinal but practical: to ensure a Buddhism that is not characterized by escapism, but that makes a positive contribution to society.

In addition Sheng Yen provides another approach, *nianfochan*, which does not emphasize an object outside of oneself. In this practice, the practitioner recites Amitabha's name until he or she becomes completely one with it. Should any sense object appear, even a vision of Amitabha, it is to be ignored. If the *nianfo gongan* arises one might dwell on it, if not then fine.

The two methods are superficially identical, proceeding as described in chapter 4: the practitioner circumambulates the Chan hall in a serpentine fashion, steadily reciting Amitabha's name. After a while he sits down on his meditation mat and continues to recite even faster, until in the end, the sound is dropped, and recitation only continues in his or her mind. What differs is the motive behind the practice. In one case, the practitioner hopes to gain something, rebirth in the Pure Land, merit for a deceased family member, or a vision of Amitabha, while in the other the practitioner must abandon all expectations and just completely absorb themselves in the method. Sheng Yen recommends the Pure Land approach for beginners, since it requires only faith, and less mastery of the method. Through diligent practice one can then progress to the *nianfochan* approach. Thus, while incorporating both somewhat conflicting approaches into his system, Sheng Yen still creates a hierarchy between the two: the Pure Land approach can serve as a gateway to a more advanced, Chan understanding. But both are legitimate

Mahayana approaches, just different doorways to the dharma (法門) that match the particular requirements of the practitioner and eventually leading to the same goal.

Regarding the conception of Pure Lands, Sheng Yen suggests a fourfold model. The Pure Lands do not correspond to specific geographical locations, but to different levels of spiritual attainment and purity. The Pure Land on Earth is the starting point, while the inner Pure Land is the goal. The way to reach that goal is foremost to purify oneself through Buddhist practice. When the goal is reached, the practitioner realizes that destination is identical with the starting point and the Pure Lands of all the Buddhas. Thus, on a doctrinal level, Sheng Yen emphasizes a Mind-Only approach based on the *Vimalakirti sutra* over an approach based on the three Pure Land sutras which stress literal rebirth in the Pure Land. However, he still promotes the latter as a valid and reliable path, and does not just relegate it to a mere *upaya*. Sheng Yen in fact stresses faith in the literal existence of the Pure Land and Amitabha, resolving the doctrinal conflict on the level of practice. While the *nianfochan* method and the Mind-Only Pure Land are advanced, the literal understanding of Pure Land is still an effective and valid means in itself that can, but does not necessarily have to, serve as a gateway to a Chan understanding. With this practical and inclusive approach Sheng Yen adapts to the different needs and understandings of the practitioners.

Both understandings of *nianfo* are means to purify the mind and thereby contribute to the establishment of a Pure Land on Earth. Neither approach is promoted in isolation, but rather in addition to other practices, such as traditional Buddhist ethics and contemporary environmentalism.

In terms of doctrine, Sheng Yen applies Mind-Only understandings of Pure Land to make them accessible to modernist interpretations. He promotes Buddhist ethics through public campaigns and environmentalism and establishes an inclusive viewpoint regarding cultivation methods. Although Sheng Yen's main focus is the popularization of Chan, his views incorporate both literal understandings of the Pure Land in the West and *nianfo* as a method of getting there.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to examine different conceptions of Pure Land at DDM and their related practices, to see how they relate to each other and how tension between them is negotiated. Furthermore I wanted to assess how they are related to the modernization of Chinese Buddhism.

There are at least two conceptions of Pure Land present at DDM: First, a literal understanding of the Western Pure Land as an actual place to go to after death. This conception of a Pure Land is based on the three so-called Pure Land sutras. To achieve this goal one has to establish a firm faith in the actual existence and power of Amitabha and set up a regular nianfo *practice*. Although DDM's main focus is Chan meditation, *nianfo* practice plays an important role at the organization. The organizational body responsible for *nianfo* practice within DDM is the Merit and Wisdom Chanting Society, one of the two big practice societies promoting Buddhist practice at Nung Chan temple, whose existence predate the founding of DDM. Nowadays, all DDM branches in Taiwan hold a weekly *nianfo* group practice. In addition, DDM Taiwan offers seven-day *nianfo* retreats usually about twice a year. Although this is a small fraction of the many Chan retreats DDM holds every year, attendance at the *nianfo* retreats is about ten times higher than at Chan retreats. From this fact we can deduce that, although DDM mainly identifies with Chan Buddhism, on the lay Buddhist level, practicing *nianfo* to gain merit and achieve rebirth in the western Pure Land seems to be the most popular practice in Chinese/Taiwanese Buddhism.

Related to this approach to Pure Land is the end of life chanting assistance DDM provides to the general public. The End-of-Life Chanting Group offers end of life care, assists in chanting for the deceased to ensure his or her rebirth in the western Pure Land and caters to the needs of the deceased's family members.

Nianfo practices aimed at gaining rebirth in the Western Pure Land have a long history in China, dating back to the beginnings of Chinese Buddhism and with precursors in Indian Buddhism. Thus I understand these to be a traditional form of Pure Land practice.

The second conception of Pure Land at DDM is the notion of a Pure Land on Earth. It reflects the discourse of *Renjian* Buddhism, advocated by Taixu, his student Yinshun, and others. At the end of the nineteenth century, many Buddhists perceived their own tradition as in decline; Reformers like Taixu and others thought that over the centuries it had come to be corrupted by elements of Chinese folk religion, and to be overly concerned with supernatural beings and practices like chanting for the dead. Their response was to promote a Buddhism that focuses on the living and makes a positive contribution to society. They absorbed the popular concept of the Pure Land into the notion of the Pure Land on Earth, a concept that diminishes otherworldly elements of traditional Buddhism in favor of a modernist version of the religion that is more affirmative of worldly matters. Buddhist groups like DDM, but also Foguangshan and Tzu Chi all adopted this modern concept and try to implement it in today's Taiwan. DDM promotes the establishment of a Pure on Earth through public outreach campaigns like Spiritual Environmentalism, based on Mind-Only ideas that do not stress the Pure Land as a physical place but relate it to the state of purification of the mind. If one's mind

is purified than the world will be purified too. This idea is based on a concept from the *Vimalakirti sutra*: "when the mind is purified, the Buddha lands will be purified". What is new, or modern, is that Sheng Yen relates this idea not just to a (mostly monastic) person's individual practice but also to society as a whole. DDM promotes this idea by applying contemporary language, using terms like environmentalism, etc., to attract a large number of people, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, to Buddhist concepts and practices. Thus I call this notion a modern or modernist conception of Pure Land.

However, historically speaking, Mind-Only understandings of Pure Land are not new, but are related to a Chan approach to Pure Land that dates back to at least the Song. They were often applied to harmonize doctrinal tensions between Chan and Pure Land. Here the Pure Lands of the Buddhist *sutras* were identified with the purified mind: If one completely purifies one's mind through Buddhist practice, one attains the Pure Land. Mind-Only concepts therefore play an important role at DDM in negotiating the tensions between Chan and literal understandings of Pure Land. However, they do not explain the role of Pure Land at DDM entirely, since they do not take in account the modernist aspects of the organization's take on Pure Land. In other words, modern notions of Pure Land include Mind-Only understandings, but are not identical with them, since they also incorporate other elements like an explicit world-affirmation, a concern for contemporary society, and references to modern concepts like environmentalism.

