Chineseness Globalized

> To propagate Buddhist teachings through cultural activities.[1] Hsing Yun

> Hsing Yun's order Fo Guang Shan not only spread Chinese Buddhism to every corner of this world, it also presented the culture of China as a gift to the world.[2]
> Li Silong, Professor of Beijing University

The two quotes above exemplify the two modes in which Fo Guang Shan deploys culture in a global context. The first one – to propagate Buddhist teachings through cultural activities – is the first of four sentences that together form the founding maxim of the order. It calls on Fo Guang Shan Buddhists to spread the Dharma by engaging with society through the arts, through music, and by holding grand and spectacular festivities. Culture is here understood as the results of human material, aesthetic, or intellectual production that can be used to spark people's interest in becoming involved with the temple and learning about the Buddhist Dharma. Anyone, irrespective of his or her background, can visit a Fo Guang Shan temple to see an exhibition, maybe take an art class, or take part in the celebrations of a Chinese festival. This mode generates the Buddhist temple as an open, accessible space that renders Chinese Buddhist culture in a way that is compatible with tourism and global event culture. By not overly focusing on discipline and obligation it invites people to engage with the Dharma in an undemanding and inclusive way.

In Taiwan as well as overseas, Fo Guang Shan's temples hold a huge spectrum of cultural activities that are meant to attract people to Buddhism. Exhibitions of Hsing Yun's calligraphy at the order's museums and exhibition spaces, flower arrangement or tea culture classes open to the public, regular book club meetings for BLIA members, as well as mass events such as the Lunar New Year's celebrations are only some examples of this approach. The second quote, however, shows a different, more parochial meaning of culture. It refers to the promotion of a set of cultural values and practices that are understood to form "traditional Chinese culture", or, in another word, Chineseness. The second quote does not understand culture as a vehicle to proselytize a modern Buddhist

1 Foguangshan zongwu weiyuanhui (ed.), *Foguangshan kaishan sishi zhounian jinian tekan*, vol. 1, p. 13.

2 Original in Chinese, own translation. "他所創建的佛光山事業，把中國佛教帶到了世界各地，把中國文化餽贈給世界人民." Li S. 李四龍, "Lun Xingyun dashi dui Zhongguo fojiao de zhuoyue gongxian" 論星雲大師對中國佛教的卓越貢獻, in: Cheng G. and Shi Miaofan (eds.), *2015 Xingyun dashi renjian fojiao – lilun shijian yanjiu (xia)* 2015 星雲大師人間佛教 – 理論實踐研究 (下), Kaohsiung: Foguang wenhua, 2015, p. 254.

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religiosity, but instead it refers to the order's role as a preserver of Chinese tradition in the age of global modernity.

In this chapter I draw on ethnographic data collected at Fo Guang Shan's overseas temples in the US and the PRC in addition to the writings of Hsing Yun to demonstrate how Fo Guang Shan generate multivalent and ambiguous renderings of Chineseness by adopting multiple and diverse discourses and practices linked to "culture". These renderings range from cosmopolitan, hybrid, and inclusive presentations of Chinese culture that are rooted in global consumer culture and that present Fo Guang Shan as an accessible modern Buddhist order in the Mahayana tradition, to more parochial or ethno-cultural notions of Chineseness that have emerged during the process of Chinese nation-state building on the mainland and in Taiwan, and that are currently experiencing a renaissance in the PRC. I argue that it is this multivalent rendering of Chineseness that constitutes one reason for the order's global success by creating points of reference not only for the internally diverse Chinese diaspora communities, but also for non-Chinese members of the respective host societies, as well as the current PRC government.

Spaces of Buddhist Leisure

Lunar New Year's Eve, 2018, fell on 15 February of that year.[3] At that time I was about to enter the last week of my stay at Hsi Lai Temple before moving on to visit further Fo Guang Shan temples in the US. Below I provide an ethnographic extract from my field stay at Hsi Lai. Preparations for the New Year were being made long before the festivities had officially begun. The temple was embellished and beautified with all kinds of decorations. At Hsi Lai, the New Year's festivities merge seamlessly with the Lantern Festival, and so big, colourful lanterns were hanging everywhere. The lanterns were in all different shapes and forms, including a dragon, a cute cartoon monk, and, as the coming year would be the Chinese Year of the Dog, a huge, cheerfully smiling dog. In addition, countless smaller red lanterns were hung up all over the temple, causing the whole temple to be ablaze with red light (see Figure 6).

