



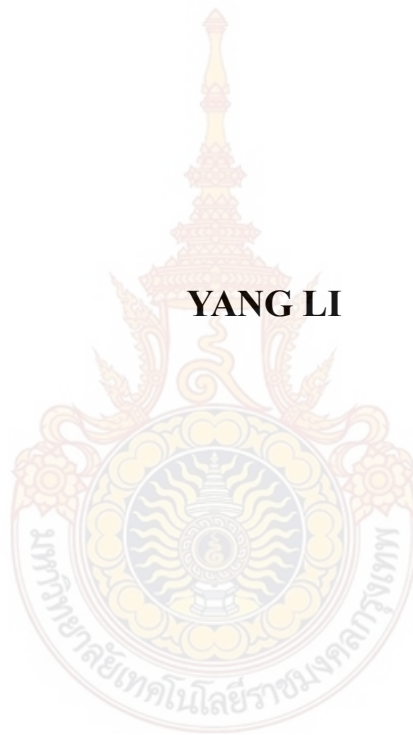
**HUMANISTIC BUDDHISM IN CHINA:
CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS AND PRACTICES**

YANG LI

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN GLOBAL BUDDHISM
INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE INNOVATION AND CULTURE
RAJAMANGALA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY KRUNGTHAP
ACADEMIC YEAR 2023
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INTERPRETATIONS AND PRACTICES
Author Yang LI
Major Master of Arts (Global Buddhism)
Advisor Assistant Professor Dr. Yaoping LIU

THESIS COMMITTEE

.....Chairperson
(Assistant Professor Dr. Somboon Watana)

.....Advisor
(Assistant Professor Dr. Yaoping LIU)

.....Committee
(Dr. Metteyya Beliatte)



Approved by the Institute of Science Innovation and Culture
Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Master's Degree

.....
(Assistant Professor Dr. Yaoping LIU)
Director of the Institute of Science Innovation and Culture
Date...Month...Year...

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ABSTRACT

“Renjian Fojiao”, literally Buddhism in Human Realm, is a reform program proposed by Venerable Taixu to address the shortcomings of Chinese Buddhism, and later on, through the efforts of his disciples, “Humanistic Buddhism” was derived. The study explores the evolution of Humanistic Buddhism in China, an indigenous movement that traces its roots to the country and has witnessed substantial expansion in contemporary times. It examines the experiences of different monasteries and monks, focusing on its impact on spreading Dharma teachings, promoting public welfare, and advancing education. Employing a historical and contemporary approach and utilizing document analysis, the study found that this form of Buddhism originated in China, was later influenced by Taiwanese Buddhism, and has recently experienced significant growth in mainland China. The findings revealed how Humanistic Buddhism has impacted a range of areas, such as spreading the teachings of the Dharma, promoting public welfare, and advancing education. Furthermore, the study findings highlight challenges and issues that Humanistic Buddhism encounters in its efforts to promote its values, including the delicate balance between commercialization and religious integrity, as well as the utilization of new media for spreading the teachings of Dharma.

Keywords: Life Buddhism, Humanistic Buddhism, China, Taixu, Nebula

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During these two extraordinary and challenging years, I have had the privilege of being a student in the MA in Global Buddhism program at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep. I embarked on this journey amid challenges and opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, as I stand on the brink of graduation, my heart brims with gratitude, and I wish to express my profound appreciation.

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Lastly, I wish to thank the Buddha for his blessings. I have cultivated a profound understanding of Buddhist wisdom and compassion in this field. The guidance and blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have accompanied me throughout, enabling me to navigate every stage of my studies.

As I prepare to depart from this academic arena, it is with a deep sense of gratitude that I convey my most sincere thanks to all those who have stood by me. I am committed to continuing my efforts to give back to society the knowledge and wisdom I have acquired, contributing to the peace and prosperity of Buddhism and the world.

Yang LI

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Since Buddhism was introduced to China, it has spread throughout the country, and throughout history, there have been numerous masters and sects. Buddhist thought and culture have integrated with traditional Chinese culture, forming a unique Chinese Buddhist culture¹. In its development, Buddhism transformed its institutions and doctrines within the Chinese context. Following the formation of the eight sects, Chinese Buddhism entered an era of "Sinicization." During the Song and Yuan dynasties, Buddhism saw ideological diversification, with sects like Chan and Pure Land Buddhism experiencing rapid growth.

After nearly a thousand years, "Sinicized" Buddhism began to exhibit various shortcomings. Since the Ming and Qing dynasties, Chinese Buddhism has gradually declined, marked by the commonality of monastic orders prioritizing prayers for the dead while neglecting their cultivation and liberation. To address these issues, the "Taixu Reform" emerged in modern times, a necessary step for further developing "Sinicized" Buddhism². After the "Taixu Reforms," Chinese Buddhism faced another transformation.³

¹ SHENG Kai, "Constructing the Academic Discourse System of Buddhism in China", China Social Science Daily, September 28, 2021, Issue 2259: "Buddhism in China is a process of interaction, complementarity, symbiosis and convergence between" History of Buddhism in India "and Chinese culture. In a sense, it is a historical process of conflict, fusion and comprehensive innovation between the two civilizations. China is a multi-ethnic and vast country. For History of Buddhism in India, the communication mode of "weak organizations" just fits in with "China" as the "background" and "concept". As an academic discourse system, the sinicization of Buddhism must take into account the territory of modern China and the different branches of sinicization of Buddhism.