Unlike in Japanese Buddhism, there is no strict separation of Pure Land and Chan in Chinese Buddhism. The notion of the Pure Land and the practice of *nianfo* have always been a general part of Chinese Buddhism and are especially popular with the laity, which

is still the case in today's Taiwanese Buddhism. In reflection of this fact, Sheng Yen took pains to incorporate Pure Land into the wider context of DDM-style Buddhist doctrine and practice.

As a bridge between Chan and Pure Land practice DDM holds *nianfochan* retreats in addition to traditional Pure Land *nianfo* retreats. On the surface they look almost identical: on both types of retreat, retreatants recite *Amituofo* while sitting and circumambulating in the Chan hall; yet the motive for each approach to the practice is different. Participants in Pure Land *nianfo* retreats wish to ensure rebirth in the Pure Land, or in some cases wish to transfer merit to deceased loved-ones or gain merit for themselves. The *nianfochan* retreat is designed differently: here participants are supposed to use *nianfo* as a Chan meditation method. However *nianfochan* retreats have significantly lower attendance than *nianfo* retreats. This reflects a gap between the more elite Mind-Only understandings of Pure Land within some circles in DDM, and the more literal Pure Land conceptions of *nianfo* retreatants that typify popular Taiwanese Buddhism in general.

As is apparent in Sheng Yen's writings and in the interview I conducted with Guojing, both prefer a Mind-Only interpretation of Pure Land to a more literal one. Conceptions of the Pure Land as an actual place somewhere in the west are perceived as a valid approach but also understood as inferior in the sense that they only function as an entrance point to a more advanced Chan Mind-Only understanding.

Similarly many people involved with the Dharma Drum Buddhist College that I have encountered indicated in conversations with me that they perceive Mind-Only understandings as more advanced.

Whenever I, as a European researcher, had a private conversation with these highly educated associates of DDM they always preferred a modernist and a Mind-Only understanding of Pure Land over literal conceptions.

However during my fieldwork at the weekly *nianfo* group practice at the DDM Anhe branch I noticed that the monastics that lead the activity deemphasized mind-only approaches to *nianfo*. They did mention them, but described them as being too difficult, instead recommending a strong faith in the literal existence of the Pure Land. This corresponds with other observations I made during my fieldwork, several informal conversations with participants at the *nianfo* group practice, and especially the significantly higher attendance at the seven-day *nianfo* retreats, compared to that of the average Chan retreat and *nianfochan* retreats. These data suggests that literal understandings of the Pure Land as a place of rebirth after death are much more common than Mind-Only understandings at DDM especially on the level of the average lay attendee of *nianfo* practice. It also seems to reflect the situation of Taiwanese Buddhism in general where *nianfo* as a practice to achieve rebirth in the Western Pure land seems to be one of the most popular approaches to Buddhism. Thus there exists a gap at DDM between elite and popular understandings of Pure Land.

In terms of doctrine Sheng Yen tries to harmonize this gap by introducing a fourfold model of Pure Lands. The four Pure Lands identified by Sheng Yen do not refer to geographical locations, but to different levels of spiritual attainment and purity. The Pure Land on Earth is the starting point, while the inner Pure Land is the goal. The way to reach that goal is foremost to purify oneself through Buddhist practice. When the goal is reached, the practitioner realizes that destination and origin, and the Pure Lands of all the Buddhas, are one and the same. But although Sheng Yen emphasizes such Mind-Only understandings, he also incorporates into his take on Pure Land the three Pure Land *sutras* that stress faith in the literal existence of the Pure Land and Amitabha.

In his two books explicitly dealing with Pure Land, Sheng Yen strongly encourages faith in Amitabha and believes in the efficacy of *nianfo* in ensuring rebirth in the Western Pure Land for practitioners of the Pure Land approach. He stresses the importance of faith, as is common in Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, over the importance of single-mindedly practicing *nianfo*, an approach emphasized in Chinese Pure Land, in order to avoid falling into the trap of escapism. Again, Sheng Yen's incorporation of literal understandings of Pure Land seems to reflect the popularity of these notions within Taiwanese/Chinese lay Buddhism.

If we go back to the second question and see how both modern and traditional Pure Land practices are related, we can see that the modern concept of Building a Pure Land on Earth represents the framework for a big range of traditional practices. The motto is promoted through public outreach campaigns using contemporary language and concepts. It does not aim to move the Pure Land mentioned in the *sutras* to our world, but rather to

create an ideal society through the purification of the minds of the population. DDM hopes to reach this goal by attracting people, Buddhists and non-Buddhists, to Buddhist practices and concepts. However, these advocated practices are not new but long established forms of religious cultivation in Chinese Buddhism. They include meditation, but also *nianfo*, ritual, repentance and keeping precepts. Each is perceived as a valid gateway to Buddhism, yet a hierarchy between them does exist. In terms of *nianfo*, literal understandings of Pure Land are a valid approach, nevertheless they represent a starting point, while Chan Mind-Only understandings are perceived as a more advanced approach. This way of negotiating tensions between different Pure Land understandings is not new or modern but has a long history in Chinese Buddhism and is especially related to a Chan understanding of Pure Land.

If we try to apply modernization theory to Dharma Drum Mountain, we find that some of the postulated characteristics fit while others do not. Some criteria, for example, Tamney's first three characteristics of a modernist Buddhism seem to describe the situation at DDM correctly, i.e., a stronger role for the laity, including women; Buddhism as a voluntary, chosen religion; engaging in social welfare and environmental protection. However other criteria fit less well: while being universal in outlook, DDM is still strongly linked with local, Confucian, discourse. As Jimmy Yu pointed out, public outreach campaigns as an ideological-pedagogical means to morally educate the population are deeply rooted in the Confucian tradition. However, while promoting traditional values like protocol and etiquette, these campaigns do also reflect modern

discourses, for example, in their use of secular language and promoting environmentalism.

Similarly, other traditional elements, like ritual and hierarchy, continue to play an important role in the organization. Repentance rituals are performed at the beginning of the *nianfo* group practice, and huge Dharma assemblies are a regular part of religious life at DDM. Furthermore a clear hierarchy is present not only within the monastic Sangha, but also between monastics and laity.

Scholars of modern Buddhism like McMahan emphasize the importance of meditation in modernist Buddhism. Meditation in fact is often equated with modern Buddhist practice. Chan meditation does indeed play a leading role in DDM's vision. Yet it is not the only form of religious cultivation promoted by DDM, and it might not even be the most popular one with the laity. The organization promotes traditional religious practices that include not just meditation, but also *nianfo*, ritual, repentance and keeping precepts. Dharma assemblies in particular, but also *nianfo* practices attract very high attendance. These practices are neither new nor modern, but have a long history in Chinese Buddhism. They constitute different forms of religious practice that respond to a particular practitioner's interests and needs (or karmic relations, to use a Buddhist term), but also reflect his or her degree of advancement. While meditation stresses the need for self-reliance, practices like upholding the precepts and repentance rituals focus on ethics. Devotional practices like *nianfo* and Dharma assemblies stress faith. All these approaches are seen as equally valid departure points for a journey towards the same soteriological goal. Yet there exists a hierarchy between different practices where some, like Chan meditation are perceived as more advanced than others. This hierarchy is implied by the

application of Mind-Only doctrine. Mind-Only is a Chan approach historically used to resolve tensions between conflicting Pure Land and Chan understandings. This strategy is not a modern one, but dates back at least as far as the Song dynasty.