As is customary, the temple had to be given a thorough cleaning before the New Year. On Temple Spring Cleaning Day (*chupo jieyuan ri* 出坡結緣日), a week before the beginning of the festivities, members of all local BLIA subchapters gathered at the temple with rags, ladders, and brooms for this year's major

3 The following ethnographic report is based on fieldwork observations.

Figure 6: Lunar New Year's Decoration, Main Shrine of Hsi Lai Temple, USA.

clean-up.[4] In the course of one afternoon, every corner of the temple – including the myriad little Buddha statues that fill the walls of the main shrine up to the ceiling – was freed of the dust and dirt that had accumulated over the course of the past year. During my weeks at the temple, I had followed different BLIA subchapters, so I was a little unsure as to which group I should join, since every group was assigned a specific task. In the end I decided to help my new friends from the Rosemead subchapter, a group consisting mainly of Cantonese speakers, many of them first generation Sino-Vietnamese Americans. Our job was to clean the Bodhisattva Hall, the shrine that marked the entrance to the temple complex. But cleaning the temple was not the only job that had to be done in preparation for this major occasion. In the weeks previously, groups were formed to deal with a wide range of tasks that would come up during the festivities, including directing traffic, preparing and selling food, managing the garbage, and welcoming guests. I was assigned to two groups: on the first day I was responsible for the recycling station in the dining hall. On subsequent days

4 The English translations of activities provided in this ethnographic report are official Fo Guang Shan translations.

I would be part of the traffic team directing the stream of cars to the different parking sites. About 150,000 visitors were expected within the first week of the celebrations alone. Since Hsi Lai Temple is located in Los Angeles, a city with a very underdeveloped public transport system, the vast majority of visitors were arriving by car. As in past years, the temple cooperated with the local police and the California Highway Patrol to manage the never-ending stream of vehicles. To accommodate the extra vehicles, the temple had rented two extra parking lots from neighbouring strip malls: one for the many volunteers who were helping out with the temple festivities, and another, larger one, for the multitude of visitors. Shuttle buses drove back and forth between the temple and the parking lot to transfer the guests.

The festivities began on Lunar New Year's Eve with a New Year's Life Prolonging Universal Buddha Dharma Assembly (*Chuxi yansheng pufo fahui* 除夕延生普佛法會). But the celebrations did not reach their climax until the following day, the first day of the New Year. Early that morning, at five o'clock, people were gathering at the temple gate down the hill. Their aim was to participate in the Chinese New Year's Pilgrimage (*xinchun chaoshan* 新春朝山). Walking up the hill, they did a full prostration every three steps, while ceaselessly chanting the name of the Buddha Shakyamuni. Following the completion of the pilgrimage, the Homage to Thousand Buddhas Dharma Assembly (*Li qian fo fahui* 禮千佛法會) was held at the main shrine. More recreational activities were scheduled to follow this solemn start to the day. From the first day, daily performances were held in the large courtyard in front of the main shrine. In addition, an international candy exhibition had opened its doors to the children, and the dining hall of the temple had been transformed into an indoor night market selling vegetarian snacks. The daily performances were organized by different subchapters, who had prepared them during the previous weeks. On the second evening of the New Year, for example, members of the two Young Adult Division chapters and I performed a dragon dance in the courtyard in front of the main shrine. The audience on that particular evening consisted mostly of Asian Americans. Whole families, often three generations together, came to the temple to pray, grab some food, and enjoy the performances. It was not only people with a Chinese background who attended the festivities. Other Asian Americans also came to the temple to participate. One monastic told me that about fifty percent of the visitors on this most important holiday of the year are Vietnamese Americans. Many of them dressed in traditional gowns and had their picture taken in front of one of the attractions. They incorporate Hsi Lai Temple into their annual Lunar New Year temple circuit. Each year they try to visit as many temples as possible, in order to secure good luck for the coming year. In addition, visitors who have no Chinese or Asian background, and therefore have no direct

cultural connection with the Lunar New Year holiday, come to Hsi Lai just to enjoy the spectacle and the festive atmosphere. The festival is easily the biggest of all Fo Guang Shan's activities each year. The weekends in particular see a never-ending stream of visitors stopping by at the temple. Not even the biggest of the Buddhist rituals held at Hsi Lai, the Water Land Dharma Assembly (*Shuilu fahui* 水陸法會), attracts such a big crowd.

The scene above shows that a temple such as Hsi Lai does not only function as a religious site, but also constitutes an important cultural space. During this time of the year, the delineation between the cultural and religious functions of the temple becomes more blurred than ever. Although many people who go to the temple during the New Year's celebrations do so for religious reasons, such as to pray for a good year, they also stroll around the temple grounds to enjoy the bright and colourful lanterns, grab a snack at the dining hall night market, or watch one of the countless cultural performances. The temple as a cultural space is thus not only generated by Fo Guang Shan monastics and BLIA members, but by a much bigger and internally diverse public. And while people of all kinds of backgrounds – Buddhist and non-Buddhist alike – also visit Fo Guang Shan temples during the holidays in Taiwan, the cultural character of the festivities becomes even more obvious within the context of a non-majority Chinese society. Within the diasporic context, the temple is not just any cultural space, but a culturally *Chinese* space. Yet a culturally Chinese space that attracts ethnic Chinese as well as non-Chinese.

