

## Acknowledgements

It would be impossible to name all those who have supported me during the process of writing this book, but let me nevertheless list some who have been particularly important in making it happen. First and foremost, I am grateful to Fo Guang Shan for permitting me to conduct in-depth ethnographic research at the order's temples and practice centres in Taiwan, the USA, South Africa, and the PRC. I am indebted to all the order's monastics and lay supporters who so generously offered me their valuable insights into the order's global development. I owe too many of them a debt of gratitude and it would be impossible to name them all. I am particularly grateful to Ven. Huifang 慧昉法師, Ven. Huidong 慧東法師, Ven. Miaoguang 妙光法師, Ven. Miaoshiang 妙祥法師, Ven. Miaoyi 妙益法師, Ven. Miaomin 妙憫法師, and Matt Orsborne. I also want to express my gratitude to Jane Iwamura, Victor Gabriel, and Vanessa Karam at the University of the West for their invaluable advice and encouragement.

This book is based on my doctoral thesis written at the Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 1199: "Processes of Spatialization under the Global Condition" at Leipzig University. I would especially like to thank the centre for so generously providing the funding for the research for this book, which allowed me to carry out fieldwork on four continents. Most of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Philip Clart, without whose continuous support I would have not been able to complete this book. I am very grateful for his invaluable advice and feedback. His patient guidance has helped me not only through the process of writing up but also during my time in the field. His kind and ever constructive attitude towards all his students is a quality I would like to emulate in the future. Furthermore, I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my second advisor André Laliberté. His singular perspective, which examines modern Taiwanese Buddhism within the broader political and societal context of East Asia, had been a source of inspiration long before I met him in person. I benefited immensely from our conversations during his time in Leipzig.

If it were not for the training I received at the Graduate Institute of Religious Studies at National Chengchi University 國立政治大學宗教研究所, I would never have been able to properly research Taiwanese religiosities. A special thank you goes to my MA advisor Li Yu-chen 李玉珍, who taught me not only most of what I know about Chinese Buddhism but also even more importantly the subtleties of conducting ethnographic research in the field. A sincere thank you goes to my MA dissertation committee members Chen Chien-huang 陳劍錚 and Hsieh Shu-wei 謝世維 for their invaluable advice on my thesis, but also for all I have learned from them about the history of Chinese religions. I very much regret that the late Tsai Yan-zen 蔡彥仁 did not live to see this book completed; he was a

wonderful teacher. I am also very grateful to Tsai Yuan-lin 蔡源林, who taught one of the first classes I took at National Chengchi University. His class on religion and globalization was inspirational, and I am still in the field. While at Chengchi University, I also had the opportunity to meet Miriam Levering and her late partner Mary E. Donovan. I miss our excursions into the culinary worlds of northern Taiwan. Furthermore, I want to express my deep thanks to Huang Hou-min 黃厚銘 from the Sociology Department at National Chengchi University 政治大學社會學系, who, through his demanding yet inspirational teaching style, conveyed to me the foundations of sociological theory.

Besides my teachers, there are many other scholars who have advised and supported me in the process of writing this book and who make the study of Buddhist border-crossings an exciting field. The encouragement and guidance provided by Chen Wei-yi 鄭維儀 and Lai Rongdao 賴融道 in particular have been indispensable to me and I am deeply grateful to them. Likewise, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Huang Wei-shan 黃維珊, Jack Chia 謝明達, and Chiu Tzu-Lung 邱子倫.

I am also thankful to all my colleagues at the SFB 1199, especially my co-researcher, Nikolas Broy. Jessica Steinman, and Diana Ayeh have been good colleagues and friends to me at Leipzig University. Although they are in different fields, I have learned a lot from them during the many hours spent with each, discussing the ups and downs of conducting multi-sited ethnographic research.

My deepest gratitude goes to Yeh Fei-shen 葉翡紳 for his support in Taiwan. Were it not for his selfless assistance in looking up information for me on the ground, sending me books, and replenishing my supply of Oolong teas, I would never have been able to complete this book. I also want to thank Darren Davies. He has provided me with strength and encouragement when it was most needed. I am furthermore very grateful to Helen Jackson. Special thanks also go to Michael Yeh 葉建緯, Su Yinrui 蘇胤睿, and Mario Prütz. Finally, I owe the deepest debt of gratitude to my parents, who have supported me with their love and encouragement no matter where in the world I have chosen to live. Without them, I would not be the person I am today.