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The Impact of Politics on the Minnan Buddhist Institute: *sanmin zhuyi* and *aiguo zhuyi* in the Context of Sangha Education

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Abstract

This article analyzes patterns in the direct and indirect influence of the Chinese government on the redefinition of Sangha education during the twentieth century. My research examines three moments in the history of the Minnan Buddhist Institute (*minnan foxueyuan* 闽南佛学院, hereafter MBI): the foundation years (1927–1933), the reopening in 1985, and its new mission and structure since 1997. I investigate the different ways in which political ideologies were incorporated into the curricula and training seminars for monastics. Specifically, this study addresses the effects of the Nationalist ideology of the Three Principles of the People (*sanmin zhuyi* 三民主义) and Communist Party patriotism (*aiguo zhuyi* 爱国主义) on the Sangha learning systems. The final section will consider the MBI as a case study of Buddhist cross-strait relations, and will map the exchanges between Buddhist education programs that developed in different political contexts by examining the values shared by Buddhists on Taiwan and on the mainland.

Keywords

Minnan Buddhist Institute – Sangha education – *sanmin zhuyi* – *aiguo zhuyi* – Taixu – *rensheng fojiao* – *renjian fojiao* – cross-strait relations

政治对闽南佛学院的影响：僧伽教育中的三民主义与爱国主义

摘要

本文分析二十世纪中国政治对僧伽教育的影响。我的研究对象是闽南佛学院，主要关注其历史上三个重要时期，即 1927 年到 1933 年的成立期、1985 年的重建期、以及 1997 年以来的新时期。本文着重分析政治意识形态，即三民主义与爱国主义，是如何影响佛学院课程的。最后，本文以闽南佛学院作为两岸交流的案例，通过分析两岸佛教共享的价值观念，来刻画不同政治环境下成长起来的佛教教育之间的交流。

关键词

闽南佛学院，僧教育，三民主义，爱国爱教，太虚，人生佛教，人间佛教，两岸交流

Introduction: China, Buddhism, Modernity, and Education

It is a fair comment that what has happened in Chinese education represents a transformation of the past as well as a transformation along modern times.

JOHN CLEVERLEY (1991:14)

Starting from the second half of the nineteenth century, Chinese civilization and Chinese identity have been shaken by the invasion of Western power and ideologies, the emergence of Japanese colonial power and supremacy in the East Asian region, the transition from the imperial regime to a Republican nation, and then, during the Maoist period, the Cultural Revolution, followed by the rise of a hybrid of capitalism and socialism that has affected every sphere of Chinese culture. The twentieth century also witnessed considerable development in Hong Kong and the reshaping of Taiwan. This is a century that saw the formation of the Chinese project of modernity, a renewal of theoretical structures in China through intertwined and interdependent processes of state-making and the making of religion (Ashiwa and Wank 2009).

The context of state and religion creating each other through conflicts and negotiations finds a parallel in the mutual borrowing and confrontation between the state-administered secular education and religious education.

The end of the empire, the creation of the first Republic, and the inception and recent reorganization of the Communist regime have all been marked and led by educational reforms. And thus, for instance, at the time of the first Republic of China phrases like “saving the country through education” (*jiaoyu jiuguo* 教育救国) and “omnipotence of education” (*jiaoyu wanneng* 教育万能) were current. The parallel transformation that Chinese Buddhism underwent throughout the last century was also to a considerable degree based on reforms of the education system for the monastic community, and it can therefore be argued that a parallel exists between the intellectual and conceptual bases of the larger reforms in secular Chinese schooling and in Buddhist education.¹

This article discusses the history of one seminary for the Buddhist Sangha, the Minnan Buddhist Institute (MBI), which is located in Xiamen (Fujian province), and analyzes how the new Sangha education that was implemented there reflected changes in the political ideologies of successive Chinese governments as well as pressures to adapt to the setting of a new China. My research examines three moments in the history of the MBI: the foundation years (1927–1933), the reopening in 1985, and its new mission and structure since 1997. It thus investigates the different ways in which political ideologies were included in the new curricula and training for monastics.² Specifically, this study addresses what effects the Nationalist ideology of the Three Principles of the People (*sanmin zhuyi*)³ and the later Communist promotion of patriotism (*aiguo aijiao* 爱国爱教) had on the Sangha learning systems.

1 On the transformation in secular education during the twentieth century, see Adams 1969; Bailey 1990; Borthwick 1983; Cleverley 1991; Cong 2007; Elman and Woodside 1994; Hayhoe 1992; Hsia 1932; Peterson, Hayhoe, and Lu 2001; Müller-Saini 2011. As for Chinese sources, see Chen 2009. For modernization in religious education, see Bays and Widmer 2009; Ji 2011. For an overview of the history of Buddhist education in China see Ding 2010; for a brief but not comprehensive overview of the modernization of Buddhist education in twentieth-century China, see Chen and Deng 2000:99–148; Dongchu 1974:197–220, 221–236, 969–975; Welch 1968:10–15, 103–120; 1972:84–108, 157–162; Travagnin 2014.

2 These three moments are representative of milestone changes in the curriculum. The years between the end of Taixu's tenure and the closure of the institute are not given major consideration because the first signs of the decline that precipitated its closure in the 1940s had already appeared in the mid-1930s.

3 The Three Principles of the People are usually translated as the principle of nationalism (*minzu* 民族), the principle of democracy (*minquan* 民权), and the principle of social welfare (*minsheng* 民生). The recourse to “Nationalism” was part of the overall project to make China a united “nation” in the global context. The call for “democracy” was inspired by an analysis of the Western political system and invoked as a better alternative to the backward Imperial system. Sun Yat-sen, again influenced by Western theories, thought it was necessary for the state to meet the basic needs of its citizens, and therefore he also advocated for “social welfare.” He gave his first speech about the Three Principles of the People in 1905.

The final part of the article will consider the MBI as a case study of Buddhist cross-strait relations, and will map the exchanges between the MBI and important Buddhist schools in Taiwan—in other words, between Buddhist education programs that developed in different political contexts but are nonetheless connected by shared values. I argue in this article that these shared values provide continuity between the period of the Three Principles of the People and that of the recent form of patriotism.

Recent studies have addressed the agency of the central government in the revival and restructuring of Nanputuo Temple, and the effect that this movement had on the MBI (Ashiwa and Wank 2006; Wank 2009). This article, instead, focuses on the context of education, and the direct and indirect negotiations between political power and Buddhist circles in the specific sphere of educational programs.⁴

Buddhist Education in China: A Multifaceted Domain

The development of monastic communities and properties beginning in the late fifth century translated also into the creation of structured programs of education for the Sangha. The period from the seventh to the tenth century witnessed an increase in the number of traveling student-monks, Xuanzang 玄奘 being one of them, who moved to either the West (India) or the East (Japan and Korea) to study in Buddhist schools abroad. At the same time Confucians built their own academies (*shuyuan* 书院) on the blueprint of the educational format practiced in the *siyuan* 寺院 (private Buddhist institutes) (Ding 2010:123–154). Starting from the end of the fourteenth century, the Buddhist Sangha were presented with an increment of Confucian learning in their education curricula (Ding 2010:157–165). In the early twentieth century, the reformer Taixu 太虚 (1890–1947) opened the first newly styled “Buddhist institute” (*foxueyuan* 佛学院), a Buddhist academy designed on the Western and Japanese models of secular schooling and whose curriculum included the teaching of secular subjects. Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, student-monks who are enrolled in

This doctrine, which initially went by the name “the Three Big Principles” (*sanda zhuyi* 三大主义), represented a revised version of an ideology that had circulated already in the late 1800s but emphasized only nationalism and democracy.