That people go to a Buddhist temple to enjoy themselves is, of course, not a modern phenomenon. Buddhist temples have never exclusively served religious purposes, instead they have always had multiple functions. Throughout Chinese history Buddhist temples have been popular sites to visit on holidays, serving as spaces for leisure and recreation.[5] Fo Guang Shan has remained faithful to this tradition since its early days. The establishment of the order's main temple in Kaohsiung coincided with Taiwan's post-war economic development. At the time, the socio-economic structures of the country were in a transition period, with Taiwan transforming from an agricultural into an industrial society. When Hsing Yun moved from Yilan to Kaohsiung, export processing zones were springing up all over the south. As a result, many of the recently urbanized young workers came to the temple regularly to enjoy their free time.[6] Then, as today, the order's grand temple sites provided a bright and colourful space for leisure and relaxation. They constitute leisure spaces that are imbued with Chinese Buddhist culture.

5 Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, p. 131.

6 Jiang C. 江燦騰, *Taiwan fojiao shi* 台灣佛教史, Taipei: Wunan 五南, 2009, p. 388.

Fo Guang Shan's large and impressive temple structures, visible from afar like the order's large-scale events, are all intended to draw attention and therefore constitute ways to attract people to the Dharma.[7] The order's large regional headquarters in different parts of the globe as well as the enormous complex housing the Fo Guang Shan Buddha Museum (*Foguangshan fotuo jinian tang* 佛光山佛陀紀念堂) adjacent to the order's headquarters in Kaohsiung, all exemplify this approach.[8]

Accordingly, Fo Guang Shan temples at home and abroad are popular tourist sites that attract a very diverse crowd. People may come to the temple purely to enjoy themselves, or they may also participate in religious activities. Some visit the temple as tourists who just want to enjoy the surroundings; some may identify with Chinese religiosity in the broadest sense and pray or make some offerings without getting further involved with the temple. Others are Buddhists and participate in an occasional retreat or a dharma assembly; still others become fully-fledged members of the BLIA. The motivations for their visits may be religious as well as recreational. As unambiguously religious sites, yet sites that are exuberantly decorated and that offer many activities to take part in, Fo Guang Shan temples constitute *renjian* Buddhist spaces of leisure. In a study on Buddhist theme parks, museums, and monuments, religious studies scholar Justin McDaniel argues that Buddhist leisure sites break down the strict binary of the secular and the religious, since people visit these sites for religious as well as for recreational reasons.[9] The same applies to Fo Guang Shan's temples.

Although the order's overseas temples are branch temples that are integrated into a hierarchically structured global temple net, as cultural spaces in the context of the diaspora the temples also constitute (and are explicitly intended to do so) *ecumenical* Chinese spaces. As discussed in the previous chapter, Fo Guang Shan's overseas temples attract ethnic Chinese of all national and regional origins as well as immigrants and their descendants. This is even more the case on occasions such as Lunar New Year. Chinese culture as it is rendered and displayed at Fo Guang Shan temples is not tied to any political entity, be it the ROC or the PRC, but instead consists of a globally recognizable set of Chinese symbols, cultural practices, and discourses, such as traditional architecture, the celebration of traditional festivals, Chinese foods and beverages, or the promotion of the notion of filial piety. It thereby generates the greatest possible intersection of attraction and resonates with both Chinese from all kinds of national origins and

7 Chandler, "Spreading Buddha's Light", pp. 175–176.

8 Shi Miaoguang, "Modern Religious Tourism in Taiwan: A Case Study of Fo Guang Shan Buddha Memorial Center", *Renjian fojiao xuebao yiwen* 人間佛教學報藝文3 (2016), p. 13.

9 J. McDaniel, *Architects of Buddhist Leisure: Socially Disengaged Buddhism in Asia's Museums, Monuments, and Amusement Parks*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017, p. 7.

non-Chinese alike. When I asked ethnic Chinese visitors at different Fo Guang Shan temples why they came to the temple, they most often replied by describing the temple in terms such as bright, colourful and welcoming. With modern technology such as air conditioning, easy accessibility, and without focusing overtly on discipline and obligations, Fo Guang Shan's overseas temple spaces cater to the needs of an emerging transnational ethnic Chinese middle class. In their function as cultural spaces and sites of leisure and recreation they represent one more aspect of Buddhist social engagement. Social engagement does not just mean contributions to charity or education, but also includes a wide range of other activities, such as cultural activities, leisure, and festivals. Particularly within a non-majority Chinese society, the temple as Chinese Buddhist leisure site provides an important space for (but not exclusively) the diaspora and their descendants.