Although these practices are traditional in the sense that they have a long history in Chinese Buddhism and they are legitimized by being grounded in Buddhist doctrine to make them meaningful for a specifically Buddhist audience, they are also promoted through modern public outreach campaigns and use modern concepts like environmentalism to reach out to the wider Taiwanese public. In addition, some of these practices like Chan meditation were historically less common than others with the laity. Thus, promoting meditation and meditational approaches to *nianfo* to lay Buddhists also reflects a modern development in Chinese Buddhism.

Let us return to Wang Hui's critique of a linear understanding of modernization based on a particular European historical experience and applied to a non-western context. We can see that rather than understanding different notions of Pure Land in terms of a binary of *not yet* and *already* modernized, where modern Pure Land on Earth notions eventually replace the remaining traditional understandings of western Pure Land, we can understand them as a multilayered assemblage, of traditional and modern, i.e., new and old, and elite and popular elements that constitute a unique and new form of Buddhism.

The concept of hybridity might be a more appropriate model for understanding the relationship between modern and traditional, elite and popular approaches to Pure Land

at DDM. The term hybrid is originally used in the context of biology and botany. In the nineteenth century it was applied to controversial debates on race, and then later applied in philology and linguistics. It became popular again with Homi K. Bhaba and Post-Colonial theory in the last century. However I apply the term as understood by Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian philosopher who worked on literary theory, ethics, and the philosophy of language. He writes:

> "What is hybridization? It is a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or some other factor."[316]

Whether modern or traditional, Mind-Only or literal, Pure Land can be understood as a cultural and linguistic utterance. It is a concept that combines a variety of understandings, practices and belief systems. It contains modernist notions of Pure Land on Earth, elite Chan notions of Mind-Only Pure Land, as well as literal understandings of the Western Pure Land so important to popular lay Buddhism and its practices.

Bakhtin further identifies two kinds of hybridity: intentional and unconscious organic. The former is "double-accented" and "double styled." To Bakhtin, it belongs to a single speaker, but

> "actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages', two semantic and axiological belief systems. (…) (T)he division of voices and languages takes place within the limits of a single syntactic whole, often within the limits of a single sentence. It frequently happens that even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems that intersect in a hybrid construction – and consequently the word has two contradictory meanings, two accents."[317]

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[316] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, transl. Carl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 358.
[317] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination,* 304-305.

This double-voiced hybrid discourse serves a purpose. It includes but also subordinates other meanings and belief systems. Applied to the situation at DDM we can see how, through Mind-Only concepts, the modern discourse of the Pure Land on Earth absorbs but also appropriates and subordinates other more literal Pure Land understandings representative of popular Buddhism. It is authorial and thus intentional.

However, there is a second form of hybridization: Organic hybridization is an unintentional, unconscious hybridization. According to Bakhtin it is the most important mode in the process of how languages change historically. It is mute and opaque, but at the same time "profoundly productive historically: they are pregnant with potential for new world views, with new "internal forms" for perceiving the world in words."[318] Applied to Pure Land, it refers to popular usage of the term on the level of lay practitioners. Practitioners who participate in Pure Land practices at DDM seem to mainly understand *nianfo* as a practice for gaining entrance to the Western Pure Land, but they might also participate to receive any other kind of miraculous response, while others then just participate because they emotionally respond to the practice.

In conclusion, different Pure Land practices at DDM do not constitute a linear binary of *not yet* and *already* modernized practices and conceptions, where more abstract Mind-Only understandings promoted though modern public outreach campaigns eventually replace literal understandings of the Western Pure Land and *nianfo* as a method to get

[318] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination,* 360.

there. Instead, modern elements like increased lay meditation, modern conceptions of religion as an institution that ought to contribute to society, the use of contemporary non-Buddhist discourses, like environmentalism, together with Mind-Only discourses, meditational approaches to *nianfo*, and traditional elements like literal beliefs in the Western Pure Land as an actual place that can be reached through *nianfo* practice together form a multilayered hybrid. This hybrid is partly an intentional product of Sheng Yen and other elite advocates of Chinese Buddhism to harmonize Chan with popular Pure Land practices and make them relevant to modern society, but also reflects the increased importance of lay Buddhism. A special role here is given to Mind-Only philosophy. Further research is necessary to assess the new role of this philosophy in Chinese Buddhism, and to examine how modern Mind-Only understandings differ from earlier ones and the concept's role in the history of modern Chinese Buddhism in greater depth.

7. Appendix

Interview transcript

Interviewer: Jens Reinke， 李明傑

Interviewee: Ven. Guojing (果鏡法師)

Time: 3:30 - 5:00 pm, May 3, 2014

Place: 法鼓山德貴分院

JENS Q1： 法鼓山的唸佛共修是在東初的時代就已經有了嗎？ 還是聖嚴法師自己建立的一種修行方法？

A：這個很早以前就有了， 這在我們中國就有了， 這叫唸佛蓮社， 蓮社就是共修的， 以唸佛為共修的。 這個在很早以前， 聽說最早的蓮社是盧山慧遠大師創立的， 從他開始的。

JENS Q2： 所以在東初老人的時代就已經有了嗎？ 當時農禪寺還不是聖嚴師父的。

A：你是說東初老人， 是我們的師公？ 我們體系的唸佛會嗎？ 東初老人時沒有

JENS Q3。 我在聖嚴師父的傳記看到了， 他好像很久以前就有帶一個佛七。

A：對， 你是說師公嗎？ 師父還是師公？

JENS Q4。 就是聖嚴師父還沒有建立法鼓山的時候。

A：對， 唸佛會是沒有法鼓山之前， 農禪寺就已經開始有， 很早就有了。 那時候最少也有30幾年前就開始有了。 對， 這個時間可以查得到。 這個在我們農禪寺應該是。。。。創立的時間， 我記得應該最少也是民國70年左右的時候。 唸佛會創立差不多是在那個時候， 民國70年等於1981年， 1980年左右， 那個時候創立的。 法鼓山的網站也有介紹過， 或者是師父的， 有關法的法鼓全集裡面也會有， 會寫。 正確的時間可以查得到。

JENS Q5。 法鼓山那些跟唸佛有關的活動， 就是唸佛共修， 助唸團和佛七， 這三個是不是？

A：對。 對。 對

JENS Q6。 佛七是一年會辦兩次是不是？

A：最少一年會有兩次吧， 有時候不一定， 有時候會增加。 這其實我們都有留紀錄， 其實都可以查得到。 我們從第一屆佛七一直， 那時候一年是辦兩次， 後來有時候一年三

次， 一年一次， 不一定。

JENS Q7。 所以還是禪的活動比較多很多？

A：禪比較多， 禪的話， 禪的次數會高過於佛七。

JENS Q8。 參加禪的活動人比較多嗎？

A：不一定。 人數， 一次佛七的人數一定高過禪七。 佛七的話有時候千人， 就是有時候唸佛會到千人以上， 可是禪七沒有辦法。 禪七頂多一百左右， 兩百。 可是有時候佛七會到一千人， 甚至有時後盛況有時候到兩千人，