4 This study is based on a few years of fieldwork in Fujian, starting in 2010. A preliminary version of this study was presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Asian Studies in Toronto (March 2012) under the title “The Political Accommodations of the Minnan Buddhist Institute: Theories and Practices of *jiaoyu* in a Sangha Context.” I am grateful for the feedback that I have received and the comments of the anonymous reviewers.

the officially recognized Buddhist academies must first of all uphold patriotism and loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

This brief overview shows that the history of Sangha education in China is a multifaceted domain that included shifts from translation and exegetical reading to the study of secular subjects, from individual lecturing to structured multi-year curricula, and from monastery-based private schools to a system of academies built under a national Buddhist association. Those shifts in the historical development of Buddhist education result from a diachronic inner evolution within Chinese Buddhism, but they also need to be approached through the analysis of synchronic interactions between Buddhist communities and the educational practices of other religious groups in China as well as the exchanges between Chinese Buddhists and other non-Chinese Buddhist worlds. Finally, the domain of Buddhist education in China has experienced interventions by non-Buddhist laity seeking to define teaching projects for the monastic community, and the establishment—by Buddhist laity and monastics—of a series of schools and alternative secular educational programs for the larger society.

The *xuetang* 学堂 (study halls), *xuelin* 学林 (study centers), and *xueshe* 学社 (study societies) were new educational structures that started appearing in China in the very beginning of the twentieth century. After a prolonged decline in the educational opportunities available to the Sangha during the second half of the Qing Dynasty, Chinese Buddhist leaders started rethinking their educational programs in the hope of bringing back the golden age of the *síyuan* while making the necessary adjustments to accommodate the social and ideological paradigms of the new era. While the names given to these new educational structures varied, they were all meant to deliver private education within the monastery, where the Sangha could receive monastic training and Buddhist learning, as well as knowledge of a set of secular subjects that went beyond the study of Confucian classics and included new sciences. The first of these structures was the Hunan Sangha Study Hall (*Hunan seng xuetang* 湖南僧学堂), built in 1903 (Ding 2010:167).

This chain of changes was initiated as one of the first constructive responses of the Buddhist Sangha to the governmental decision to “turn temples into schools” (*miaochan xingxue* 庙产兴学) during the Hundred Days’ Reform (1898). Later on, in the 1920s, Chinese intellectuals and politicians started a debate on the meaning and social role of religion, and articulated the institutionalization of belief systems accordingly through national and local associations. Those years brought changes to the structure and social role of the Buddhist monasteries as well, and consequently also a new configuration of the schooling system for the Sangha. Within this context, many temples turned into nondenominational monasteries (*conglin* 丛林) and new-style, modernized institutes of learning for monastics called *foxueyuan* 佛学院 started to be built in various provinces.

The monk Dongchu 东初, who enrolled in and graduated from one of these institutes, explained that the name *foxueyuan* had been inspired by the new university system that had started in China in the early twentieth century: each university (*daxue* 大学) was divided into a number of institutes (*xueyuan* 学院) that were designed to address specific studies. A *foxueyuan* was thus understood as an “institute” for the study of Buddhism (Dongchu 1974:230–231). That was also the moment when the Sangha adopted a new term being used in the secular context to designate “education,” *jiaoyu* 教育, and applied it to their own pedagogy; and thus the expression *seng jiaoyu* 僧教育 replaced *xuefo* 学佛 as the name for the education and training carried out in a *foxueyuan*. Secular education was emulated not only in this naming practice, but also in the degree system and curricula adopted by the *foxueyuan*; these “modern” institutes of Buddhist studies were designed as a perfect parallel to secular universities, but open only to the Sangha. Their “modernity” was reflected in the adoption of new techniques, such as the use of blackboards and textbooks. Modernity was also mirrored in the curricula, which featured key subjects such as foreign languages (mostly English and Japanese, but also Tibetan and Sanskrit), the humanities (history, Chinese literature, geography, comparative religions, and so on), and the sciences (psychology, biology, evolution theory, and so on). Such changes marked the demise of the traditional sectarian system of learning.

According to Holmes Welch, modern “new” education presupposed the teaching of non-Buddhist (secular) subjects, the hiring of lay teachers, and the adoption of “modern teaching methods” (which included the adoption of entrance examinations, grading systems, the use of blackboards, and the issuing of diplomas). On the other hand, “old” education was synonymous with a conservative and traditional system of learning (such as the Vinaya Hall and the Dharma Hall), and an “old-fashioned atmosphere.” The “new” education involves the study of Buddhism as a philosophy, whereas the “old” system of learning is identified with the study of Buddhism as Dharma. Following Welch, the binary of “old” and “new” thus overlaps with the binary “traditional/conservative” and “modern.” Finally, Welch (1968:103–120) also interpreted the addition of secular subjects to the curricula of Buddhist academies as part of the “new,” whereas mere textual study in Buddhism is identified as the core of the “old.” Chen Bing and Deng Zimei (2000:123) invoked a similar dichotomy, writing in terms of “recent new-style education” (*jindai xinshi jiaoyu* 近代新式教育) and “new monks” (*xinseng* 新僧). This is just a reflection of how the discourse of Buddhist education was framed in the first half of the twentieth century by the Chinese Sangha and Buddhist laity as well, who were contrasting the new monks (*xinseng* 新僧) with the old monks (*jiuseng* 旧僧).

Dongchu (1974:204–220) also expressed his personal fear that this secularization of learning—where the distinction between Buddhadharma (*fofa* 佛法) and mundane living (*shifa* 世法) was blurry—might mean the end of proper Buddhist education, not to mention the danger of having more monks disrobing (Lai 2013; Travagnin 2014).

It is worth remembering that not many *foxueyuan* were established after the end of the Qing Dynasty and during the Republican era. Dongchu, for instance, counted only thirty-four new *foxueyuan* founded in the years 1914 to 1944, and some of them used the title of *foxueyuan* even if they were not implementing all the new features of the system. In other words, the new system of *foxueyuan* was not widespread in China before the 1980s.

The Minnan Buddhist Institute: Why It Matters

The MBI currently comprises two campuses: a male and a female academy. The male Buddhist institute occupies its historical site inside Nanputuo Temple (*Nanputuosi* 南普陀寺), while the female academy, which was inaugurated only in 1985, is now located within the much quieter Zizhulin nunnery (*Zizhulin'an* 紫竹林庵). Currently the MBI has eighty teachers, including monks, nuns, and lay teachers almost in equal proportion. The male academy has an enrollment of more than one hundred student-monks, while the female academy counts more than two hundred student-nuns; close to a thousand monastics have graduated from this Buddhist institute. The male and female seminaries accept international student-monastics, their curriculum includes Buddhist studies as well as secular (nonreligious) subjects, and they require students to participate in outreach activities directed toward the local community. In addition to the foundational four-year study program, in 1993 the MBI opened a three-year graduate program that is conducted at Nanputuo Temple and is attended by student-monks and student-nuns together. MBI graduates can become teachers in other Buddhist institutes: some end up working in the temple administration, others are sent abroad to spread the Dharma or continue their own education, and finally some occupy leadership posts in Buddhist associations. The MBI has a website (<http://www.nanputuo.com/nptxy/>), computer rooms, and library facilities, and publishes an academic journal, *Minnan foxue* 閩南佛學 (Minnan Buddhist Studies).