The overseas temple is not just an ethnic enclave or a *China outside of China*; instead it constitutes a culturally imbued transnational religious space that generates a variety of linkages with its host society. By engendering itself as an easily accessible yet recognizably Chinese space through a set of Chinese symbols, cultural practices, languages and discourses, the temple produces linkages with a complex Chinese diaspora community as well as with non-Chinese locals.[10] Most cultural activities one can participate in at the temple are unambiguously Chinese activities. The architecture of most of Fo Gang Shan's overseas temples is characteristically Chinese and the people speak mostly Mandarin in the temple precincts. The teahouse serves Taiwanese Oolong Tea and snacks, and the restaurant serves Chinese vegetarian cuisine. And, besides some English language titles, the bookstore sells Chinese language books. The temple thereby generates a social space where first generation ethnic Chinese migrants of all origins can chat in Mandarin (although they might also use the language of the host country or another Chinese language), celebrate Chinese festivals, and mingle with people who share a similar cultural background and or a similar personal history of migration. People support each other and offer advice on how to adjust to a new life in a new country. During my time at Hsi Lai Temple, for example, the temple had invited a guest speaker to give a talk about a recent tax cut in order to provide Chinese language advice in financial affairs. The temple also helps first generation migrants introduce their culture of origin, or at least one version of it, to their children. The Buddha's Light Hsi Lai School (*Foguang xilai xuexiao* 佛光西來學校) at Hsi Lai Temple, for example, provides almost daily Mandarin language and pronunciation classes and after-school programmes. In addition, the temple, like most other Fo Guang Shan overseas temples (at least those that have the capacity),

10 The following section is based on fieldwork data.

holds regular spring and summer camps for the young. In a 1996 article on Hsi Lai Temple, Irene Lin argues that in addition to its religious function, the temple serves as a Chinese community centre. The free services provided by the temple include assistance with finding jobs and seminars on American laws, customs, the educational system, and the job market. She adds that besides language classes, the temple also offers special classes on Chinese culture such as courses in the Chinese arts, Tai Chi, and Chinese cooking.[11] She notes that Fo Guang Shan's goal for the classes – particularly for the one point five and second generation – is to "preserve, strengthen, or at times create the Chinese identity of its members".[12]

At the same time, the temple's distinctive yet accessible rendering of Chineseness makes it also attractive to non-Chinese visitors. Many non-Chinese visitors come to the temple to experience Chinese culture. For many of them, visiting a Fo Guang Shan temple is less about getting involved in religious activities or celebrating a traditional holiday, but about spending a leisurely afternoon and experiencing something new. Instead of flying to the other side of the globe, they can get a taste of China just a drive away from their home. At Nan Hua Temple in South Africa, for example, one monastic told me that the numbers of visitors had increased significantly after a group of martial arts performers from the Shaolin Temple in the PRC had given a performance in Cape Town. Non-Chinese locals came to the temple explicitly to see Buddhist monastics in a Chinese temple setting. Similarly, one European American member of the English language BLIA Los Angeles that I interviewed told me that she decided to join the organization precisely because its Chineseness had attracted her. But not all of the non-Chinese at the temple I have talked to hold a similar perspective on the issue; in fact, some hope for the temple to engage more in the mainstream culture. These different assessments of the temple's Chineseness correspond with an observation I made when I attended the end-of-year gathering of the BLIA English language subchapter at Hsi Lai Temple. The gathering was held on a Saturday evening in the temple's Assembly Hall. There were about 30 people present, sitting around five tables. At each table was one monastic. The group was quite mixed in terms of age but also in terms of ethnicity: some people were Chinese American, some had a Hispanic background, while others were European American. During the conversation at my table, while everybody was enjoying a cup of tea and some vegetarian snacks, the topic of localisation came up. It very soon became clear that while some people hoped

11 Lin, "Journey to the Far West", pp. 112–113.
12 Ibid., p. 213.

that the temple would make more effort to shake off its Chineseness, others insisted that, just like the interviewee mentioned above, they come to the temple *because of* and not despite its Chineseness.

Similarly, many of the Vietnamese visitors mentioned above who incorporated the temple in their Lunar New Year temple visit circuit, come to the temple because it is a Chinese Buddhist temple and therefore maintains a cultural proximity to Vietnamese Buddhism. Most of them are not Sino-Vietnamese and the temple even puts up Vietnamese language signs to accommodate their needs. Vietnamese also constitute an important demographic at other Fo Guang Shan overseas temples. At a smaller temple like the Fo Guang Shan temple in Berlin, for example, one monastic told me that particularly in the early days it was Vietnamese who had provided support. Due to their cultural and religious proximity to the Vietnamese Mahayana, many Vietnamese Buddhists recognize the Fo Guang Shan temples as related to their own tradition.

Thus, Fo Guang Shan's insistence on its Chineseness may not necessarily be seen as an obstacle to interaction with the non-Chinese majority society. Through its exhibited Chineseness, the temple functions as an ambassador of Chinese culture in a diasporic setting. Comparing Chinese Christians with Chinese Buddhists in the Los Angeles San Gabriel valley, Carolyn Chen states that the latter's status as religious and cultural others leads them to higher engagement in inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue.[13] Lin too mentions that Hsi Lai Temple operates as a cultural centre that fosters cross-cultural understanding between Chinese migrants and the European American mainstream society. She states that during her research, while the majority of individual visitors were predominantly Chinese Americans, those who attended group visits sponsored by the temple had up to two thirds European ancestry.[14] Although I do not have access to official numbers, her observations roughly correspond with those I made about two decades later, with the exception that I noticed that a significant portion of the non-Chinese group consists of Hispanic Americans. This may be caused by the recent increase in residents with a Hispanic background in the San Gabriel Valley. Lin did not specify the national origin of the Chinese Americans at the temple, but I did notice that at the time of my fieldwork, based on the particular Mandarin spoken, many of the Chinese casual temple visitors originated from the PRC.