² SHI Taixu (January 8, 1890 to March 17, 1947), born in Chang'an Town, Haining County, Zhejiang Province, advocated the Buddhist revolution and devoted himself to the cause of Buddhism all his life. He said that he was "committed to sorting out the Buddhist system and walking in the Bodhisattva Yoga Ring Book." He was praised as the founder of Humanistic Buddhism. Master Taixu is committed to the reform of Chinese Buddhism. He put forward the idea of "Humanistic Buddhism", which marks the full development of the transformation of Chinese Buddhism from traditional form to modern form. Master Taixu's reform mainly refers to a series of reform measures he carried out on Buddhism, aimed at making Buddhism more adaptable to the development of modern society. His reforms include reforms in Buddhist doctrine, religious system, and religious property. Master Taixu believed that after the Chinese political revolution, Chinese Buddhism must also undergo a revolution. His reform made great contributions to the transformation of modern Buddhism.

³ WU Chaowei, "A Brief Discussion on Humanistic Buddhism", Zen, 2004, Issue 6: "Humanistic

Venerable Taixu's discussion on the construction and development of Chinese Buddhism mainly centers around The Complete Works of Master Taixu. Of the three revolutions proposed by Master Taixu, the "revolution of the teaching system" and the "revolution of the teaching property" served as theoretical guides for further reform and development of "Sinicized" Buddhism⁴. These theories have become crucial for the construction and management of modern Chinese Buddhism. Master Taixu's "Life Buddhism" concept addresses the detachment from followers and real-life faced by traditional Chinese Buddhism. For over a thousand years, traditional Chinese Buddhism has emphasized the afterlife to the extent of completely ignoring the present world. Master Taixu introduced "Life Buddhism," advocating attention to real life, emphasizing concern for the actual world, and advocating active engagement with the world.

"Life Buddhism" is distinct from "earthly Buddhism," but it forms the ideological basis for the latter. From this foundation, Taixu's disciples gradually developed the concept of "Humanistic Buddhism." Humanistic Buddhism focuses more on integrating spiritual practice with life, emphasizing humanism and concern for the reality of life. This concept aligns closely with the humanistic ideology of traditional Chinese culture and has thus been widely accepted in Chinese society. It has gradually become a significant trend in Chinese Buddhism.

With the development of the social economy and cultural diversification, the Buddhist community faces many new challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, traditional Buddhist teachings and practices confront the challenges of modern society;

Buddhism" appeared as a proper term in Master Taixu's "How to Build Humanistic Buddhism", and as a modern unique Buddhist theoretical ideology, it was formed in the 20th century. As for "Humanistic Buddhism", there are many advocates. This theoretical system is the accumulation of long-term creative thinking of modern Chinese Buddhist thinkers on many issues raised by the transitional society and modern life based on the basic principles of Buddhism."

⁴ DING Xiaoping, "On the Relationship of Buddhism and a Religion", Journal of Chengdu Normal University, 4th issue, 2017, pp. 88-92 : "In 1913, at the memorial meeting of the Buddhist monk, Taixu put forward the three major Buddhist revolutions of "doctrinal revolution", "educational system revolution" and "educational property revolution" in view of the accumulated disadvantages of the Buddhist jungle at that time, demanding the elimination of ghosts and gods superstition, and actively advocating the spirit of self-interest in Mahayana Buddhism to improve the national society; Reforming the living and organizational systems of monks and establishing a community of abbot monks that meets the needs of the times; The old rule of inheriting the temple heritage according to the Legalist School will be changed into the Common ownership of the ten Buddhist monks, which will be used to provide for virtuous elders, cultivate young monks, and start the Buddhist cause."

on the other hand, the Buddhist community needs to adapt to the needs of modern society and promote the modernization of Buddhism.

In contemporary China, the thought and practice of Humanistic Buddhism have been widely promoted and applied. Many Buddhist monasteries and groups have conducted practice activities and charitable causes related to Humanistic Buddhism. These are supported and participated in by most believers and recognized and praised by society. Therefore, a comprehensive study of the developmental history, contemporary interpretation, and practice of Humanistic Buddhism in China holds excellent practical significance and academic value.

1.2 Research Problem

As the study of contemporary Chinese Buddhism or “Sinicized Buddhism” is an ongoing discussion in the academic field, there is still much vacant space for contributing knowledge on this subject from different dimensions. Most of the existing literature on this topic is based on historical and political perspectives rather than contemporary religious perspectives. Most of the studies done in the English language are from outsiders' perspectives rather than from a person engaged in Buddhist religious practice as an insider. The existing research about Humanistic Buddhism is Taiwan-centric, paying insufficient attention to mainland China, where Humanistic Buddhism originated and continuously promoted. When considering these factors, this gap exists in the current literature that should be filled to understand the current situation of applying “Humanistic Buddhist” Practices in contemporary China.

As the birthplace of Humanistic Buddhism, what are the theoretical and practical innovations in the inheritance and development of Humanistic Buddhism in contemporary China? How can these specific measures be critically evaluated?