JENS Q9。 如果那麼受歡迎的話， 為什麼只有一年辦一次或是一年辦兩次？ 因為我原先以為 是禪比較受歡迎。

A：因為我們的佛七都是定在一個是彌陀佛七， 一個是清明佛七。

JENS Q10。 它的差別在哪裡？

A：它有目的， 一個是清明節， 因為我們掃墓， 這因應我們中國的民情， 就是清明掃墓節， 慎終追遠， 所以我們那時候都會打一次清明佛七， 清明佛七都是在三月底四月。

JENS Q11。 所以內容都是一樣嗎？

A：對， 一模一樣。 主要是有這樣的一個意義。 另外一個是彌陀聖誕前後， 舉辦一個彌陀佛七， 我們那時候大概一年就這兩次， 所以它是有一個意義性的佛七。 禪七就不一定了， 禪七是隨時隨地就， 師父要打或是甚麼都有， 像現在整年都在打禪七， 不一樣。 那佛七大概都會有為了特定的目的， 一個清明佛七， 一個彌陀佛七， 一直到現在都沒有變。 然後有時候頂多， 像現在增加一個就是唸佛禪七， 就是唸佛就是禪， 那樣子的概唸來打唸佛禪七。

JENS Q12。 所以這個跟一般的佛七不一樣嗎？ 它的差別在哪裡？

A：對， 不一樣。 一般的佛七就是當然我們有目的性， 希望能夠得到佛菩薩的接引， 加持， 那種意味很重， 就是信仰的意味很重。 這個， 師父的著作裡面有寫， 唸佛禪七跟一般的佛七哪裡不一樣？ 一般的佛七， 我們主要目的是希望能夠跟佛菩薩能夠感應， 能夠祈求有一些瑞祥之類的， 通常那種信仰層面很高。 可是唸佛禪七不是， 完全沒有這些東西， 就是純粹你就是唸佛， 唸佛本身它就是禪，禪修的方法， 就是用唸佛的方法來達到禪修的目的， 這是完全不同的。

JENS Q13。 所以目標是不一樣的，但是內容是一樣嗎？

A：目標是不一樣的， 內容也不一樣。 內容設計非常不一樣， 唸佛禪七當然一樣是有持命唸佛 ， 一樣是有唸佛， 可是它的持命唸佛並不是為了要跟佛菩薩感應， 或是要得甚麼樣的身心上的瑞祥， 禪七就是純粹， 就跟一般的禪七雷同， 只是用的方法唸佛。

JENS Q14。 所以是要達到唸佛三昧嗎？

A：對。 當然一般的佛七也可以達到唸佛三昧， 也是一樣有， 一樣可以。 其實到時候殊途是同歸的， 只是一開始的出發點不一樣， 一般的佛七我們希望能夠達到有跟佛菩薩感應的信仰層面非常濃厚的， 當然你到最後， 這些東西都捨棄掉， 就是轉為一般的禪修，是可以的。 是可以轉， 可是我們一般大概不這麼帶。 我們一開始就把它說這是一般的佛七， 那這是我們唸佛禪七， 不一樣。 可是持命唸佛是相同的， 用持命唸佛來達到相同的目的， 只是入門不同。

JENS Q15。 法師剛剛說的唸佛禪， 它是唯心淨土的嗎？

A：對了， 它是唯心淨土的。 一般佛七它是西方淨土的， 就是要往生西方極樂世界，

JENS Q16。 兩個淨土的關係怎麼樣？

A：西方淨土我們一般說都是有相的。 等於說它是有這樣子的一個極樂世界， 而且是在西方， 很清楚， 因為阿彌陀經就告訴我們。 那唸佛禪七它是無相唸佛， 等於說無相就是實相， 是為了要跟佛的實相， 證悟佛的實相[319]而有的， 而且佛的淨土就是唯心的淨土， 而不是說在西方有個淨土， 不是， 這個不同的。 唯心淨土當下就會是淨土了， 不是只有到西方極樂世界才是淨土， 這個不同點在這裡。

JENS Q17。 在師父的書有看到自性淨土， 那自性淨土跟唯心淨土是一樣的嗎？

A：是一樣的。唯心淨土， 自性彌陀， 是一樣的。

JENS Q18。 唯心淨土的概唸是永明延壽的嗎？ 還是它是從甚麼時候開始的？

A：這個概唸我們一般都說是永明延壽， 可是在我們淨土的研究裡面， 唯心淨土的思想，其實還有很多研究的空間。 因為一般都說是宋朝的永明延壽， 可是一般來說它其實可以推得更上面， 因為這個要講到禪淨， 就說到淨土的概唸它就是一個跟禪結合的概唸， 這可能就要牽涉到禪跟淨土的中間融合的關係， 可能研究上必須你要朝這個方向， 禪淨融合的。 因為單單說唯心淨土是起於宋朝的永明延壽， 這個稍為就有點， 就是要保守一點， 可以再追溯。

JENS Q19。 所以一定是從永明延壽開始的， 還是有可能是唐朝？

A：唐朝的時候可能就有， 唐朝的時候的幾位淨土的大師裡面， 也會講到唯心淨土， 尤其是禪宗的禪師們， 他們一般都是有唸佛的傾向。 當然到宋朝就已經很普遍了， 但唐朝的時候其實也有， 也有一般禪宗的禪師對淨土也有契合的， 唐朝裡面像惠能大師， 不是主張禪淨而已， 他還主張教禪淨戒， 四種一致的一個概念， 其實裡面他也就主張禪淨是一致的， 其實不是只有到宋朝。 其實不只， 有時候可以推得更遠一點。 在我們佛經裡

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面， 像有些從印度傳過來的經典裡面， 它是禪的經典， 可是它裡面也有講到唸佛， 唸佛的概唸， 也有講到阿彌陀佛， 這個我們如果要推溯到更遠一點， 其實有時候從那些經典裡面， 是禪的經典裡面， 其實也有提到唸佛， 意思就是說在印度佛教的時候， 它們對禪跟淨土， 唸佛， 它們的概唸可能就已經有存在了， 這有人這麼懷疑。 有關的禪的經典，確實是哪一本忘記了， 就是專門寫禪的經典， 可是裡面卻有講到阿彌陀佛， 甚至講十方佛， 唸十方佛的概唸， 那是梵文翻譯過來的。

JENS Q20。 法鼓山一個禮拜有一次的唸佛共修， 它是屬於唸佛禪還是一般的唸佛？ 還是都可以？

A：現就是把它當作共修， 唸佛共修。

JENS Q21。 所以是一種修行嗎？

A：是一種修行的方法。 在共修的時候大家只是專注的唸佛， 一心唸佛。 就是把它當作是修行的方法。 最重要是心態， 你唸佛的時候你的心態是甚麼？ 是要祈求佛菩薩感應，或是你並沒有要跟佛菩薩有甚麼樣的感應， 你只是專注的唸佛？ 甚至在唸佛的過程中迴就關照到唸佛的是誰， 進入到話頭禪。 從唸佛進入到話頭禪， 有一個話頭叫做唸佛的是誰？ 這個其實沒有唸佛的人要參這個話頭， 有時候不好參。 這就是唸佛的人， 當你迴唸， 迴光返照的時候， 你照到這個唸佛的人倒底是誰？ 你起了這個疑情之後就進入到話頭， 話頭就可以理解。 這是我們一般從唸佛可以進入到話頭禪的關鍵點。