13 C. Chen, "The Religious Varieties of Ethnic Presence: A Comparison between a Taiwanese Immigrant Buddhist Temple and an Evangelical Christian Church", *Sociology of Religion* 63 (2002) 2, pp. 230–231.

14 Lin, "Journey to the Far West", p. 114.

Deterritorializing Nationalized Tradition

Anthropologist Pnina Werbner points out that late modern diasporic discourses are multiple and rather than fuse, they intersect and can even be contradictory.[15] They are characterized by a dual orientation towards the region of origin and the place of settlement, thus often being "both ethnic-parochial and cosmopolitan".[16] This complex entwinement of discourses and practices that links the dynamics of diaspora with those of the nation-state can also be detected when considering the globalization project of Fo Guang Shan. The spectacular Lunar New Year's festivities and other cultural activities show how Fo Guang Shan engenders Chineseness through the deployment of culture in a way that is congruent with tourism and global event culture. They link a diasporic community consisting predominantly of members of a globally minded middle class with the mainstream culture of their host society. Within this context, the temple constitutes a Buddhist space permeated with "traditional Chinese culture" that is welcoming and easily accessible for people of all backgrounds. Yet besides this open and cosmopolitan rendering we can also encounter more parochial representations of Chineseness at Fo Guang Shan. In some conversations with Fo Guang Shan Buddhists, particularly those of a certain age, but also in the founder's publications, I encountered tropes that merge notions of Chinese culture with the modern concept of ethnicity.

An article written by Hsing Yun may serve as an example for the second approach. The title of the article, which was published in the opinion section of the *China Times* during the 2018 Taiwanese local election period, is "I am a Taiwanese Chinese".[17] In the article Hsing Yun explains his identity as a Taiwanese Chinese. He begins the article by noting that although he has lived on the island for most of his life – born in Jiangsu, he left mainland China at the age of 24 and, at the time of writing the article had lived in Taiwan for 68 years – he still feels that people often do not perceive him as Taiwanese. Conversely, on visits to China, such as on his first visit to the People's Republic in 1989, he is referred to as a Taiwanese monk. For this reason, he identifies himself as a Taiwanese Chinese (*Taiwan Zhongguo ren* 台灣中國人). Later in the article, he also calls himself a global citizen or global person (*diqiu ren* 地球人), as he has done on several other occasions. He goes on to further specify his self-identity by adding that he is a culturally Chinese

15 P. Werbner, "Complex Diasporas", in: Knott and McLoughlin (eds.), *Diasporas*, p. 74.
16 Ibid., p. 75.
17 Hsing Yun, "Wo Shi Taiwan Zhongguo Ren 我是台灣中國人", *Zhongshi dianzi bao* 中時電子報, 11 December 2018, https://www.chinatimes.com/opinion/20181211003852-262105?chdtv.

global person (*zhonghua diqiu ren* 中華地球人). He reports that when he travels the world and meets with overseas Chinese, people resonate with his self-description. Hsing Yun argues that despite being physically separated from China, in regard to their blood line and race, overseas Chinese are still Chinese. He continues by expressing his strong bond with Taiwan, describing his long history on the island, including the hardships he had to endure while spreading the Buddhist Dharma. In the last part of the article, Hsing Yun turns to the election. Hsing Yun finds it most troubling that Chinese culture, a national consciousness, and the origin of the family have been ignored and forgotten during the election campaign. Many people had abandoned their own traditions and forgotten their roots. He continues by depicting China as a country "pregnant with 5000 years of glorious Chinese culture, the cultural China, the China of all people, the people of one flesh and one blood, the unchangeable Chinese nation. [. . .] I am frankly and sincerely telling everybody, we all are the descendants of Yan Di and Huang Di. That is an unchangeable historical fact."[18] Hsing Yun then posits the question of whether there is any ancestor of the Taiwanese who is not Chinese, and claims that those who advocate to use Taiwanese instead of Mandarin overlook the fact that Taiwanese originates from the Chinese province Fujian. Hsing Yun claims that it is in Taiwan that Chinese culture is best preserved and that Taiwanese all celebrate the Chinese New Year, Mid-Autumn Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, and Tomb-Sweeping Festival. The text continues by quoting a proverb about appreciating one's roots. Hsing Yun then quotes the PRC president Xi Jinping as saying that "the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are one family (*liang'an yi jiaqin* 兩岸一家親)" and asks, in rhetorical fashion, if it were possible to deny the common roots and origins of the people in Taiwan and China. He closes the article by stating his love for China and Taiwan and expressing his hope that Taiwanese will not discriminate against their fellow Taiwanese who are born on the mainland. Lastly, he poses the question that, if both sides of the Taiwan Strait would have compassion towards each other and come together to Taiwan's rescue by deploying Chinese culture, and if both sides of the political spectrum in Taiwan (DPP and KMT) would be equally compassionate towards each other, who would fear that there was no hope for the future?