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To study the development of humanistic Buddhism in China
2. To study the contemporary interpretation of Chinese Humanistic Buddhism.
3. To analyze the contemporary practice of humanistic Buddhism in Mainland China.

1.4 Research Questions

This research takes the development and future of "Buddhism for Life" and its derived "Buddhism for the Human World" as the core of the research issues and divides explicitly it into the following aspects:

1. What is the development of humanistic Buddhism in China?
2. What are the contemporary interpretations of Humanistic Buddhist thought in China?
3. What is the contemporary practice of humanistic Buddhism in Mainland China?

1.5 Research Methods and Sources

This study aims to explore the development of Chinese Buddhism, explicitly focusing on the essence, characteristics, and prospects of "Humanistic Buddhism." The author employed a historical and contemporary approach to address this, utilizing document analysis from various angles.

First, we will conduct an archival document analysis to examine the historical evolution of Chinese Buddhism, emphasizing the formation, changes, and influencing factors of Sinicized Buddhism. This research will rely on primary historical materials from libraries and relevant resources from online Buddhist libraries and Mainland China thesis websites to gather comprehensive data.

Next, through document analysis, investigate modern Chinese Buddhism's current status and future trends, particularly emphasizing the principles, content, and practices of "Humanistic Buddhism." This will involve drawing upon the work of scholars from the current books, manuscripts, leaflets, journals, and periodicals and referencing information related to the Humanistic Buddhist activities of Chinese Buddhist temples and Buddhist literature on daily life. Relevant and document analysis were selected, considering the contemporary Chinese societal backdrop, ideology, and economic landscape in analyzing modern Chinese Buddhism's continuity and development.

Finally, based on the findings from document analysis, this study will compare the two to provide interpretations and evaluations of Chinese "Humanistic

Buddhism". It aims to provide an objective description, an accurate reflection of reality, and a perspective aligned with the spirit of the times and social progress while respecting historical traditions and current needs.

This study primarily involves the author, with occasional input from classmates and guidance from mentors. While we anticipate minimal obstacles in historical research, there may be varying opinions on particular viewpoints, especially concerning the analysis of modern Chinese Buddhism. Notably, Chinese Buddhists might lack clarity regarding how to develop "Humanistic Buddhism" further within the framework of "Chinese Buddhism" in the new era. As such, we will prioritize effective communication, respect diverse perspectives, and maintain an open and inclusive approach throughout the research process.

1.6 Research Scope

The main issue of this study is the history and current development trend of "life Buddhism" to "Humanistic Buddhism". Starting from the analysis of the "Taixu Reform" caused by the drawbacks of Buddhism after its "sinicization", this paper analyzes the development of "life Buddhism" and its reality in different regions, as well as the evolution from "life Buddhism" to "Humanistic Buddhism", and analyzes the different interpretations and practices of the "Humanistic Buddhism" imagination.

In order to better understand the connotation and extension of "life Buddhism" and "Humanistic Buddhism", this study will explore from the perspectives of history, culture, society, and religion. Firstly, this study will briefly review the challenges and crises Chinese Buddhism faces after being influenced by Western culture and science in modern times. Secondly, this study will focus on Master Taixu, a leader and representative figure of the modern Buddhist reform movement in China, his theory and practice of "life Buddhism", and his attitude and insights on Chinese Buddhist tradition and modern social issues. Once again, this study will examine the dissemination and development of "Life Buddhism" in different regions and periods and its difficulties and challenges. Finally, this study will analyze the transformation process from "life Buddhism" to "Humanistic Buddhism", as well as the definition and understanding of "Humanistic Buddhism" by different factions and groups, as well as

their efforts and contributions to social participation, charity, and cultural inheritance.

The scope of this study mainly focuses on the "life Buddhism" started by Master Taixu and the "Humanistic Buddhism" thought derived later. By comparing and analyzing these two ideas, we can see the development direction of Chinese Buddhism since modern times and how "Humanistic Buddhism" thought is implemented to explore the appearance of "Humanistic Buddhism" thought in the future.

Therefore, the overall research is still focused on the analysis and research of the above two ideas and starts from the actions taken by the Chinese Buddhist community to implement these two ideas.

1.7 Significance of Research

From a historical perspective, Buddhism was closely related to the well-being of human society anytime and anywhere. Since the 20th century, Chinese Buddhism, initiated by Master Taixu, has become the mainstream Buddhist development thought in China. This research provides an in-depth historical examination of Buddhism's transformation in India and China, with a particular emphasis on the process of "sinicization". It offers a comprehensive exploration into the evolution from "life Buddhism" to "Humanistic Buddhism", situating this shift within the broader sociocultural landscape of contemporary Chinese society. Draws attention to the real-world implications of this research, proposing actionable recommendations for addressing current challenges and determining the future trajectory of Buddhism in China. Elaborates on the delicate balance required in modern "sinicization" efforts, advocating for an approach that marries the core teachings of Buddhism with the cultural and societal nuances of contemporary China. Chronicles the adaptive resilience of religious movements, using the "Taixu Reform" as a case study in introspection and renewal within religious traditions.

The dissertation delves deeply into the historical and theoretical evolution of "life Buddhism" and "Humanistic Buddhism" within the unique context of China. Central to this exploration is the influential role of Master Taixu and his revolutionary teachings and how they serve as a precursor to the emergence.