JENS Q22。 師父的博士論文是研究蕅益智旭， 而袾宏也是把禪跟唸佛連在一起。 師父的淨土觀有沒有受到他們兩個人的影響？ 因為他們的概念當時已經很發達， 把傳統的淨土跟唸佛禪連在一起。 師父的觀點跟他們的相似嗎？ 還是不一樣？

A：不一樣。 當然是有師父的傳承， 其實師父一定是有他的傳承， 然後師父又有一些創新。 當然師父不會平白無故自己創新， 一定是祖師們有這樣子的東西， 然後師父傳承下來之後， 再把它弄成現代人很容易接受也很容易理解的方式， 講出來讓大家能夠思修。

JENS Q23。 蕅益智旭跟師父最大的差別是？

A：你要了解蕅益智旭的整個生平， 他的生平中好像只是有這樣的理論， 據我的印象中好像沒有看到他有帶眾。 最大的不同是師父有帶徒弟， 我們出家的徒弟們還有信眾們， 可是蕅益大師好像沒有。 他在這一方面就跟師父絕大不同， 蕅益大師是自己思修沒錯， 他有很多自己思修的個人的體驗。

JENS Q24。 那在淨土觀的概念方面有沒有很大的差別？

A：應該師父是有傳承他的， 有從他那邊得到一些跟淨土有關的概唸。 當然他也是講唯心的， 唯心淨土， 自性彌陀的， 一樣的， 師父講的也是一樣， 在這一點基本上是沒有問題， 基本上是相同的。

JENS Q25。 比較他們對禪的感覺。 我自己的印象是， 對師父來說禪還是比較重要的， 因為師父的著作裡面談到最多的是禪。 但是從師父的博士論文中， 師父寫到在修行方面， 好像滿益智旭自己做的最多的是淨土， 只有一段時間是做唸佛禪， 大部份最多是比較傳統的淨土。 所以是不是師父比較偏禪？

A：其實師父也沒有說禪比較重要， 唸佛不重要。 但是如果用這個角度來看， 可以這樣說。 可是滿益智旭的禪修功夫非常好， 從他的一些著作裡面可以看得到， 他其實已經修到蠻高的層次， 人家說也有開悟的經驗了。

JENS Q26。 在法鼓山裡面唸佛共修或唸佛， 跟人間淨土的關係如何？

A：人間淨土的面非常廣， 我們要達到人間淨土， 能夠讓我們人間能夠建立起像淨土一樣的快樂的國土的話， 其中一個方法就是唸佛。 不是只有這個方法， 禪修也是一個方法， 或是說用戒律， 師父講的菩薩戒， 我們也在弘傳菩薩戒， 這也都算是建立人間淨土的方法之一。 那些都可以建立人間淨土， 是實踐方法。 唸佛是其中之一， 禪修當然也是， 然後是菩薩戒， 甚至我們的水陸法會， 都是可以達到人間淨土的目的。

JENS Q27。 那都是一樣重要嗎？ 還是有區別？

A：每個人的根基不一樣。 有人喜歡唸佛， 有人喜歡禪修， 有人喜歡持戒受菩薩戒， 有人喜歡誦經， 這是依據人的根基， 他的根基如何？ 他可以選擇， 從不同的地方入門， 是比較廣泛的。 師父建立的人間淨土， 這些都是方法， 都可以達到人間淨土的方法。

明傑 Q28。 這些東西其他的道場也都會辦， 那有差別嗎？

A：我們有個目標， 我們讓每個人都清楚知道， 我們做這些事情， 都是為了要建設人間淨土。 其實其他道場也一樣， 他們做一樣的事情， 人間淨土不是只有法鼓山在做， 我們希望整個世界都在做這件事情， 不是我們自己做才叫人間淨土， 不是， 我們也是希望所有的， 佛教也好， 不要講佛教， 其他的宗教也跟我們一樣， 我們共同來建設人間的淨土， 所以我們沒有宗教的隔閡。

JENS Q29。 如果以唸佛來說， 法鼓山的唸佛共修跟別的團體的唸佛共修， 有沒有甚麼是法鼓山的特色？ 不是在目標， 而是在結構， 方法的 方面來看。

A：基本上， 其實原理是相同， 因為這都是從祖師這樣下來， 從經典出來的， 其實基本上是完全相同的， 沒有甚麼差異。 只是說我們用的， 有些小小的不一樣。 有些地方， 可能你唱的這個調跟我們的調子不一樣， 這個不影響我們的根本。 就像你講的話跟我講的話不一樣， 可是我們同樣有一個共同點， 其實沒有甚麼差別， 以我們來說的話這個根本是相同的， 相通的， 即使一點點差異不同， 並不會影響， 構成我們基本的內涵不同。 表面上的一點點差異， 其實並不是很重要。 沒有一個道場唸的音調一模一樣， 各唸各的， 可是一樣都是在唸佛。 能夠說得出來這間道場跟那間道場唸得不同， 可能只有音調不同， 還有在內容， 內容是指念的開始點不同， 或是有道場這個唸那個地方不唸， 頂多是這樣。 可是它的根本並不變， 唸佛的根本並不變， 只是在枝末上， 表面上一點點的不

同， 其實並不影響它的內涵。 最重要的是它的內涵， 唸佛的內涵是相通的。 除非有的道場搞不清楚為什麼要唸佛， 不知道自己為什麼要唸佛， 唸佛是為了甚麼？ 唸佛能夠達到甚麼樣的目的？ 可能都不知道， 這樣的也有。 即使你不知道， 內涵還是不變的， 它真正的內涵不會因為你知道或不知道就存在或消失了， 它本來就是這樣的功能， 就是這樣的內涵。 只是用的人不知道有這些東西， 考試他就傻傻的唸， 可是傻傻的唸可不可以達到這樣的內涵？ 一樣可以， 只是不曉得甚麼時候而已。

JENS Q30。 法鼓山裡面參加禪修和唸佛的人是不是不一樣？唸佛的是不是第一次因為家裡有發生事情， 以後才來參加的？

A：這個叫做因緣， 接近這個方法的因緣不同。 因緣跟根器不一樣。 根器就是說， 我就是喜歡打坐不喜歡唸佛， 我就是喜歡打坐不喜歡誦經， 這個是根器的問題。 因緣， 剛剛你提到說， 有的人學佛就是接近唸佛， 可能有的人是朋友一直說服他， 要他來試試看， 他就拗不過朋友他就來接觸， 一接觸覺得不錯， 這個是因緣。 或是說你剛剛提的， 家裡有人往生， 因為誦經， 看到了出家人， 也看到了人家來幫忙， 覺得好像心裡上蠻踏實的， 因為這樣的原因他想要去了解， 這樣接觸， 這個叫做因緣。 每個人接觸的因緣可以千百萬種，