If we compare the way Chineseness is evoked in Hsing Yun's article to how it is presented through the order's cultural activities, we can see that the former displays a more parochial understanding of Chinese culture. The article merges

18 "這裡我們所說的中國，是五千年中華文化孕育的歷史中國、文化中國、全民中國，是民族血肉相連、不能改變的中華民族。(. . .) 所以，坦誠地告訴大家，我們都是炎黃子孫，這是無法改變的歷史事實。"

historical notions of Chineseness (descendants of Yan Di and Huang Di *Yan Huang zisun* 炎黃子孫) with modern ones (the people of one flesh and one blood *minzu xierou xianglian* 民族血肉相連). Similarly, the concept *zhonghua minzu* 中華民族, which in the text is characterized as an unchangeable or eternal entity (*bu neng gaibian de zhonghua minzu* 不能改變的中華民族), is a modern expression that merges the notion of the nation with ideas about race and ethnicity and was coined by Liang Qichao (梁啟超 1873–1929).[19] Hsing Yun goes on to invoke another modern conception that relates ethnicity to bloodline (*xueyuan* 血源). Yet by arguing that the celebration of traditional cultural festivities is evidence of the Chineseness of the Taiwanese, he simultaneously employs a more culturalist approach. Furthermore, the more parochial language is embedded into globalist, cosmopolitan imagery, when he describes himself, as he has done frequently in the past, as a global person.

In order to better understand the specific combination of discourses Hsing Yun is deploying in this article, it may be beneficial to consider the context in which he founded Fo Guang Shan and wrote "to propagate Buddhist teachings through cultural activities" as the first sentence of its maxim. Hsing Yun established Fo Guang Shan in the same year that the KMT began to promote its Cultural Renaissance Movement (*Wenhua fuxing yundong* 文化復興運動) in Taiwan, which was its response to the Cultural Revolution in the PRC.[20] The movement was successor to the pre-1949 New Life Movement (*Xin shenghuo yundong* 新生活運動) on the mainland. Yet compared to the more futuristic New Life Movement, the Cultural Renaissance Movement was decidedly preservationist.[21] After relocating to Taiwan, the KMT had transformed its earlier approach to nationalism as a "revolutionary agent of sociopolitical change"[22] into a "*cultural* nationalism".[23] This new rendering of its views on the nation state had already begun with the Glorious Restoration (*guangfu* 光復) period (1945–1967), was further developed during the Cultural Renaissance Movement, and continued until 1977.[24] Culture within this context did not just refer to the arts but to an "invented tradition" in a Hobsbawmian sense serving as a means for the construction of a new

19 C.-T. Kuo, "Introduction", in: Kuo (ed.), *Religion and Nationalism in Chinese Societies*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017, p. 16.

20 D. Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003, p. 144.

21 M. Clinton, *Revolutionary Nativism: Fascism and Culture in China, 1925–1937*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2017, p. 198.

22 A. J. U. L. Chun, *Forget Chineseness: On the Geopolitics of Cultural Identification*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017, p. 21.

23 Ibid., p. 22.

24 Ibid., pp. 22–23.

consciousness that was instrumental to the KMT's project of transforming Taiwan into a modern Chinese nation-state.[25] The open and accessible formation of Chineseness engendered through global event culture as described in the first half of this chapter is not in tension with the more ethno-cultural discourse of Chineseness; instead, it represents one possible current expression. Both renderings of Chineseness are historically linked. Anthropologist Allen Chun has called the deployment of "traditional Chinese culture" by the post-war KMT government a first measure to commodify culture.[26] The KMT government by means of selection constructed a particular set of "traditional Chinese culture" for its goals of nation-state building. A complex history was abbreviated within this process in order to be made applicable to a specific goal. The temple as a cultural Chinese space can be seen as a globalized extension of the earlier commodified deployment of "traditional Chinese culture" for KMT nation-state building processes on Taiwan, albeit with a different goal. The goal now is to spread Fo Guang Shan *renjian* Buddhism and perpetuate a deterritorialized Chinese cultural identity. This is to be achieved not within a particular Chinese nation-state (such as the PRC or the ROC), but in a global context.