Through this research, we have identified Master Taixu's teachings as not

just a doctrinal shift but as a transformative bridge between traditional monastic practices and the tangible applicability of Buddhist principles in daily life. This research highlighted the nuanced dynamics between religious traditions and their societal context, suggesting that religions must continuously evolve with societal changes to remain relevant and impactful.

This research offered insights into the complexities and potential pitfalls of the "sinicization" of Buddhism, emphasizing the importance of preserving its core tenets while ensuring its resonance with modern Chinese society.

At present, the Chinese government is promoting the "Sinicization of Buddhism". Only by reviewing and summarizing the history and studying China's "Humanistic Buddhism" can we combine the current situation of China's Buddhism and explore the new trend of "sinicization" of China's Buddhism in the future.

The study of the history and development model of "life Buddhism" and "Humanistic Buddhism" itself is a study that should not stay at the theoretical level. The practical significance of this study is how to use the theory of this study as a guide to reality and provide a reference for reality.



CHAPTER II

HUMANISTIC BUDDHISM IN CHINA

2.1 Taixu and Life Buddhism

As a theoretical paradigm of modern Buddhism and the trend of the times, Taixu Life Buddhism has distinct characteristics from traditional Buddhism.

Firstly, the Buddhist ideology of Taixu Life has implemented the idea of sending death to life, bringing the other world back to this world, and achieving a significant transformation from being born to be born. Although traditional Buddhism contains factors of entering the world, the original purpose of Buddhism was to transcend the world and extend to the late Qing and early Republic of China, resulting in many drawbacks. Taixu realized this. During the Song and Ming dynasties, Confucianism was strong, while Buddhism gradually declined and significantly contributed to the field of 'death'. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, the "cause" of transcending the dead through repentance achieved unprecedented development, becoming a religion of "human death" that "serves the dead"¹. It should be said that Buddhism had shown its characteristic of entering the world as early as the Tang Dynasty. The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch says, "Buddhism is in the world, and it is impossible to leave the world to pursue enlightenment. Wanting to get away from the human world to realize Bodhi is as impossible as finding the horns of a rabbit"². However, it has always been practiced only by some high-level monks.

On the contrary, the belief in Pure Land with intense earthly colors has always been popular among the lower class. As he said in his book *From Pali Language to Today's Bodhisattva Practice*³, "Chinese Buddhist doctrine is Mahayana, while the behavior is Mahayana"⁴. Over time, Buddhism has also been regarded as a method of

¹ MIAO Zhan, "The Chan Style of Laigu Chan Master——Commemorating the Forty Years of Laigu's Passion", "Southern Fujian Buddhism, No. 2, 1993.

² Chinese : 佛法在世間，不離世間覺；离世求菩提，恰如求兔角。

³ This is the topic of a lecture given by Master Taixu at the Sino-Tibetan Academy of Teaching and Science in June of the 29th year of the Republic of China. Taixu had just returned from visiting Buddhist countries such as Myanmar, India, and Ceylon. In this speech, he talked to the students about some of his impressions of the visit and his thoughts on the reform of Chinese Buddhism.

⁴ SHI Taixu, "From Pali Language to Today's Bodhisattva Practice", p5, Religious and Cultural Publishing House, 2004

praying for blessings and a method of sending people to death. Even some literati consider Buddhism as their spiritual refuge and psychological balance agent. Buddhists also rely on Buddha for survival or retreat and meditation, not only not caring about life and intervening in society but also being separated from the world daily. Buddhism became the target of a group attack. Some people say that Buddhism is a religion of the dead, dedicated to serving them; Some people say that "Buddhism cannot be used in the present world"⁵. In this regard, Taixu believes that the idea of being born or abandoned is a departure from the essence of Buddhism and expresses the need for thorough reform. He vigorously advocates the integration of Buddhism and worldly teachings, believing that "there is no non-Buddhist doctrine or non-Buddhist practice in the world"⁶ to improve Buddhism's social image and demonstrate its social function. The constructed Buddhist philosophy of life is "to know death through birth, and to know ghosts through serving others"⁷, which uses the convenience of entering the world and the enlightenment of Bodhisattva, who enters immediately, to shift the focus of traditional Buddhism's emphasis on death, serving ghosts, and returning to the world to rebirth, serving people, and returning to the world, thus achieving a constructive replacement from "life and death" to "life" in theory.

Secondly, the Buddhist ideology of Taixu Life carries forward the spirit of neutrality in traditional Chinese culture, absorbs Confucian ideological resources, and has a fusion of truth and customs. This integration is mainly reflected in the integration of traditional Confucianism and Buddhism that have entered the world. Taixu believes that "learning Buddhism starts with being a person"⁸. To repay the kindness of parents, society, and the country is the beginning of improving one's life. Gratitude towards parents is filial piety, loyalty towards the country, and benevolence towards the newspaper. Similar to the new development of Confucianism caused by the support of Buddhism and Taoism by Song Confucianism in history, the New Buddhist Movement that Taixu was committed to incorporated Confucianism into the Buddhist thought of being born in order to achieve the transformation of Buddhism's function from being

⁵ SHI Taixu, *"Introduction to Indian philosophy"*, p63, Education and Culture Press, 2004