The present MBI represents the latest development in a series of educational programs established within Nanputuo starting from the beginning of the twentieth century. The year 1913 saw the establishment of the Zhantan Study Center (*Zhantan xuelin* 旃檀學林), which in 1919 was transformed into

the Jingfeng Society of Buddhist Study (*Jingfeng foxueshe* 景峰佛学社).⁵ Nanputuo became a nondenominational monastery (*conglin* 丛林) in 1924, and a year later opened its own *foxueyuan*, the *Minnan foxueyuan* (Zewu 2011:229–230).

The unique trait of the MBI is that its history includes all the crucial movements, leading personalities, and reforms that have affected Buddhism and Buddhist education in the last one hundred years. It thus serves as a valid case study for the assessment of the interaction between political power, ideological settings, and Buddhist communities in twentieth-century China in the definition of a new educational system for the Sangha.

Important moments in the history of the MBI during the first half of the twentieth century were the tenure (1927–1933) of the reformist monk Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947), who implemented a revised and updated version of the educational and training program that he had started and supervised at the Wuchang Buddhist Institute five years earlier, and later on the decline and finally the closure of the MBI in the 1940s as a consequence of war.

The newly expanded space for religious activities that opened up in the 1980s, as well as the strict control that the Religious Affairs Bureau, the Chinese Buddhist Association, and local offices had exerted on religious groups, also affected Nanputuo and the MBI in both a positive and negative way. Nanputuo was defined as one of the most relevant monasteries in the country, and therefore the rebuilding and reconstitution of its monastic community received official sponsorship. The MBI reopened in 1985 under the tenure of Miaozhan 妙湛 (1910–1995), and since then it has followed the curriculum imposed nationwide by the Chinese Buddhist Association. The further modernization that had a considerable impact on China in the late 1990s has also been reflected in Nanputuo and the MBI since 1997, when Shenghui 聖惠 (b. 1952) became abbot of the temple.⁶

Another factor that makes the MBI a good case study is its link with Taiwan and thus its participation in strengthening Buddhist cross-strait relations in the education sector. Among others, the monk Yinshun 印順 (1906–2005) studied there before moving to Taiwan and establishing the roots of what is

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- 5 The monk Zhuanchu 转初 served as director of Zhantan. The senior monk Xingyuan 性愿 established and ran the Jingfeng, where he also served as the main lecturer, with the monks Ruijin 瑞今 and Guangxin 广心 as supporting tutors. Xingyuan gave classes on *Dacheng qixin lun* 大乘起心论, and lay teachers offered instructions on Chinese (non-Buddhist) classics. More than seventy people came every day to attend those lectures (Zewu 2011:229).
 - 6 Publications on the history of the MBI include Shenghui 2005a (see especially Shenghui 2005b); Minnan foxueyuan 2006; Minnan foxueyuan 2007; Zewu 2010 and 2011.

now Taiwanese Buddhism. Since the early 2000s, Taiwanese monks and representatives of the MBI have cooperated in the improvement of the education sector through constructive exchanges.

The Minnan Buddhist Institute, 1927–1933: Dharma and/in the *Sanmin Zhuyi*

The *sanmin zhuyi* are the principles to save the nation [*jiu guo* 救国], and thus can also be defined as the principles to save the people [*jiu min* 救民].

TAIXU (1932B:114)

The reformist monk Taixu was the key figure in the first stage of the development of the MBI.⁷ Taixu arrived at Xiamen in 1927, five years after the planning and opening of the Wuchang Buddhist Institute. However, the structure and curriculum at the MBI were very different from those adopted in 1922 at Wuchang, where secular subjects such as science, politics, and foreign languages never occupied a considerable space in the curriculum.⁸

Western schooling systems had provided inspiration for the new policies of secular education in China from the late Qing through the Kuomintang (KMT) period. The addition of Western sciences and languages to the existing curricula that had begun at the very end of the nineteenth century was an effect of this Westernization process. Beijing University was founded in 1898, and the first Ministry of Education (*Jiaoyu bu* 教育部) was established in 1905. However,

7 Taixu (Lü Gansen 吕淦森) was born in 1890 at Chongde 崇德, Zhejiang province. His tonsure ceremony took place in 1905, and his full monastic ordination in 1907 at the Tiantongsi 天童寺 in Ningbo 宁波 under the monk Jichan 寄禅. Taixu became well known for his plans for the reform of Chinese Buddhism, including the threefold reform of the Buddhist Order, its teachings, and monastic property. In line with his reforms, Taixu founded Buddhist journals such as *Sound of the Tide* (*Haichao yin* 海潮音), *Buddhist Journal* (*Fohua bao* 佛化報), and *Buddhist Youth* (*Fohua xin qingnian* 佛化新青年), and Buddhist institutes such as the Wuchang Buddhist Institute (*Wuchang foxueyuan*) in 1922 and the Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Institute (*Hanzang jiaoliyuan* 汉藏教理院) in 1931; Taixu was also dean of the Minnan Buddhist Institute from 1927 to 1933. See Pittman 2001.

8 Taixu was not the first monastic to address the importance of education in Nanputuo; previously Huiquan 会泉 (1874–1943) had established important programs and garnered support for the study of the Sangha. Huiquan was also one of the founders of the MBI, its first dean, and the one who invited Taixu to run the school after a few years (Du 2011).

it is the year 1928 that marked a new era in secular education with the KMT's decision to adopt the "Three Principles of the People" as the core of a new education for the nation.⁹ Discussions on the role that the Three Principles of the People was to play in the national education had already started in 1926, at the time of the establishment of the Education Administration Committee (*Jiaoyu xingzheng weiyuanhui* 教育行政委员会), but became stronger in 1928, when at the first National Conference on Education (*Quanguo jiaoyu huiyi* 全国教育会议) the Three Principles of the People started to replace, and indeed became synonymous with, patriotism and loyalty to the Party (*danghua* 党化). The meeting in 1928 also brought reforms in the structure of the schools and the division of programs into elementary and high schools, colleges, and post-graduate institutes.

What impact did the KMT's reshaping of education have on Buddhist education at the MBI? In the early 1920s, Taixu started lecturing about the new concept of "education" as expressed by the term *jiaoyu*, addressing the role of a Buddhist *jiaoyu* in society and how to arrange the most adequate *jiaoyu* for the Sangha. As early as 1915 he had listed the Buddhist seminaries in China that already included secular subjects in their curricula. However, it was at the MBI between 1927 and 1933 that Taixu directly and indirectly, explicitly and implicitly, engaged with the KMT's policies concerning the creation of a Buddhist institute that might be acceptable to, and valued by, and for, the nation. The first step toward accomplishing this was integrating Sangha education with the Three Principles of the People. This happened in a general context where Buddhists were reflecting on Buddhism from the perspective of the Three Principles of the People, and therefore struggling to show connections and similarities between the pillars of KMT ideology and the conceptual foundation of the Dharma. Several publications in Buddhist journals from the 1920s to the early 1940s addressed specifically the links between the Three Principles of the People and Buddhism. For instance, the monk Dayuan 大圓 (1927) argued that the integration of the Three Principles of the People with the Buddhist practice of the Bodhisattva path (*pusa dao* 菩萨道) and virtuous roots (*shanggen* 善根) could make a positive contribution to world peace. Xinsheng 心声 (1936) stated that the study and practice of Buddhism represented the essence of the Three Principles of the People, and that the Three Principles of the People put the study of Buddhism into practice. Jiang Tesheng 蒋特生 (1928) wrote that "Buddhadharma and the Three Principles of the People are in complete harmony," and that those who considered Buddhadharma important

9 Among the various editions of the Three Principles of the People, see Sun 2011:1–186.

then should have also considered the Three Principles of the People as equally crucial, and vice versa.¹⁰