JENS Q30。 那麼在年紀上， 唸佛的人年紀比較大嗎？ 禪修的人比較是上班族嗎？ 還是有沒有這樣的關係？

A：當然是一般的統計來說， 因為每個人的根基不一樣， 這根基是不是有年齡的呈現？

JENS Q31。 我自己認為的是上班族有很多壓力， 所以會選禪。 然後可能是因為家裡有發生事情等， 所以唸佛的人年紀比較大。

A：這是會的。 這個你們要得到這個答案， 你們可以鎖定某一些層次的人， 你們所想的你們去調查， 這個要透過調查你們才會得到一些數據， 這個是最準的。 當然我們一般看我們現在的信眾來說， 一般來看唸佛會， 一看都是年紀比較大的人比較多， 如果你光這樣看的話。 禪修的人， 確實年齡層比較年輕。 可最準的話， 還是要某個年齡層， 某個設定的問卷調查， 經過實地的調查， 你才能得到準確的。 那我們現在看到是我們現在確實是這樣。 唸佛會的人， 唸佛的人確實是年紀比較大的人， 是不是他們就比較喜歡唸佛？ 這個不知道， 你們要透過採訪， 透過調查， 你們才會真正知道。 禪坐會， 打坐的人也有年紀大的， 當然也有年紀輕的， 年紀大的人他為什麼要來打坐？當然都有很多理由， 其實有時候你們可以透過調查， 這樣會比較準。 所以通常你們要研究這個， 大概都要有一點調查。 光是這樣眼睛看不行， 沒有辦法成為你們研究的參考。

JENS Q32。 如果談人間淨土的話， 在法鼓全集裡面真的談淨土的好像只有一本書， 後來還有一本書是唸佛生淨土。

A：跟淨土有關的其實蠻多的， 淨土不是只有那個， 像師父也有聖嚴法師教觀音法門， 觀音法門也算是淨土的， 當然它裡面也有禪觀， 那個其實你也可以考慮。 還有無量壽

經， 師父也有講無量壽經的講記， 然後還有幾本。

JENS Q33。 聖嚴法師教觀音法門是不是以後才寫的？ 就是Retreat 的時候， 不是真的寫一本書。 是他教了以後， 才寫成一本書。

A：對， 這個都是用講的， 然後整理出來的。 不過師父有親自刪改過， 師父有重新潤稿過。

JENS Q34。 師父的人間淨土的概念， 有沒有哪一本書講的最多？ 因為他是很多書都有講一些， 但是沒有很多。

A：有， 師父講的心靈環保就有了， 裡面都會講到人間淨土。 所以你要去把師父這幾年來我們有出了一套的心靈環保的， 有講到心五四， 心六倫， 這都跟建設人間淨土有關， 那些資料你們也要拿到， 然後去閱讀。

明傑 Q35。 師父教的淨土， 對於有一些人來講可能比較偏向人間淨土， 對有些人來講他可能比較偏向西方淨土。

這是一個願力的問題， 有的人就沒有想要去西方， 他覺得人間很好， 他不想去西方極樂世界。 所以， 師父沒有說你要還是不要， 反正他是給你這些概念， 這些方法， 最重要是你自己要發願， 你要不要去？ 是跟你自己有關， 跟師父沒關係。 唯心淨土還是西方淨土， 這些都是你個人根器的問題。

JENS Q36。 唯心淨土跟人間淨土是怎樣的關係？

A：我們講人間淨土， 其實我們在。 有時候你說唯心淨土跟西方淨土， 我們有時候， 我們現在來說看它是二分法， 師父有講過， 有時候不是， 它可以合而唯一。 它不是二， 它可以成為一。 西方只是一個概念而已， 其實極樂世界的阿彌陀佛， 佛的佛性， 其實我們用佛性實相觀來看的話， 是沒有所謂西方極樂世界或是唯心的世界， 是一樣的， 極樂世界也是唯心的世界。 你要用實相來觀它的話， 它是一樣的， 也是二就是一。

JENS Q37。 所以這算是比較唯識觀的想法？

A：對， 這是可以說是唯識的沒有錯， 可是唯識也是唯心阿。 我們說人間淨土， 你說人間淨土跟唯心淨土。 人間淨土－你要讓人間成為淨土， 你沒有在心上用功的話， 這個淨土不可能成， 就講到心。 為什麼最後師父會講到心靈環保， 都跟這個心有相關。 那唯心淨土講的不是心嗎？ 其實西方淨土講的也是心， 心， 佛心， 眾生心。 佛心即是眾生心， 三無差別佛心， 眾生心跟我們的自心三無差別。 淨土也是一樣， 淨土又講到華嚴的思想了， 所有的淨土是可以相通的， 一即是一切， 一切即是一， 所有的淨土都是相通的。 即使我們在人間建立起來真正成為人間淨土的時候， 它跟西方極樂淨土是相通的， 它跟佛的淨土是相通的， 只要它是成為淨土的時候。 而且我們人人都能成佛， 我們在人間每個人都成佛了， 這人間淨土不就是佛的淨土嗎？ 那佛的淨土跟阿彌陀佛的淨土哪裡不一樣？ 阿彌佛陀的淨土不是佛的淨土嗎？ 不是相同嗎？ 這就講到華嚴的思想。

JENS Q38。 華嚴的淨土觀跟天台的淨土觀哪裡不一樣？

A：我們通常淨土大概會比較講到華嚴， 我們剛剛講的其實都是華嚴的觀念。 天台的淨土就會有點不一樣， 天台的淨土就會比較要想一下。

JENS Q39。 所以師父的淨土觀也是比較是屬於華嚴的嗎？

A：是屬於華嚴的， 華嚴淨土的。 當然你說有沒有天台的， 因為其實到最後， 我還是講到最後。。 只是說切入的角度不同， 應該說是切入的角度不同， 而不是根本上的不同。 其實天台淨土跟華嚴的淨土， 它不同的地方應該就是我剛剛講的， 它切入的地方不一樣。 至於切入的地方不同在哪裡？ 等於說一個是講真心， 一個是講妄心。 天台是講妄心的， 華嚴是講真心的。 這就講到真忘了， 真就是真諦。 天台是從妄心切入， 華嚴是從真心切入， 它們不同的地方在這裡。 其實根本上講淨土是一樣的， 只是切入點一個是從妄心切入一個是講真心切入。 這是我個人的看法， 給你們做參考。

JENS Q40。 師父的書跟別的書做比較， 印象覺得師父是比較偏華嚴的， 但是不敢確定？

A：是華嚴而且華嚴禪， 禪宗。 融合的－華嚴， 淨土， 禪。

JENS Q41。 現在在當代台灣是華嚴還是天台影響比較多人？ 比較多人談論， 寫或發想？ 因為現在沒有甚麼天台宗還是華嚴， 只是概念的印象。

A：那都只是概念。 因為我們在修行上， 一般現在不是淨土就是禪， 華嚴跟天台是比較偏向於教理上的。 修行上因為很多已經融入禪宗裡了， 你把它獨立出來還是牽扯不了禪， 給人的感覺就沒有必要再。我們台灣還是有什麼華嚴蓮社， 可是他們也沒辦法舉足輕重， 畢竟已經融入禪宗裡頭了。 淨土現在， 在我們宋朝以後， 禪淨是兩大支流， 一直到現在都一樣。 天台跟華嚴很明顯的已經融入在這兩個宗派裡頭。 你說天台， 天台修止觀， 最後還是可以在禪宗裡面有連結的地方， 所以你說你修天台， 天台止觀到最後還是會跟禪連結在一起， 所以覺得沒有必要性。 現在當然有人在提倡天台， 可是到最後還是沒有辦法成為像以前一樣。 以前它能夠在中國成為重要的兩大支派， 那是因為教理教觀的關係， 而不是它的實修， 不在於他的實修。 現在教理上有在復興， 我們也大概知道， 可是在一般能夠通俗話的還是禪跟淨土。