⁶ SHI Taixu, *"Complete Book of Master Taixu"*, Volume 3, p78

⁷ SHI Taixu, *"Complete Book of Master Taixu"*, Volume 3, p78

⁸ To learn Buddhism, you must first be a human being. The earliest source is the gatha written by the eminent monk Taixu in the Republic of China in 1936: "Looking up to the Buddha is the only way to achieve perfection in personality; to become a man is to become a Buddha, which is called true reality."

born to being born. Traditional Buddhism believes that improving the secular world is a specialty of Confucianism, and Buddhism does not need to attach importance to it. However, he believes that on the level of secular improvement, Confucianism and Buddhist thought have no "gaps or exclusionary ends" and a distant compatibility. The book *Life Morals of Buddhism*⁹ integrates the five principles of Confucianism and the ten virtues and five precepts of Buddhism: Not killing is benevolence, not stealing is righteousness and profit, not engaging in immorality is propriety, not speaking falsely, not using fancy language, not using two tongues, and not using malicious language are four types of faith, and the three types of consciousness that are not greedy, not occupying, and not being foolish are wisdom. It can be seen that the ten good virtues of Buddhism are the five ethics of Confucianism. "¹⁰This is to establish the moral principles of life in Buddhism.

Interestingly, he also used multiple Confucian sages such as Yiyin¹¹, Boyi¹², Confucius¹³, Mencius¹⁴, and others as personal examples of Buddhist Bodhisattva behavior in life in order to reveal the "truth of Buddhism" that "in the entire human society, improving life behavior, rationalizing, moralizing, and constantly advancing

⁹ In December of 24th year of R.O. China, Master Taixu gave a speech on "The Morality of Buddhism in Life" at Fudan Middle School in Guangzhou. "The morality of life in Buddhism is to start from the standpoint and point of view of Buddhism, and give a brief introduction to the morality of life." (CBETA 2023.Q1, TX03, no. 2, p. a159a1-13)

¹⁰ SHI Taixu, " *Buddhist Life Morals*", P9, Zhonghua Book Company, 2011

¹¹ YI Yin (Chinese: 伊尹, born Yi Zhi (伊摯), also known as A Heng (阿衡)), was a Chinese politician who served as a minister of the early Shang dynasty, and one of the honoured officials of the era. He helped Tang of Shang, the founder of the Shang dynasty, to defeat King Jie of Xia. Oracle inscriptions of Yi have been found, evidence that his social status was high.

¹² Yi (Chinese: 益, Yi; fl. 2nd millennium BCE) was a tribal leader of Longshan culture and a culture hero in Chinese mythology who helped Shun and Yu the Great control the Great Flood; he served afterwards as a government minister and a successor as ruler of the empire. Yi is also credited with the invention of digging wells (although Shennong is also credited with this). He is the ancestor of royal family of Zhao, Qin, Xu and Liang.

¹³ Confucius (Chinese: 孔夫子; or commonly 孔子; c. 551–c. 479 BCE) was a Chinese philosopher and politician of the Spring and Autumn period who is traditionally considered the paragon of Chinese sages. Confucius's teachings and philosophy underpin East Asian culture and society, remaining influential across China and East Asia to this day.

¹⁴ Mencius (born Meng Ke (Chinese: 孟軻); or Mengzi (Chinese: 孟子; 372–289 BC) was a Chinese Confucian philosopher who has often been described as the "second Sage" ("亞聖"), that is, second to Confucius himself. He is part of Confucius' fourth generation of disciples. Mencius inherited Confucius' ideology and developed it further. Living during the Warring States period, he is said to have spent much of his life travelling around the states offering counsel to different rulers. Conversations with these rulers form the basis of the Mencius, which would later be canonised as a Confucian classic.

upward"¹⁵. It can be said that using the Confucian spirit of entering the world to reform traditional Buddhism is the essence of "life Buddhism," which uses the spirit of entering the world. In other words, Taixu regarded Confucianism as an ideological resource for modernizing and adjusting Buddhism while endowing traditional Buddhism with a human-like character.

Once again, the Buddhist ideology of Taixu Life reasonably solves the relationship between the humanization and transformation of Buddhism and adheres to the transcendental character of Buddhism. Taixu has always emphasized the integration of Buddhism and the world, but the world truth is only an advanced transition to the actual truth. Buddhism must still maintain its characteristics and play its role in guiding people's hearts and benefiting society. The purpose of his founding of the monthly magazine *Ocean Tide Sound* is to "promote the true meaning of Mahayana Buddhism and guide modern people's thinking"¹⁶. He proposed that the transition from human to Buddha, from the 'Bodhisattva position of humans' to the 'Bodhisattva position of Superman', and to the 'Bodhisattva position of Buddha', is a shortcut to the actual reality 'of humans becoming Buddha'.¹⁷ The purpose of achieving the position of Buddha and Bodhisattva is to practice Bodhisattva practices in order to enhance human morality and benefit secular people. "Practitioners of today's Bodhisattva practice should cultivate noble morality and character, be proficient in Buddhism and scientific knowledge, and participate in the work of all sectors of society".¹⁸ Anagārika and Upāsaka should all participate "so that the public in the country can benefit from Buddhism"¹⁹. "With each person's tranquil mind, one can gradually gather many good and pure causes, and over time, this turbid and evil world can transform into a solemn pure land"²⁰. The realm view is based on the pure mind and bodhisattva journey of