In 1928 the monk Jichen 寄尘, a graduate from Wuchang, started teaching a course on the Three Principles of the People (which had been included in a minor way in the curriculum since 1925), a course that continued to be offered until the end of Taixu's tenure in 1933. In 1928 Taixu also published an article on the Voice of the Buddha (*Haichao yin* 海潮音) titled "Proposal for a National Conference on Education" (*Quanguo jiaoyu huiyi tiyi'an* 全国教育会议提议案), in which he firmly endorsed the Three Principles of the People as a basis for the educational system and not merely as a political ideology, and defined his "humanistic Buddhist education" (*rensheng fojiao jiaoyu* 人生佛教教育) as being in line with the new KMT policies. In the same article Taixu proposed an "education according to the morality of the Great Unity" (*datong de daode jiaoyu* 大同的道德教育) as a thorough form of education that also embodied religious values and could thus benefit society overall. In the essay "First Steps in Taking the Buddhadharma as the Three Principles of the People" (*Yiwei zhongsheng de fofa zuowei min de sanmin zhuyi zhi xianfeng* 以为众生的佛法作为民的三民主义之先锋), Taixu (1932) also stressed that nationalism would serve to promote Chinese culture and bring about international freedom and equality, democracy would build the new China and bring political freedom and quality, and social welfare would lead to economic freedom and equality.

In 1931 Taixu (1931a) gave a lecture at Peiping titled "Objectives and Programs of Sangha Education" (*Seng jiaoyu zhi mudi yu chengxu* 僧教育之目的与程序), where he declared that Sangha education had to follow KMT principles, with the caveat that monastics were not merely "common citizens" (*putong jumin* 普通居民) but also "religious teachers" (*zongjiao shi* 宗教教师) and, as such, they could benefit society better than "common citizens."

In the same year Taixu (1931b) published the paper "Discussing Sangha Education from the Viewpoint of Chinese General Education" (*Cong zhongguo de yiban jiaoyu shuodao seng jiaoyu* 从中国的一般教育说到僧教育), in which he drew a parallel between the improvements that the government implemented in secular education and the changes that occurred in Sangha education in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Later on, in 1932, the Chinese Buddhist Association (*Zhongguo fojiao hui* 中国佛教会) compiled an "Outline of the Organization of the Buddhist Academies" (*Fojiao xuefan zuzhi dagang* 佛教学范组织大纲), which was sent to the Ministry of Interior Affairs for feedback but was eventually refused by the Ministry of Education for two

10 See also Liu 1930; Mingdao 1929; Dakong 1947; Dongchu 1964.

main reasons: it demonstrated a lack of understanding of the Chinese system of secular education, and it failed to organize a thorough curriculum for the Sangha. The central government expressed major concerns over how the degree system of the Buddhist institutes might eventually relate to the degree system adopted in secular education. In 1933 Taixu wrote "On the Response of the Ministry of Education to the Plan for a Sangha Education under Request of the Ministry of Interior Affairs" (*Lun jiaoyu bu wei ban seng xueshi fu neizhengbu ziwen* 论教育部为办僧学事復内政部咨文), where he responded to the negative comments that the Ministry of Education made on the "Outline" that had been sent to the central government the year before. Taixu reconsidered his plans to have a four-degree school system for the Sangha and stressed again the need to include the Three Principles of the People among the subjects to be taught in the curriculum (see also Dongchu 1974:222–225).

Taixu maintained his firm support for the relevance of the Three Principles of the People to the plan to improve Sangha education and its social role even after the end of his tenure at the MBI. In his 1935 essay "On the Foundation of Contemporary Chinese Buddhism" (*Jianshe xiandai zhongguo fojiao tan* 建设现代中国佛教谈), Taixu summarized the value of the Three Principles of the People in their contribution to national reforms and the revival of China. Sun Yat-sen, Taixu argued, was in favor of the promotion of traditional Chinese culture and of its integration with foreign ideologies that could advance and strengthen China. Sun Yat-sen, Taixu continued, aimed to build a nation and thus to enter the Great Unity (*datong* 大同). And Buddhism? Buddhism, Taixu wrote, has also the power to save the country. Buddhism can nurture the moral behavior of humankind, and thus contribute to improve international cooperation, build world peace, and establish a new, strong China that could eventually enter the Great Unity. Sun Yat-sen's program, his Three Principles of the People, and Buddhism are thus in perfect alignment.

The adoption of the recently formulated "education" (*jiaoyu*) as the new model of learning did not have direct political roots but resulted from a wider intellectual enterprise, whereas Taixu's ideal of "Buddhism for Human Life" was reshaped, if not formulated, in accordance with the KMT political ideology of the Three Principles of the People. Buddhism for Human Life was then defined according to the concepts of societal sustainability and civility embedded by the Three Principles of the People, so that it finally became the religious visitation of the latter. In other words, Taixu's Buddhism for Human Life and the KMT's Three Principles of the People were in harmony and proposed similar ideals for education, which were also in line with the education of the (Confucian) Great Unity. Accordingly, Taixu introduced the study of the socially and politically framed Three Principles of the People into the curricula

of the MBI; indeed, he decided to have the subject taught in each year of study in the degree program. Taixu stressed that monks had to be trained as citizens, and also referred to the ancient Confucian virtues and the ideal of the Great Unity as a value shared by both the Three Principles of the People and Buddhism for Human Life.

The connections that Taixu had established with the Nationalist government became evident in a number of other episodes. For instance, when Taixu's Wuchang Buddhist Institute became a refuge for political rebels and anti-KMT propaganda, it was Taixu's acquaintance with the regime and his adherence to the Three Principles of the People as a guiding principle in Sangha education that saved his seminary and ensured the safety of the monastic community (Reichelt 1954:88).

To conclude, like the other contemporary Buddhist seminaries, the MBI was established in 1924 under the support of the KMT. Taixu's contribution to the MBI was embedded in the connection that he established between the Three Principles of the People and the ideal education for a modern and civil Sangha, and consequently in identifying civility and citizenship as core values of Sangha education. Taixu's Buddhism for Human Life, then, became the perfect embodiment of his education project.

The Minnan Buddhist Institute, 1985: Dharma and/in *Aiguo Aijiao* 爱国爱教 (I)

Similar to Taixu, [Miaozhan engaged in] rectifying the Sangha system, creating education structures, promoting Buddhism for Human Life.

ZEWU 则悟 (2011:166)

After Taixu's departure in 1933, the MBI suffered a gradual decline until its final closure in the 1940s. The MBI witnessed the succession of four deans in the short span of three years. Changxing 常性 was appointed dean in 1933, but left the MBI before the completion of his three-year mandate and was replaced by Zhuanchen 转尘. In 1936, Huiquan returned as dean but left to be temporarily replaced by Xingyuan 性愿 until 1938. The MBI experienced a first closure from 1938 to 1942 because of the ongoing war and reopened only for a year, in 1942–1943, with Kuairan 块然 as dean, but classes were eventually discontinued in 1944 for financial reasons. The MBI stayed open in the years 1946–1953, but its main duty was to facilitate ordination ceremonies. More importantly, in the years after 1934 Taixu's ambitious curriculum slowly became replaced by the exclusive study of Buddhism and Chinese humanities.

Forty years passed between the shutdown of the MBI in the 1940s and its reopening in 1985. Those were important years that included the transition from the ROC to the PRC, and from Maoism and the Cultural Revolution to Deng Xiaoping's new policies and possibilities for religion in the late 1970s. The PRC saw the creation in 1953 of the Chinese Buddhist Association (*Zhongguo fojiao xiehui* 中国佛教协会), which was "the first real unified national Buddhist organization in Chinese history" (Ji 2008:253). Taixu was the Buddhist who became the standard bearer during the first phase of the MBI's history, while the monk Miaozhan¹¹ and the former president of the Chinese Buddhist Association, Zhao Puchu 赵朴初 (1907–2000),¹² became the two representative figures during the second, post-1985 phase of political accommodation for the MBI.