JENS Q42。 那麼在一般的佛教世界裡面， 討論思想， 概念方面是華嚴必較有影響力還是天台？ 還是很難說， 都有？

A：很難說。

JENS Q43。 以師父來說是華嚴比較多？

A：對。 當然你說天台， 師父也有。 你說蕅益大師， 他本身就是天台的， 可是蕅益大師他又沒說他自己是， 他還是說他是禪的背景的。

JENS Q44。 他沒有說， 可是師父把他看成必較是天台的。

A：對， 沒錯， 師父來看他的話， 他是以禪的立場來詮釋天台。 現在台灣學佛的風氣裡面， 當然慢慢的了解天台和華嚴的人也慢慢多了， 可是還是不是很普遍。 一般來說還是不是很普遍， 如果要用數據來看待的話。 一般信徒大概都不會想要那個， 因為唸佛的唸佛了， 打坐的人打坐了。 如果要有數據的話， 就要去統計調查了。 有人讀了， 可是對他有什麼影響？ 他知道， 可是他修行還是唸佛， 還是打坐， 禪修， 不會去修什麼華嚴。

JENS Q45。 華嚴有自己的修行方法嗎？

A：華嚴其實也有， 基本上華嚴也有修行的層次次遞， 可能也是蠻複雜的， 它要一層一層的。 我記得， 它好像有好幾個層次， 一層一層這樣上來， 這可能可以查得到。 有拉， 還是有， 它有它的修行方法。

明傑 Q46。 法師你剛剛講說， 像現在唸佛的還是唸佛， 修禪的還是修禪。 像華嚴跟天台沒有像這兩個這麼普遍。 因為我的母親她是在台南占仁寺(?)那邊， 我有時候回去也會去那邊共修， 那邊的師父就有說， 你是研究天台的話， 如果是講到天台， 占仁寺(?)一定沒有人不知道。 是不是他專門在研究這個的人， 才會知道這個東西？

A：對， 你說對了， 一般人沒辦法知道的， 一般人不可能知道， 你一定是有接觸， 然後研究， 你才會知道。

JENS Q47。 師父的博士論文是明末中國佛教之研究， 師父在1987年還有寫了明末佛教研究， 後者是從他的博士論文發展出來的嗎？ 因為一個是談薄益智旭， 另外一個談的比較廣。

A：一本是他在日本的博士論文， 另外一本好像是他後來寫的。

JENS Q48。 所以不是他留下來的資料？

A：不是， 他後來才寫的。 寫得很清楚， 有很多參考資料， 整理得很多， 值得參考的。

明傑 Q49。 法鼓山的唸佛的活動， 跟其他的淨土的道場有什麼異同之處嗎？ 就像有些人唸佛是以禪修的心態來唸， 有些人可能是用佛菩薩感應的方式。 那其他修淨土的一定是唸佛然後跟佛菩薩有感應這樣子嗎？

A：每個人的根器， 還有他個人為什麼要唸佛有相關。 來參加唸佛會的人你也不可能每個人去問他， 你今天來唸佛是什麼原因？ 那你要去調查了， 你才能夠統計出來這一次唸佛會裡面， 來參加唸佛的， 他們是用什麼心態來的？ 我們不能規定， 除非說來打七， 打佛七， 我們可以統一的說， 我們這一次這個佛七， 我們是為了要達到禪的目的， 那你們要搞清楚， 我們帶的方法就是要像唸佛禪七， 跟佛七不一樣。 你要講清楚， 然後他們就會知道， 他們來參加這一次的佛七要用什麼心態來， 才能夠跟我們這一次帶的相應， 你才能夠受益。

JENS Q50。 那唸佛禪七跟佛七參加的人是不一樣的嗎？

A：當然不一樣， 裡面的帶法不一樣。 參加的人族群會不一樣， 很明顯的。 有的人覺得他喜歡跟佛菩薩接近， 就是信仰層面的人， 他就是想要來達到某一種跟佛相應的那種感應的方向， 有的人就專門喜歡打這樣的佛七， 他覺得佛七會跟他比較相應。 其實有時候， 我們通常會鼓勵， 但是不能強迫， 讓他們知道。 當然有的人來參加唸佛禪七， 還是有所求， 還是會有這樣子心態不是來修禪的， 不是無所求的心。 一般的佛七是有所求， 禪七/唸佛禪七是無所求， 最大的不同是這個， 一個是有所求一個是無所求。 有的人他就是因為我的家人往生， 它有種種的原因， 所以他是有求而來參加的， 有很多的目的， 原因。 有的人他沒有， 他覺得我就純粹的， 沒有什麼， 沒有想要得到什麼， 我就是純粹來唸佛， 就是禪的那種心態， 無所求的心態。 可是當然參加的過程， 也有人會想說沒關係， 都一樣， 反正我來參加這個我就是來唸佛， 跟大家一起共修而已。 至於他是怎麼發心的， 我們也不知道， 可能會有這樣的人來參加也說不定。 其實你也沒有辦法規定， 你不能說你這樣的人不能來參加， 我們是開放性的， 你不曉得他是什麼心態來的，還是會接受。

JENS Q51。 如果比較禪跟唸佛禪， 哪一個比較簡單？ 是唸佛禪七比一般的禪簡單嗎？ 因為我個人覺得一般的禪很難。

A：這個還是得講根性， 根器。 你說簡單嗎？ 也不見得。 也就是說唸佛， 它很明顯的很強烈的有一個東西， 讓你能夠用， 你就是在打坐的時候， 你有一個唸佛， 你一直唸佛，因為你很清楚有個佛號讓你能夠把你的心繫在那裏。 禪七它不同的地方， 禪七有很多種， 看是怎樣的禪七。 一般的禪七， 我們有時候是教數息觀的禪七， 數息－數呼吸，這是根器， 喜歡唸佛的人， 他們覺得數呼吸數不來， 數呼吸習慣的人他們覺得唸佛很累， 不同的反應。 有的人他就喜歡參話頭， 其實原理是一模一樣， 唸佛算是一個suoyanjin(?)， 數息觀也是一個suoyanjin(?)， 話頭也是一個suoyanjin(?)， 其實他們是相同的， 對一個禪修的人來說其實是相同的， 都是一個suoyanjin(?)， 只是你個人的根基， 你是喜歡唸佛的人， 或是喜歡數息的人， 或是喜歡話頭的人， 一般來說它的功能是完全相同。 我們在禪修的時候， 一開始是要有一個suoyanjin(?)讓你把散亂的心收回來， 集中，甚至到達同一心， 最後再到達無心， 這完全一樣， 沒有什麼不同。 所以這個跟個人的根器有關係， 它們都可以達到同樣的， 都是suoyanjin(?)。 對喜歡數息的人， 他們覺得唸佛很囉嗦很麻煩很累， 對一個喜歡唸佛的人， 他們會覺得呼吸很沒有意思， 沒有一個東西抓不住， 呼吸那麼的空虛， 呼到哪裡去了搞不清楚， 他們覺得心不踏實， 唸佛踏實。根本上其實還是跟根器有關， 不是方法， 方法其實它的目的都是要達到把人從一個散亂的心， 到達集中心， 在到達一心， 目的是完全相同。 唸佛也是從散心， 到集中心， 到一心， 最後能夠進入到無心。 話頭也是一樣， 數息也是一樣。