Hsing Yun presents the post-war trope of an ethno-cultural rendering of Chineseness within the contemporary context of cross-strait relations and Chinese diaspora. Adapting to this new context, he also added a new theme: that of a culturally Chinese yet global person. I argue that it is this multivalent intertwinement of ethno-cultural parochialism and global cosmopolitanism that has accelerated the order's impressive transnational development. While the Chinese Mahayana Buddhist tradition is thought of by its followers as universal, it does not follow that it completely transcends national identity. As can be seen from the article above, the notion of national (Chinese) identity retains importance in Hsing Yun's thought. Many first-generation migrants, particularly those who grew up and went to school in martial law-era Taiwan, are very familiar with this particular rendering of Chineseness.[27] The same KMT discourses on Chineseness have similarly influenced the overseas Southeast Asian community, albeit to a lesser degree.[28] It is this particular multivalent rendering of Chineseness, one that creates a nexus between a post-war cultural nationalist discourse and a globalist cosmopolitan imagery that resonates with many first-generation migrants in the

25 E. J. Hobsbawm (ed.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

26 Chun, *Forget Chineseness*, p. 24.

27 Chun, *Forget Chineseness*, p. 23.

28 Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, p. 206.

diaspora. Today, this very discourse also resonates with many who belong to the most recent wave of Chinese migration from the PRC.

As a response to the Tiananmen incident in 1989, views that link ethno-culturalism with the nation-state have become increasingly popular on the mainland during the last three decades.[29] The new ethno-cultural nationalist project, which substituted earlier anti-imperialist views on the nation-state, was further promoted through Xi Jinping's "China Dream" campaign.[30] The replacement of earlier Maoist ideology with a new emphasis on "traditional Chinese culture" generated new points of reference for Buddhists and other religious actors in the diaspora. Concurrently, the CCP had realized that cooperating with Taiwanese Buddhists might be of help for their project of unification with Taiwan.[31] Hsing Yun, as a long-time supporter of the KMT who has formerly served as an advisor to the party, member of the KMT's Central Committee, and commissioner for the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission, has himself always been an outspoken supporter of unification.[32] It is thus not farfetched to assume that the particular amalgamation of the two distinct renderings of Chineseness at Fo Guang Shan has not only attracted PRC new migrants overseas, but has also facilitated the order's recent access to the People's Republic.

The Move to the Mainland

I have discussed the significance of the overseas Fo Guang Shan temple as a Chinese cultural space within the context of a majority non-Chinese society. Yet over the last two decades, Fo Guang Shan has also extended its global development to the People's Republic of China. At the time of my fieldwork, the order maintained one temple in the PRC, with a second in the process of reconstruction. Fo Guang Shan's other facilities include a restaurant, a publishing house, a library, and several cultural centres. Because of the restrictions imposed on religious activity by the CCP government, culture constitutes the order's main

29 K. Mühlhahn, *Making China Modern: From the Great Qing to Xi Jinping*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019, pp. 541, 145; C. R. Hughes, *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era*, London: Routledge, 2006, p. 18; B. Vermander, "Sinicizing Religions, Sinicizing Religious Studies", *Religions* 10 (2019) 2, p. 8.

30 Mühlhahn, *Making China Modern*, p. 564.

31 A. Laliberté, "Buddhist Revival under State Watch", *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 40 (2011) 2, p. 123.

32 Laliberté, *The Politics of Buddhist Organizations in Taiwan*, p. 71.

field of social involvement in the People's Republic. The biggest of the order's cultural activities in the PRC is the annual Yixing Vegetarian Culture and Green Living Product Exhibition (*Zhongguo Yixing ji sushi wenhua ji lüse shenghuopin bolan* 中國義興際素食文化暨綠色生活品博覽). Similar to the situation at Hsi Lai, big cultural festivities at the Ancestral Da Jue Temple attract significantly more people than do religious activities, such as the regular Dharma assemblies. The following section is an ethnographic extract from my fieldwork at Da Jue.

On the Saturday morning of the first weekend in May 2018, I take a bus from my hotel situated in Yixing's city centre, a county-level city under the prefecture-level city of Wuxi in the southern Jiangsu province, to the nearby Hengshan Reservoir. Right next to the reservoir lies the impressive temple complex of the recently reconstructed Fo Guang Shan Ancestral Da Jue Temple. The city of Yixing is mainly famous for its clay teapots and a nearby 120 square kilometre bamboo forest, the Sea of Bamboo Scenic Area (*Yixing zhuhai fengjing qu* 宜興竹海風景區). But for the seventh year in a row now, Yixing has been hosting a new tourist attraction: the annual Vegetarian Culture and Green Living Product Exhibition at the Fo Guang Shan Ancestral Da Jue Temple. From the morning of 28 April to the afternoon of 1 May, over 100 booths are set up on the temple grounds selling foods and products related to vegetarianism, healthy living, and tea culture. As I stroll through the main stage, the temple complex is already crowded with people. When I arrive at the stage, the opening ceremony had just started. Several local officials are present at the ceremony that morning, including the mayor of the city of Yixing, the deputy mayor of the city of Wuxi, representatives of the China Tourism Association (*Zhongguo lüyou xiehui* 中國旅遊協會), the Jiangsu Tourism Association (*Jiangsu sheng lüyou xiehui* 江蘇省旅遊協會), the Wuxi City Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Affairs (*Wuxi shi minzu zongjiao shiwu ju* 無錫市民族宗教事務局), among others. They are accompanied by a group of very high-ranking Fo Guang Shan monastics. In his opening speech, the mayor of Yixing praises the efforts of Hsing Yun in spreading vegetarian culture and a green lifestyle and his contributions to making healthy living part of mainstream culture. Noting that the previous six exhibitions had attracted a total of over two million visitors, he also stresses the exhibition's benefits to the development of the Yixing tourist industry. This year is the first year to hold a display of tea culture, the Tea Zen Culture and Art Festival, as part of the larger exhibition. Many of the exhibitors attending the Tea Zen Culture and Art Festival are representatives of the local tea industry. Together with their Taiwanese counterparts they not only present their products but also participate in a contest about which tea table designs best encompassed the spirit of Buddhist tea culture (*Liangan chachan wenhua jiaoliu luntan ji chaxi sheji bisai* 兩岸茶禪文化交流論壇暨茶席設計比賽). The