The first conversations between Miaozhan and Zhao Puchu regarding the reopening of the MBI took place in 1980, enrollment for monks and nuns began

- 11 Miaozhan (Zhu Yongkang 褚永康) was born in 1910 at Dandong 丹东, Liaoning province. In 1937 he first received his tonsure at the Shuangquan Temple (*Shuangquansi* 双泉寺) with Jinxiu 进修 as master, and later moved to Beijing where he received full ordination under the monk Quanlang 全郎 at the Nianhua Temple (*Nianhuasi* 拈花寺). Miaozhan entered the Zhaoshan Buddhist Institute (*Zhaoshansi foxueyuan* 湛山寺佛学院) in Qingdao and studied under Tanxu 倓虚; in 1942 he resided at Gaomin Monastery (*Gaominsi* 高旻寺) in Yangzhou, and in 1946 at Wanfo Monastery (*Wanfosi* 万佛寺) in Jinshan. After pilgrimages to Mount Putuo and Mount Jiuhua, Miaozhan in 1957 finally settled at Nanputuo, in Xiamen, where he remained until his death in 1995.
- 12 Zhao Puchu was born in 1907 at Anqing 安庆, Anhui province, but moved to Taihu 太湖 at the age of four. After graduating from Suzhou Dongwu University (*Suzhou dongwu daxue* 苏州东吴大学), Zhao Puchu became well known as a leader of Buddhist associations and, with the commencement of the PRC, also of the CCP. In 1928 he was secretary of the Zhejiang United Buddhist Association (*Zhejiang fojiao lianhe hui* 浙江佛教联合会) and the Shanghai Buddhist Association (*Shanghai fojiao xiehui* 上海佛教协会), and director of the Buddhist Purification Society (*Fojiao jingye she* 佛教净业社) and the Siming Bank (*Siming yinhang* 四明银行). In 1938, he became secretary of the Chinese Buddhist Association. In 1946 he became chairman of the China Association for Promoting Democracy (*Zhongguo minzhu jijinhui* 中国民主促进会). In 1953, and so after the commencement of the PRC, Zhao Puchu was elected deputy director and secretary of the new Chinese Buddhist Association, and ten years later he was also elected vice president of the China-Japan Friendship Association (*Zhongguo riben youhao xiehui* 中国日本友好协会). He was also director of the Chinese Buddhist Association and dean of the Chinese Buddhist Institute (*Zhongguo foxueyuan*) in Beijing from 1980 onwards. Zhao Puchu also held several posts in the CCP, and he became well known for being a remarkable promoter of patriotism and *aiguo aijiao*. In 2000 Zhao Puchu died in Beijing at the age of ninety-three.

in 1984, and courses started in 1985. The new MBI included the establishment of two distinct male and female colleges, more than one hundred and sixty students, and a group of around thirty teachers including both monastics and lay people. Occasionally guest lecturers were invited to improve the secular curriculum of the school. Following his ideas for a better education of the Sangha, and in order to integrate learning with academic research, in 1989 Miaozhan launched the *Minnan foxueyuan xuebao* 闽南佛学院学报 (MBI Scholarly Journal), later renamed *Minnan foxue* (Minnan Buddhist Studies), where both student-monks and teachers from the Buddhist institute could publish their textual and doctrinal studies. In 1992 Miaozhan opened a graduate school in the MBI, started fundraising activities to improve Sangha education, and also established the Fujian Buddhist Education Foundation (*Fujian sheng fojiao jiaoyu jijinhui* 福建省佛教教育基金会) to provide scholarships to students. In 1995 Miaozhan participated in the East Asian Buddhist Cultural Exchange (*Zhongrihan fojiao wenhua jiaoliu* 中日韩佛教文化交流), where he called for the improvement of educational structures for the Sangha. Under Miaozhan, the MBI became renowned as a leading institute for Sangha learning and a benchmark school for the entirety of Buddhist China.

The different historical and political context brought crucial changes in structure and curriculum for Sangha education; nevertheless, traces of ideological continuity between the MBI of the late 1920s and early 1930s and the MBI of the middle and late 1980s can still be detected. For instance, Taixu's Buddhism for Human Life, the educational program based on it, and the consequent ideal of a Sangha that engages with society have been preserved and still remain the foundations of the new Chinese Buddhist Association that was opened in 1953. Buddhism for Human Life and the training for a civil Sangha were also upheld as the leading principles of the system of monastic education that was installed in the MBI after the reopening in 1985.

The Three Principles of the People, which were so important in the curricula of the MBI in the 1920s and 1930s, partly remained at the basis of Mao's thought, and thus some of the Nationalist KMT values—at least that of nationalism—have been carried on in China, in political, social, and religious contexts, even after 1949. As far as Buddhist education is concerned, the study of the Three Principles of the People was replaced by courses on patriotism and the ideology of *aiguo aijiao* (love your country and love your religion), even if, as I will show below, the Three Principles still implicitly pervade the MBI. *Aiguo aijiao* is the ideal that the CCP imposed on religion in the document issued in 1982 and has subsequently reinforced after 1989. The full motto is *aiguo aijiao tongxin tongxing* 爱国爱教同心同行 (love your country and love your religion, same mind and same path). Indeed, *aiguo aijiao* has become the

general directive for reforming the Sangha and Sangha education throughout China. Therefore, the ideal of loving the country and at the same time (or maybe before) loving religion is one of the main rules that monks and nuns of the MBI have had to abide by. Besides loving their country, monks and nuns are asked to respect the constitution and socialist principles, and to protect the unity of the nation.

In the Buddhist context, the transition from the Three Principles of the People to *aiguo aijiao*—or better, the assimilation of the Three Principles of the People into *aiguo aijiao*—becomes even more evident through a comparison of articles published in Buddhist journals in the 1920s and 1930s and Buddhist writings dating from the 1980s onwards. In fact, in recent articles Taixu's Buddhism for Human Life and his ideals of Sangha education are not aligned with the Three Principles of the People anymore; on the contrary, Taixu is associated with *aiguo aijiao* (Zewu 2011:220–223). Taixu's "Three Principles of the People-styled Education" is identified as "*aiguo aijiao* education." In short, what was labeled as the Three Principles of the People is now labeled as *aiguo aijiao*. Following the same logic, even the monk Hongyi 弘一 (1880–1942) is said to have embodied the "*aiguo aijiao* spirit" (*aiguo aijiao jingshen* 爱国爱教精神). In response to the serious attack on religion that characterized the early twentieth century, Buddhist monks living in the Republican period used to stress how Buddhism could help "save the nation" (*jiu guo* 救国); the same assertions are now read as patriotic slogans that embody the more recent patriotic ideology.¹³

Zhao Puchu drew a clear connection between Taixu's Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism during and after Mao's rule. Zhao declared that the main spirit of the Chinese Buddhist Association was rooted in "Buddhism for the Human Realm," which is based on—and is a further development and improvement of—Taixu's Buddhism for Human Life. In the end, the *aiguo aijiao*, if it is interpreted as support for society and respect for religion (i.e., Buddhism), is not far from Taixu's Buddhism for Human Life (and later Buddhism for the Human Realm), which had been filtered through the Three Principles of the People (Zhao 2009:211–214).¹⁴

13 Hongyi's famous sentence *nianfo bu wang jiuguo, jiuguo bixu nianfo* 念佛不忘救国，救国必须念佛 (Recite the sutra without forgetting saving the country, and saving the country must recite the sutra) is cited as proof that the monk's thought and preaching were infused with patriotism.