明傑 Q52。 人間淨土跟助唸的關係如何？

A：你覺得助唸沒有關係嗎？ 對建設人間淨土有沒有關係？

明傑 Q53。 據我的理解， 我們是引導， 協助往生者來唸佛。 因為人間淨土是教導活人， 就是心靈環保， 那這兩者的關係如何？

A：你忘掉了一件事情， 往生者的家屬。 其實我們在幫人助唸的時候， 其實我們也在渡化他們的家人。 你有沒有發現， 到最後他們的家人都來學佛？ 這一個環扣很重要， 雖然幫助的是往生的人， 可是別忘了我們幫助他的過程， 其實他周遭的親屬都受到我們的影響， 尤其在那個時候， 一個家屬， 你的親人至親往生的時候， 每個家人心都是徬徨的， 當我們在這個時候給予協助， 他們的心會非常非常的感動， 他們甚至會想要了解我們， 甚至到最後會來學佛， 甚至投入我們這個助唸的行列， 甚至能夠也學習怎樣在心上怎麼去幫助別人， 幫助自己幫助別人。 這樣子跟人間淨土沒有關係嗎？ 有阿， 不是只有往生的人， 他周遭的人， 你看， 一個往生的人， 他周遭有十幾二十個家屬， 就渡化了多少， 甚至連串的甚至到百人。 別忽略了他的親人， 那個助唸的力量就是在這裡。 對不對？ 我這樣講對嗎？ 那你說跟建設人間淨土沒關係？ 有阿， 怎麼會沒關係？ 所以我們為甚麼在助唸的時候都還要很留意， 照顧他們的親人， 不單單只有助念而已， 很多層面。 為什麼我們助唸團會有很多的符文， 這都有相關， 那服務的不就是他們的家人親人嗎？ 對不對。

明傑 Q54。 我剛剛要來這邊之前， 我在萬芳醫院助唸。 法器一拿起來我就全身僵硬， 因為我知道這個工作就是要帶生者跟往者， 所以不可以敲太快， 可是因為太緊張就一直敲， 敲得很快。

A：因為你緊張的關係， 你太緊張了， 沒有放鬆。 而且引磬不是只有敲給往者聽， 是一起助唸的人聽， 所以你要學禪修， 先放鬆， 身心放鬆， 然後你敲起引磬來才能夠專注， 你的引磬敲得好， 然後專注力， 大家跟著你的引磬唸的話就會很專注， 這都是渡眾的， 接引眾生的一個方法。 如果你引磬敲得好， 大家在唸佛唸得很歡喜， 那你不就渡化了他們周遭的朋友親戚嗎？ 他們覺得唸佛怎麼這麼好， 明明是很哀傷的一件事情， 可是唸起佛來卻心裡面覺得踏實很多， 他就會想要持續， 再接著我們就把他的家人請到來參加我們的唸佛會， 又讓他感受到大家唸佛共修的力量， 他就會想要加入了， 很多都是這樣來的不是嗎？ 對不對， 這跟人間淨土沒有關係？ 有嘛! 你從這樣子的角度來看， 你看， 這個都是阿! 這每一個點都是建設人間淨土的重要環扣。 所以這個都是連鎖的， 師父這樣一下子全部都架構起來了， 人間淨土的架構， 每一個環扣都可以接引各個層級或是各個根器的人， 全部都涵蓋在裡頭。 你喜歡持戒持律的， 你喜歡禪修的， 你喜歡唸佛的， 你喜歡誦經的， 誦經也可以阿! 你喜歡拜懺的， 什麼都有， 這些都可以達到人間淨土。 為什麼？ 一個， 別忘了心。 心， 你只要從心上去串連的話全部串連起來了，

明傑 Q55。 福慧唸佛會 有沒有什麼架構， 組織？

A：有阿有阿， 這是一個會員組織。 (他上面沒有法師在帶)， 有， 我們叫輔導法師， 然後有一個唸佛會的會長， 會一樣也是有一些會務， 有阿當然有， 到現在也是有。

JENS Q56。 法鼓山有沒有提供福慧唸佛會的歷史？ 因為法鼓山的年譜中， 裡面每個東西

都有寫， 但是沒有談唸佛會的。

A：有阿， 有唸佛會的組織。 可是當然沒有特別去講它， 因為它就在我們整個體系裡面的一個唸佛會， 禪坐會。 禪坐會也有， 也是有它的會長， 也有它的會務， 都有， 不是沒有。 當然我們從早期的兩個會， 慢慢衍伸到有很多的變化， 有很多它的歷史， 歸屬大概都有一點點的變化， 可是它的根本都是用唸佛跟禪修來接引人， 然後大家來共修， 這個根本是不變的。 可是它的組織確實有， 因為它最後就融入在我們整個的體系裡面， 甚至就有了護法， 護法會。 這個你們去查都可以查得到。 唸佛會它是有一些組織的。

明傑 Q57。 現在的輔導法師是？

A：現在是在每一個寺院裡頭， 現在我們的分支道場都有唸佛會， 都一個唸佛會跟禪坐會， 現在的名詞應該也是有輔導法師， 應該是有。 不過大部分比較沒有那麼清楚， 每一個寺院都有唸佛會的輔導法師。 不像以前只有一個唸佛會， 就是農禪寺， 那時候我們還沒有分支道場， 只有一個農禪寺有禪坐會唸佛， 它很明顯的就很清楚。 可是我們後來慢慢的在分支道場遍布全省的時候， 甚至全世界的時候。。

JENS Q58。 所以國外的， 像美國的也有唸佛會嗎？

A：也是有。 不過華人比較喜歡唸佛。 西方人可能覺得唸佛不相應， 因為他們覺得跟唸基督一樣， 好像那種感覺， 所以唸佛好像在西方就比較沒辦法推。 華人沒問題， 我們也一直希望， 看能不能讓一些西方人能夠接受唸佛， 我們現在還沒有跨出這個部分， 大部分的唸佛還是華人為主， 當然也有少數的西方人， 有人可以接受。

JENS Q59。 從唯心的角度， 西方人比較容易接受是嗎？

A：對。 所以他們喜歡打坐， 唸佛禪就會比較容易。 我們在西方現在也有嘗試著要帶唸佛禪七， 現在好樣有幾次了， 在國外。 不過唸佛禪七會比較複雜， 因為打坐的話只要幾個法師就可以， 可是有時候唸佛要一些法器， 人手就必須要多， 有時候會牽涉到人手的問題。 當然這個都可以經過設計， 都可以達到目的。 都要經過設計而已並不複雜， 只是我們現在有人力的問題。

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