¹⁵ This is a speech titled "Buddhism of Life" given by Master Taixu at the Zhenjiang Welcome Conference in August of the 35th year of the Republic of China. Among them, improving the life behavior of life, rationalizing, moralizing, and making continuous progress, this is the truth of Buddhism." (CBETA 2023.Q1, TX03, no. 2, pp. a239a12-a240a1)

¹⁶ SHI Taixu, "The Manifesto of Haichaoyin Monthly Appearing in the World", included in "Taixu Quanshu·Nineteenth Edition Collection" Volume 145, CBETA 2023.Q1, TX31, no. 19, pp. 1040a1-1041a2

¹⁷ SHI Taixu, "Issue 1 of 'Ocean Tide Sound', p3

¹⁸ SHI Taixu, "From Pali Buddhism to Today's Bodhisattva's Walks", included in "Taixu Quanshu·Tenth Series Learning Practice" Volume 3, CBETA 2023.Q1, TX18, no. 10, p. a030a9-10

¹⁹ SHI Taixu, "From Pali Buddhism to Today's Bodhisattva's Walks", CBETA 2023.Q1, TX18, no. 10, p. a030a9-10

²⁰ SHI Taixu: "On the Construction of a Pure Land on Earth", originally published in "Haichaoyin",

enjoying Buddha's journey. Practicing the Bodhisattva line of Mahayana Buddhism is necessary to create a pure land on earth. He advocates "eliminating personal laziness and serving the public"²¹. The key to Taixu's Buddhist practice of life is to get rid of selfish and lazy people and serve the public, which is quite similar to the view of duty of the Christian Protestant work ethic. Therefore, in these eight characters, one of the others becomes a human being, while those far away, from shallow to deep, from coarse to fine, from clear to transparent, are all born out of these eight characters. Those who practice here must follow this righteousness to benefit from what they have learned! "²² According to these eight characters, one can practice from shallow to deep, and from near, one can achieve one's personality, while from far, one can achieve one's monastic character. Although Taixu criticized the absurdity of Christian Theism, he strongly advocated that Chinese monks promote Buddhism according to their dissemination methods, and the spirit of Protestant work ethic to benefit society was also recognized. This also reflects that the Secularization of religion is a worldwide process.

"Looking up to the Buddha, the completion lies in the personality, and the completion of a person is the completion of a Buddha, which is called true reality."²³ The ultimate goal of Taixu is to uphold the only Buddha and fulfill his personality; becoming a Buddha is to become an actual reality. Taixu's philosophy of life, Buddhism and the Pure Land of the World, which is constructed by improving life, increasing victories in future generations, freeing oneself from life and death, and achieving enlightenment in the Dharma realm, is based on the multiplication of human beings, advocating for the improvement of personality and life, and deepening the practice of serving all sentient beings through the "Bodhisattva practice of today"²⁴ in society. Although there is a certain degree of idealism and illusionism, it aims to achieve the

Volume 1, Volume 1, included in "Taixu Quanshu Fourteenth Edition Zhilun" Volume 5, CBETA 2023.Q1, TX24, no. 14, p. a349a1

²¹ SHI Taixu, "*Abstain from privateness, quit laziness and serve the public*", lectured at the Sino-Tibetan Academy of Teaching and Science in June 31st of the Republic of China, included in Volume 15 of "Taixu Quanshu Tenth Edition Xuexing", CBETA 2023.Q1, TX18, no. 10, p. a113a1-2

²² SHI Taixu, "*Abstain from privateness, quit laziness and serve the public*", CBETA 2023.Q1, TX18, no. 10, p. a113a1-2

²³ SHI Taixu, "*On the True Reality of Man Becomes a Buddha*", written in Chongqing in February 27th of the Republic of China, included in Volume 7 of "Taixu Quanshu Fourteenth Part of Zhilun": "After falling into the world year after year, suddenly At the age of forty-eight, all sufferings will boil, save Huai Mingda all over, look up to the Buddha, the end lies in the personality, and the person will become the Buddha, which is called true reality." CBETA 2023.Q1, TX24, no. 14, p. a457a1-4.

²⁴ SHI Taixu, "*From Pali Buddhism to Today's Bodhisattva's Walks*", CBETA 2023, no. 10, p. a030a9-10.

Pure Land of the World. However, on the one hand, Buddhism is required to enter the world to serve modern society and life actively.

On the other hand, we need to rely on Buddhism to transform the human world. It not only benefited the world but also promoted the development of Buddhism. Creating a realm view of pure land on earth, guiding people's gaze back to real life, thereby inspiring people to save the present world and actively participate in the construction and transformation of the present society and life. It points out the direction for the future development of Buddhism and has important guiding significance.

2.2 Concept of Humanistic Buddhism

"Humanistic Buddhism" was proposed by Master Shih Yin-shun. He also proposed a premise: during the Republic of China period, Master Taixu proposed "Life Buddhism". Master Shih Yin-shun proposed the idea of "Humanistic Buddhism" based on Master Taixu's "life Buddhism". These two are in one continuous line. So now we usually mention "Humanistic Buddhism" from Master Taixu.