14 To quote Zhao Puchu (Zhao 2009:213): "In the twentieth century, Taixu formulated Buddhism for the Human Realm, but what he particularly stressed was Buddhism for Human Life, which he articulated in the book *Buddhism for Human Life*. According to Taixu, Buddhism for the Human Realm is less significant than Buddhism for the Human Life. Taixu claimed that Buddhism must adapt to contemporary society, that is, 'for human life' in attitude, and 'for the human realm' in scope." See also Zhao 2012:107–111, 139–144.

In 1985 Zhao Puchu called for a new generation of Buddhist (citizen) monks:

The current priorities of Chinese Buddhism are, first, training talents (*peiyang rencai* 培养人才); second, training talents; and third, again, training talents.

FAJING 2010:182

Miaozhan (1989, 1992) made “training monastic talents” (*peiyang sengcai* 培养僧才) who were followers of *aiguo aijiao* his lifelong priority. Miaozhan is remembered for his commitment to nurture monks who would spread the Dharma, give importance to the *Vinaya*, and remain firm in practice and cultivation, but also monks who could serve as virtuous model citizens who loved their own country.¹⁵ Biographical and hagiographical materials about Miaozhan all praise him as someone who followed the *aiguo aijiao* ideology for his entire life (*yisheng aiguo aijiao* 一生爱国爱教), one of the vital figures in the Sangha education reforms in China, and also a “close friend of the Chinese Communist Party” (*zhongguo gongchandang de qinmi pengyou* 中国共产党的亲密朋友) (Lei 2010:108). To be more precise, it is Miaozhan’s patriotism that is underlined here. Several writings reveal an emphasis on the latter rather than on an equal affection for both country and religion. A recent collection of essays in honor of Miaozhan all emphasized *aiguo aijiao* as the key term in the education project that Miaozhan carried out during his tenure at the MBI (Zewu 2010). As one contributor wrote, “Education based on the patriotic ideology is the essential concept at the base of the education given here at the [Minnan] Buddhist Institute” (Lei 2010:109).

If we draw a parallel between Taixu and Miaozhan, once again we can discern the legacy of the first historical period in the second. Similar to Taixu—as the quote at the beginning of this section highlights—Miaozhan promoted monastic education, the spirit of Buddhism for the Human Realm, and a greater level of Buddhist social engagement. He also opposed the superstitious aspects of religion and demonstrated that he was quite “modern,” considering the period in which he lived. Miaozhan is also remembered for running the Fujian Buddhist Institute as deputy dean (1983–1985) and dean (1985–1995). The new MBI did not deny its strong roots in Taixu’s ideals, and this is well demonstrated by the establishment of the Taixu Library in 1990, and the presence of a few pagodas dedicated to Taixu that were erected not far away from the pagoda for Miaozhan. Finally, Taixu and Miaozhan were both active in pan-Asian meetings that discussed Sangha education.

15 As primary sources for Miaozhan’s ideas and ideals for Sangha education, see Miaozhan 1989, 1992; Chengyi 2010; Fode 2010; Langcheng 2010; Yu 2010; Zhou 2010.

Recent Chinese scholarship has drawn a comparison between Taixu's program of reforms for Sangha education and the curriculum that Miaozhan implemented at the MBI. Following Zhang Yunjiang's 张云江 (2010) argument, the evidence shows that there is discontinuity as well as continuity between the two leaders. Miaozhan challenged Taixu's emphasis on integrating Buddhist learning with specific secular subjects, one of them being the study of the Three Principles of the People. Courses relevant in the 1920s and 1930s were discontinued and replaced with updated lectures and a more detailed articulation of the study of Buddhism. The result was a focus on three main modules: politics, social issues, and Buddhist doctrine. The three-year-long study of the Three Principles of the People was replaced with the study of current political and social ideologies. Second, in order to meet the demands of contemporary society, Miaozhan reorganized the Sangha learning lines into six trajectories, as opposed to the single one that Taixu had implemented (Zhang 2010:116–119). Miaozhan (1992) also added different classes on government policies and social issues, in order to attune Buddhist student-monks to the surrounding society. Differently than Taixu, Miaozhan not only held the position of dean at the MBI, he was also abbot of Nanputuo, chairman of the Xiamen Buddhist Association (*Xiamen shi fojiao xiehui* 厦门市佛教协会), chairman and deputy chairman of the Fujian Buddhist Association (*Fujian sheng fojiao xiehui* 福建省佛教协会), and director and executive director of the Chinese Buddhist Association.¹⁶ Moreover, Miaozhan was active on the standing committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee of the city of Xiamen. These positions, as Wank (2009:133) argued, placed limitations on Miaozhan but also facilitated the cause of the Buddhist clergy. Another form of facilitation was the close relationship between Miaozhan and Zhao Puchu. Of course Miaozhan's stronger political connections are also a sign of the stronger centralized power represented by the Chinese Buddhist Association, founded in 1953.

Miaozhan continued Taixu's mission and developed even further Taixu's Buddhism for Human Life, but he replaced the Three Principles of the People with the CCP patriotic slogan *aiguo aijiao*. The next phase of the MBI has unfolded under the central principles of *aiguo aijiao*; however the latter has taken on a new dimension to fit the post-Deng Xiaoping era, and changes to Buddhist education have followed accordingly.¹⁷

16 He was also abbot of other monastic complexes, such as Yongle Chan Monastery (*Yongle chansi* 永乐禅寺), and served as director of the Nanputuo Charity Foundation (*Nanputuo cishan shiye jijinhui* 南普陀慈善事业基金会).

17 For an overview of the influence of *aiguo aijiao* on Buddhist education, see also Tang 2001.

The Minnan Buddhist Institute, 1997: Dharma and/in *Aiguo Aijiao* (II)

The entire monastic community must love the country and love religion (*aiguo aijiao*), support the guidance of the Communist Party and the People's Republic of China, conform to a society led by socialist principles, be respectful of the constitution and the law, carry out related policies, treasure and take care of the community life, cultivate discipline-meditation-wisdom, and eliminate greed, anger, and attachment.

ZEWU 则悟 (2011:468)

Zhao Puchu appointed Shenghui as abbot of Nanputuo and dean of the MBI in 1997.¹⁸ In 2001, under Shenghui's tenure, the MBI became the first Buddhist institute in China to recruit students from abroad, besides making changes to its regulations and curriculum.