following day a panel discussion is to be held at which an award is handed out to the winner.

The exhibition is subdivided into three sections: located at the centre is a market selling vegetarian snacks, around the main shrine visitors can purchase products related to a green Buddhist lifestyle, and right in front of the Fragrant Forest Abundant Treasure White Pagoda is the main stage and the tea and Chan culture area where the tea table designs are exhibited. All the exhibitors in the food and lifestyle section are from Taiwan. They sell a huge variety of snacks and products, ranging from the famous Taiwanese stinky tofu to Buddha statues, to more unconventional products like alcohol-free red wine. The whole event is extremely well-patronized, and the temple grounds are filled with people. Yet the food section is definitely the section that is the most popular with the crowds. People enjoy tasting the vegetarian versions of typical Taiwanese night market snacks or take a sip of bubble tea. The exhibition takes place over four days, all equally well attended.

The Fo Guang Shan Vegetarian Culture and Green Living Product Exhibition constitutes one more example of how Fo Guang Shan successfully deploys culture and spectacle in a manner that conforms to global consumer culture with the aim of attracting people to the temple. While the Da Jue Temple does of course hold Lunar New Year's festivities too, this example is particularly interesting because it is promoting vegetarianism and a healthy lifestyle. It is thus explicitly linked to Buddhist culture, yet in a way that produces no tension with the CCP political agenda. Not only does it promote a green lifestyle and boost local tourism in the area, it also encourages cross-strait cultural exchange. The Vegetarian Culture and Green Living Product Exhibition above can be seen as one more example of how local PRC government officials have supported the development of Buddhist temples as tourist sites since the 1990s.[33] Similar to the Asian Buddhist leisure sites that McDaniel has researched, a culture of spectacle also constitutes a central element in the merging of Buddhism and the tourist industry in the PRC. The example of Da Jue Temple shows how Fo Guang Shan is taking part in this newly emerging global culture of Buddhist leisure. What differs from the situation in California is, of course, the context. As a Taiwanese temple in the People's Republic, it does not constitute a Chinese diasporic space in a non-Chinese majority society, but a Buddhist space within a Chinese society. The temple is therefore not required to function as a Chinese community centre here. But culture does play an important role. Because religion is highly regulated within the PRC, most of the order's facilities on the mainland are cultural centres. The order's smaller facilities possess

33 Ji, "Buddhism in the Reform Era", p. 40.

weaker linkages with tourism, but function as spaces for people to learn about or engage with "traditional Chinese culture". During my last week in the PRC, for example, I attended a flower arranging class at the Fo Guang Shan Suzhou Jiaying Assembly Hall, a beautifully renovated traditional building with a little shop in the entrance area and several exhibition spaces (see Figure 7). The following fragment is a brief ethnographic extract of my field visit to the Jiaying Assembly Hall. On the second floor of the building is a classroom that oversees the courtyard. I am one of 70 people who attend the class, most of whom are women. The majority are university students in their 20s but there are also some attendees in their 30s and 40s. Based on the way they dress and the full-size executive model cars they arrived in, those who are a little older appear to be middle class or above. The teacher is a florist who is flown in from Taiwan. His class goes on for two hours and is repeated in the afternoon for a different group of participants.

Figure 7: Flower Arranging, Jiaying Assembly Hall, PRC.

This chapter has argued that culture represents one important field of Fo Guang Shan's social engagement. Culture, mainly understood as *Chinese* culture, is deployed within the context of the order's global trajectory in a multivalent way: The overseas Buddhist temple generates an accessible, open Buddhist *and* Chinese space that holds cultural activities in ways that are compatible with global event

culture. At the same time, this global and cosmopolitan deployment of Chinese culture is underpinned by an ongoing twentieth-century ethno-cultural discourse of Chineseness. The multivalent entwinement of both renderings of Chineseness contributes to the order's successful development overseas, including its recent development in the People's Republic of China. But its exhibited Chineseness also creates points of reference with many non-Chinese who visit the temple because of its role as an ambassador of Chinese culture.