Shih Yin-shun believes that "worshipping only the Buddha, completing in personality, and becoming a person is becoming a Buddha, which is the true reality of the name" is the original intention of Buddhism in Taixu's life. The focus of Taixu's "true reality theory"²⁵ lies in the issue of life. Shih Yin-shun believes that life Buddhism and Humanistic Buddhism are roughly similar in the aspect of "manifesting righteousness" but are different in the aspect of "opposite governance". In the Introduction to Humanistic Buddhism, he said:

The position of a person in the Five Senses is precisely in the middle. Above a person in heaven. Below are hell, hungry ghosts, and beasts, which can be said to be next to the human world but can also be connected to the upper and lower levels. Buddhism is a religion, and the Five Senses say that if one cannot attach importance to the human world, then if one values the side of ghosts and beasts, it will become more critical than ghosts and death, similar to ghost religion; if one envies the deity (immortal,

²⁵ SHI Taixu, "True Reality Theory", Renmin University of China Press, 2004-09. Master Taixu's theoretical demonstration to reveal Buddhism as a religion facing reality is an important work for constructing the theoretical basis of his "Buddhism of Life".

ghost) that day On the one hand, even if practicing Buddhism, it will become a focus on God and eternal life (longevity, longevity), close to theology. God and ghosts can be separated but not separated; they will become divine and ghost, deified and witched Buddhism. This is China's preference for being a ghost and India's later Buddhism, a mixture of gods and deities. For example, India's later Buddhism abandoned Buddhism's true meaning and focused on heaven instead of human beings (initially more focused on Brahma with a monotheistic tendency, later more focused on Emperor Shitian with a pantheistic tendency), resulting in significant changes in Buddhism. So the word 'human' is specifically mentioned to treat him... True Buddhism is human, and only human Buddhism can demonstrate the true meaning of Buddhism. So, we should inherit the true meaning of 'life Buddhism' and promote Buddhism worldwide.²⁶

As for the content and theoretical basis of Humanistic Buddhism, Shih Yin-shun believes that Humanistic Buddhism has the nature of a "logical opportunity". Those who learn from Bodhisattva and follow the path of Buddhism need not flaunt magic but start from a practical and stable place.²⁷

Shih Yin-shun believes that Humanistic Buddhism has three fundamental theoretical bases in terms of "agreement": one is "the unity of law and law".²⁸ The principles and precepts of Buddhism should be unified. The second is the unity of origin and emptiness.²⁹ The starting point of this unity is the origin, the sentient beings who originate from it, especially from the humanistic standpoint. If it is said that everything originates from cosmology, it is easy to deviate from the Buddha Dharma based on sentient beings. If we talk about all sentient beings in general, we cannot grasp the essence of Buddha coming out of the world and becoming Buddha. The third is the unity of self-interest and altruism.³⁰ Mahayana has always maintained that Bodhisattva's self-interest comes mainly from altruism, and everything corresponds to altruism. So, anything beneficial to all sentient beings without considering oneself and with altruistic compassion is the practice of Bodhisattva's actions and the pursuit of Buddha's fruit.

²⁶ SHIH Yin-shun, *Wonderful Gathering, Buddha on Earth, Introduction to Humanistic Buddhism*, p25, Zhengwen Press, 2016.

²⁷ SHIH Yin-shun, "Outline of Humanistic Buddhism", CBETA 2023.Q1, Y14, no.14, p.104a5-6.

²⁸ SHIH Yin-shun, "Outline of Humanistic Buddhism", CBETA 2023.Q1, Y14, no.14, p.104a5-6

²⁹ SHIH Yin-shun, "Outline of Humanistic Buddhism", CBETA 2023.Q1, Y14, no.14, p.104a5-6

³⁰ SHIH Yin-shun, "Outline of Humanistic Buddhism", CBETA 2023.Q1, Y14, no.14, p.104a5-6

In terms of "opportunities", Shih Yin-shun combines the characteristics of modern Chinese people and stands at the height of the times, summarizing the following three points: first, the "youth era"³¹. He believes that in the current era, young people have gradually evolved into the leadership center of society. Therefore, the current promotion of Humanistic Buddhism should focus on youth. Only when young people are focused on learning is the factor in promoting true Mahayana. The second is the "era of life"³². Unlike the traditional Chinese Buddhist image of becoming a monk and being born, Master Shih Yin-shun believes that "living in the world" is a significant trend in modern society, which is in line with the characteristic of Mahayana Bodhisattva's "living in the world with the spirit of being born". Modern society is open, and Buddhism was originally in the human world. As long as there is a place for people to live, they should engage in various beneficial undertakings and spread the Mahayana Dharma. The third is the "collective era"³³. Buddhism originally valued group life, and modern society also tends towards it. According to the instructions of Buddha's law, one must live in a group to truly benefit oneself and others. "In such a group life, we should 'know the past and change it'. Everyone should make progress, live together with joy, and develop the mind, purity, and solemn character of the past. Purify ourselves, improve Buddhism, and carry forward the dharma, and everything will come true from this." ³⁴Therefore, Shih Yin-shun loudly declared, "We are human beings; what we need is human Buddhism. We should choose Buddhism based on this so that Buddhism can restore its original brightness in the world." ³⁵

Although Taixu's Buddhist innovation idea failed to succeed due to the resistance of some people inside and outside the religion at that time, and the idea of Indo-Shun Humanistic Buddhism was also hit in Taiwan in the 1950s, this trend of thought after all, represents the hope of Chinese Buddhism to adapt to the development of modern society. Therefore, since the 1960s, humanistic Buddhism has been gradually implemented in Chinese Buddhism and has made remarkable achievements. In Taiwan

³¹ SHIH Yin-shun, "Outline of Humanistic Buddhism", CBETA 2023.Q1, Y14, no.14, p.104a5-6

³² SHIH Yin-shun, "Outline of Humanistic Buddhism", CBETA 2023.Q1, Y14, no.14, p.104a5-6.