Even the most recent curricular planning of the MBI claims to be based on the national policies on education and religion, and aims to prepare graduates to serve society in the spirit of the Buddhism for the Human Realm that the Chinese Buddhist Association promotes. In a meeting held in 2005 to celebrate the eightieth anniversary of the MBI, leaders of the Chinese Buddhist Association, teachers and administrators of the MBI, representatives of the Chinese central government, and local officials shared their views on how Buddhist education should be, how to improve it, and what the real contribution of the MBI to the motherland was. The speeches were all filled with the same

18 Shenghui (Peng Qinghui 盛清辉) was born in 1951 at Xiangtan 湘潭, Hunan province. He received tonsure under the monk Rende 仁德 at Zhiyuan Monastery (*Zhiyuansi* 祇园寺) on Mount Jiuhua in 1981, and one year later the full ordination under the monk Guoyi 果一 at Donglin Monastery (*Donglinsi* 东林寺). After attending the Chinese Buddhist Institute (*Zhongguo foxueyuan*) in Beijing (1982–1989), Shenghui served as dean of the Mount Jiuhua Buddhist Institute (*Jiuhuashan foxueyuan* 九华山佛学院) from 1990 to 1992, and later was elected dean of the Chinese Buddhist Institute and deputy chairman of the Chinese Buddhist Association (1992–1996). Shenghui arrived at Nanputuo in 1997, where Zhao Puchu assigned him to the posts of abbot of Nanputuo, dean of the Minnan, and president of the Nanputuo Charity Foundation. In 1998 Shenghui also became a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. At the moment, Shenghui is dean of the Minnan, deputy chairman of the Chinese Buddhist Association, deputy dean of the Chinese Buddhist Institute, chairman of the Hunan Buddhist Association (*Hunan sheng fojiao xiehui* 湖南省佛教协会), dean of the Hunan Buddhist Institute (*Hunan foxueyuan* 湖南佛学院), chairman of the Hunan Buddhist Charity Foundation (*Hunan sheng cishan zonghui* 湖南省慈善总会), and an abbot of other minor temples in Fujian and Hunan provinces.

political slogans: the central government (i.e., the CCP) and the State Administration of Religious Affairs consider the training of religious personnel (*zongjiao ren yuan* 宗教人员) to be extremely important, and they maintain that training personnel to uphold the patriotic spirit is the key for religious groups to attain great achievements. It is thus important to nurture and graduate “*aiguo aijiao* Sangha-personnel” in order to ensure that Buddhism is in tune with contemporary Chinese socialist society (Minnan 2006:13–14). The proceedings of that meeting also highlight that a new era started with Shenghui’s deanship, since Shenghui implemented a new structure and a new curriculum that were better suited to present-day circumstances. Shenghui’s principal challenge has been to train talents who stand by the *aiguo aijiao* principles (Minnan 2006:9–10). Shenghui’s deanship abides by the principle “love your country and love your religion, learning and cultivation combined” (*aiguo aijiao, xuexiu bing zhong* 爱国爱教，学修并重), and the new educated Buddhist personnel serve to strengthen the unity of the country (*guojia de tongyi fuqiang* 国家的统一富强) and the well-being of the people (*renmin de xingfu* 人民的幸福).

Shenghui enacted new regulations for MBI students; the first one on the list—which provides the epigraph for this section of the present essay—started by stressing the importance of *aiguo aijiao*. The regulations that were implemented in 2000 include a revised “Student-Sangha Code” (Zewu 2011: 483–489). Its first point reads:

Uphold the leadership of the CCP, protect the sanctity of the legal system, defend the interests of the people, protect the integration of the various ethnic groups, and defend the unity of the motherland.

ZEWU 2011:484

And the third continues:

Abide conscientiously by the Constitution, and the regulations and policies set by the People’s government.

ZEWU 2011:484

Starting from 1995, Minnan students—like student-monastics in any of the recognized Buddhist institutes in the country—had to take classes on Chinese government, the regulations on religion defined by the Religious Affairs Bureau, and “Deng Xiaoping’s Ideology” (*Deng Xiaoping lilun* 邓小平理论). These classes all belong to the so-called “Moral Education” (*De yu* 德育), which

is one of the Five Types of Education (*Wu yu* 五育) that Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940) promoted in 1912 and that have structured the learning system in China ever since.¹⁹

The three main modules of study (political thought, social issues, and Buddhist principles) at the MBI from 1997 onward show continuity with the administration of the previous dean, Miao Zhan (Zewu 2011:245). For the module on political thought, Shenghui stressed further the need to abide by the *aiguo aijiao* policies, and in order to foster this, the contents of the foundational teaching include classes on patriotism, the fundamental directives of the Party, and the legal system (for instance, regulations on ethnic groups and religious affairs).²⁰ As mentioned above, an important part of the non-Buddhist curriculum since the 1990s—therefore in the post-Deng Xiaoping era—has been the course on “Deng Xiaoping’s Ideology,” which is conceived as the Marxism of contemporary China and is perfectly in line with the *aiguo aijiao* education:

“Deng Xiaoping’s Ideology,” which is basically the “Theoretical Basis of a Chinese-style Socialism,” is a course on political science that the National Religious Affairs Bureau imposed as compulsory for all the religious institutes in the country.

MINNAN 2007:459

A good part of the course relates to the foundational characteristics of Chinese-style socialism (in terms of socialist politics, socialist culture, and socialist economy), the theory of the constitutional principle “one country, two systems” (*yi guo liang zhi* 一国两制), and the factors that form the basis of the unity of the motherland (*zuguo tongyi* 祖国统一).

The ways in which teachers and students over the last three decades have interpreted the participation of the CCP in Buddhist affairs can assume interesting forms as well. For instance, a lay teacher stated, “The CCP has preserved the great essence of Chinese Buddhism, especially the spirit of the Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva,” and also underlined similarities between the CCP and Buddhism in their approaches to society and socialism (Minnan 2006:44).

19 The Five Types of Education are *De yu* (Moral Education), *Zhi yu* 智育 (Intellectual Education), *Ti yu* 体育 (Physical Education), *Qun yu* 群育 (Collective Education), and *Mei yu* 美育 (Aesthetics Education).

20 For details on the politics module, see Minnan 2007:451–465.

Cross-Strait Relations: The Channel of Buddhist Education

Taiwanese Buddhism developed from the many immigrants from the mainland, and is even more connected to the high rate of immigrants from the Minnan. In the long term, the Buddhist exchanges between Xiamen and Taiwan have become more frequent and constructive.

ZEWU 则悟 (2011:317)

Nanputuo and the MBI built relations with Asian communities, from Japan and Korea to Burma and Indonesia, and with Buddhist groups in European and North American countries (Zewu 2011:309–352). There is documentary evidence of contacts between Fujian and Taiwan both before and during the Japanese occupation of the island. Nevertheless, it was only after 1945 that the “Dharma and Sangha relations” between the MBI and the Buddhist community in Taiwan began to increase (Zewu 2011:317–322).

These exchanges, which also occurred in moments of extreme political tension between the PRC and the ROC, have resulted in more than just significant religious achievements. In fact, some of these exchanges were aimed at promoting a constructive dialogue on Buddhist education, while others included the participation of student-monks from the MBI. The exchanges became initiatives intended to reinforce the unification of the “cross-strait Buddhist community,” to organize the joint celebration of Buddhist festivals, and to strengthen a cooperation that transcended educational goals.

The modern history of cross-strait relations between Nanputuo/MBI and Taiwanese Buddhists can be divided into three major periods. During the first one, from the beginning of the twentieth century to the early 1940s, monks from Xiamen visited Taiwan to give lectures and perform ordinations. For instance, Huiquan, abbot of Nanputuo, made several trips to various monasteries in Taiwan, such as Luquan Monastery (*Luquansi* 录泉寺) on Mount Yuemei and Longhu'an (*Longhu'an* 龙湖庵) on Mount Datong, to deliver lectures on Mahāyāna sutras and communicate lay precepts to the Buddhists on the island. With regard to education, in October 1933 Huiquan invited more than twenty monastics from Taiwan to attend the Wanshiyan Buddhist Studies Society (*Wanshiyan foxue yanjiu she* 万石岩佛学研究社) (Zewu 2011:317; Du 2011).

The second phase started with the establishment of the PRC in mainland China and the emigration of monks from the mainland to Taiwan, which became known as the “Free China” (*Ziyou Zhongguo* 自由中国). From 1949 through the early 1950s, former MBI students and teachers such as Yinshun, Daxing 大醒, Cihang 慈航, Yanben 演本, and Yanpei 演培 all moved to Taiwan, where they helped to establish what is now called Taiwanese Buddhism.

The concept of “Taiwaneseness” constitutes another important link between the MBI and Taiwan. The gradual invention of Taiwanese identity occurred along with a debate on whether this identity was rooted in the heritage of the Japanese occupation or in the cultural traditions of China. In the Buddhist context, the period after 1945 is a time when connections between Taiwanese Buddhists and the mainland intensified, providing evidence that *Taiwan fojiao* is rooted in mainland Chinese Buddhism rather than Japanese Buddhism. The monk Yinshun may be considered the best bridge between the island and the mainland. On the occasion of his death, Taiwanese newspapers wrote about a “Buddhism for the Human Realm Lineage” that had the mainland reformer Taixu as its founding figure, the Taiwanese nun Zhengyan 证严 (and thus the Tzu Chi Foundation) as its final member, and Yinshun as the central link.²¹ In other words, as a native of the mainland and a student of Taixu, Yinshun served as strong proof that the newly formed Taiwanese Buddhism was indeed grounded in the reformist monks who were active in the mainland at the end of the Qing Dynasty and during the Republican Era; these were the same reformers who discussed Buddhism as being in dialogue with the Three Principles of the People and developed a Buddhist learning system based on the latter.

The third stage started at the end of the 1980s, following the end of martial law in Taiwan (1987), in the climate of the new policies established by Deng Xiaoping on the mainland (from 1978 onwards). Even here the strong link between the MBI and Taiwan is represented by Yinshun: in 1994 Yinshun returned to Nanputuo and the MBI, and after his death it was his disciple Houguan 厚观 (b. 1957) who started making routine visits to the MBI to discuss the state of the curricula and exchange views on monastic education. In addition to Yinshun and his Taiwanese legacy, other monastic leaders representing important Buddhist educational programs in Taiwan have visited the MBI from the early 1990s onwards. In 1992 the nun Wuyin 悟因 (b. 1940), from the Incense Light Community (*Xiangguang nizhong xueyuan* 香光尼众学院), began visiting the MBI on a regular basis, and she also donated 2,000,000 RMB for the founding of the Minnan Female Buddhist Institute at the Zizhulin. In 1994 the monk Huikong 惠空 (b. 1957), from the Yuanguang Buddhist Institute (*Yuanguang foxueyuan* 圆光佛学院), paid a visit to the MBI to continue the discussion on Sangha education that he and Miao-zhan had begun four years earlier in Taiwan. In 2002 Huikong and the leadership of the MBI organized a workshop on “contemporary Sangha education” (*xiandai seng jiaoyu* 现代僧教育) in Xiamen. In 2002 it was the turn of Shengyan 圣严 (1931–2009), from

21 See *Zhongguo shibao* 中國時報, June 12, 2005, p. A5.

Fagushan 法鼓山, to visit Xiamen and the MBI. These visits from Taiwan are reciprocated by MBI students and teachers.

More importantly, in the twenty-first century the MBI and Taiwanese Buddhist groups organized several cross-strait meetings not only to discuss how to improve Sangha education and the role of Buddhism in society, but also to hold rituals reinforcing the idea of unity between Buddhism on the mainland and on Taiwan, and thus implicitly restating the mainland roots of Taiwanese Buddhism. In one of these cross-strait meetings, the monk Shengyan in fact argued:

Taiwanese Buddhism and mainland Buddhism not only share common roots, they in fact are one single body that cannot be divided into pieces, therefore there is no reason to create distance between the Buddhism in Taiwan and the one on the mainland.

FAGUSHAN 2000:35

The visit of the Buddha finger relic (*Fo zhi sheli* 佛指舍利) to Taiwan in 2002, organized by Shenghui and realized with the assistance of twenty student monks from the MBI, can be read along these lines. The unification (or reunification?) of Taiwan and the mainland was seen not only in Buddhist terms but in a more comprehensive way: in 2006, for instance, Taiwanese and residents of Nanputuo organized a Buddhist ceremony in Jinmen to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II. In 2007, one hundred and fifty monks from Taiwan visited Nanputuo for the nirvana of the Buddha. In the same year there was a meeting of representatives of the MBI, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Xiamen to discuss education issues. The fact that some of these initiatives took place—and therefore had been approved by the respective governments—in the early 2000s, just when cross-strait relations were being overshadowed by political tensions, imbues the Buddhist links between the two sides in these undertakings with more than just Buddhist significance and underlines connections rather than disjunctions.

In the last sixty years Taiwan has been ruled mostly by the KMT, which is not the KMT of China in the 1920s and 1930s, but nevertheless a KMT based on the Three Principles of the People. Differently, in the last sixty years mainland China has been adopting a new leading ideology in social and religious contexts. Still, the post-1945 KMT Taiwan and Communist China have been engaging in constructive cross-strait dialogues for the improvement of Sangha education on the basis of a set of shared principles. Yinshun (and his Buddhism for the Human Realm) as a link between the mainland and Taiwan; the emphasis on Taixu as the “patriarch” of both Taiwanese and mainland Buddhism; the teachings of Buddhism for Human Life, Buddhism for the Human Realm,

and the concept of a “pure land on earth” (*renjian jingtu* 人间净土)—these constitute the common ground and the bridge between the two Buddhisms, and also the guiding principles for cross-strait relations in the context of Sangha education. And, as the previous sections have argued, Taixu’s ideas and the training of a socially involved Sangha have also been a crucial connection between Sangha education in the 1920s and 1930s and Sangha education in recent decades.

Again, there are strong Buddhist connections across the Taiwan Strait, regardless of apparent discrepancies in political ideology. In other words, the Buddhist dialogue between Taiwan and China today is possible for the same reasons that Buddhism in 1920s China and Buddhism in contemporary China belong to the same line of evolution.

Conclusion: Within and beyond Political Ideologies

This article has addressed three historical moments, three political ideologies, three different governments, three different Buddhisms, and three different *foxueyuan*, but has nevertheless shown a strong continuity in the foundations of Buddhist education that reflects a pattern of conceptual perpetuation from the 1920s through the 1990s in Chinese culture, religious and otherwise. The recent increase in exchanges between Taiwanese and mainland leaders, especially from the MBI, in regard to current Sangha education shows the grounds for dialogue between Buddhists in the two areas regardless of their different governments, or better, thanks to the shared ideals of their ideologies.

To return to the motto *aiguo aijiao*, “love your country and love your religion,” how do *aiguo* and *aijiao* relate to each other? Previous scholars have translated the phrase and interpreted it as indicating that patriotism is a priority; therefore loyalty to one’s country comes first, and is definitely prior to any form of loyalty and dedication to one’s religion. This may imply the acknowledgment of a close dynamic between *guo* (country) and *jiao* (religion), but also an explicit separation between the two concepts of country and religion, state and church, secular authority and the clergy (Ashiwa 2009:58–59; Chau 2006:233; Feuchtwang 2010:181). To quote Elaine Jeffreys:

As a disciplinary technique geared towards national-scale social regulation, *aiguo aijiao* entails both allowance and punishment, granting religion limited autonomy on condition that it does not threaten the primacy of the Party-state and shows active support for Party leadership, national unification, social stability and economic development.

JEFFREYS 2009:141

If we then consider the *sanmin zhuyi*, the reality of Sangha education in the 1920s and 1930s China, and especially if we look at those policies vis-à-vis recent CCP policies, we may conclude that *aiguo aijiao* establishes a clear distinction, as well as a hierarchy, between *guo* and *jiao* that the *sanmin zhuyi* had already entailed, if only implicitly.

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