³³ SHIH Yin-shun, "Outline of Humanistic Buddhism", CBETA 2023.Q1, Y14, no.14, p.104a5-6.

³⁴ SHIH Yin-shun, "Miao Yun Gather, Buddha in the World, Humanistic Buddhism Essentials", p.99, Zhengwen Publishing House, 2016

³⁵ SHIH Yin-shun, "Miao Yun Gather, Pure Land and Zen: A New Discussion on Pure Land", p.1, Zhengwen Publishing House, 2016

and overseas Chinese communities, implementing Humanistic Buddhism saved traditional Buddhism's decline. It significantly promoted the development of Buddhism through the three pillars of culture, education, and charity. Under the guidance of Humanistic Buddhism, Buddhism in Taiwan's Buddhist community has established a series of prestigious Buddhist groups. On the mainland, Zhao Puchu, a hermit, raised the idea of Humanistic Buddhism to the height of "where Chinese Buddhism is going in today's era" in his report "Thirty Years of Buddhist Association of China" in 1983³⁶. After more than 20 years of rapid development, the mainland Buddhist community has also achieved remarkable achievements under the guidance of this ideology.

2.3 Overview

Humanistic Buddhism, as its name implies, is to realize the pure land of Buddhism in the world, that is, to realize the Sukhavati of Buddhism in the real world. This is the fundamental idea of "Humanistic Buddhism". This idea of contemporary Buddhism is a guide to all Buddhist activities. "Humanistic Buddhism" has become a solid ideological trend in the development of Buddhism in the modern world. "Humanistic Buddhism" has been advocated and promoted by China and the Buddhist circles in India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and even the whole world, and has become a worldwide trend in the development of Buddhism.

As far as China is concerned, "Humanistic Buddhism" has been strongly advocated in both the mainland and Taiwan. As early as the 1920s and 1930s, the Buddhist master Taixu proposed that Buddhism should adapt to the requirements of the times, "follow the times to promote the enlightenment function of Buddhism"³⁷, and put forward slogans such as "to serve society and seek benefits for society"³⁸ and

³⁶ ZHAO Puchu, "Thirty Years of the Buddhist Association of China", reported at the second meeting of the fourth council of the Buddhist Association of China, December 5, 1983.

³⁷ SHI Taixu, "New and Rong Guan", delivered at the Research Department of the World Buddhist Academy in August of the 26th year of the Republic of China, Included in Volume 22 of the "Complete Book of Taixu, Volume 1: General Study of Buddhism": "Based on the eternal truth of Buddhism, to adapt to the ideological and cultural characteristics of the times, to wash away the colors that do not conform to the times, and to promote the educational function of Buddhism with the times. This is called the World Understanding Tan in the Four Understanding Tan, which is the active Buddha Dharma in human society or the world of sentient beings, and everyone is happy to follow it." (CBETA 2023. Q1, TX01, no. 1, p. 450a3-5)

³⁸ SHI Taixu, "Learning Buddhism starts from being a person" was taught at the Buddhist Society of Siming County in February of 22nd year of R.O. China, included in Volume 12 of the "Complete Book

"Buddha is a realist"³⁹, and regarded "reality" as the idea of "the universe of life"⁴⁰. It can be seen that although Master Taixu did not explicitly put forward the concept of "Humanistic Buddhism", he already contains some essential ideas of "Humanistic Buddhism". In the 1980s, the Buddhist community in Mainland China put forward the idea of "Humanistic Buddhism". In 1983, Chairman Zhao Puchu systematically exposed "Humanistic Buddhism" at the 30th anniversary commemoration meeting of the Buddhist Association of China. He believes that the idea of "Humanistic Buddhism" is to realize the ideal of pure land on earth and to carry forward the spirit of Mahayana Buddhism, which is happy and affectionate. It calls on the vast number of Buddhist believers to sacrifice themselves for others and strive to do a good job serving society and benefiting all sentient beings to achieve this great goal. Therefore, it points out the direction of their efforts to develop Buddhism in mainland China.⁴¹

Like other religions and even philosophical ideas, Buddhism arises with the needs of a particular society and era and changes with the changes of a particular social era. Historically, Buddhism originated from the needs of ancient Indian society and was formed in the struggle against the caste inequality system maintained by Brahmanism. Afterward, it developed with the development of Indian society. After Buddhism was introduced to China, it merged with traditional Chinese culture (mainly Confucianism and Taoism), forming a sinicized Buddhism that met the needs of ancient Chinese society, thus enabling unprecedented development of Buddhism on Chinese soil. As for why the thought of "Humanistic Buddhism" flourishes today, it is also the same as the emergence and development of Buddhism in history, which was the need of the time. It must be found in the current era and the needs of the current society. This requires us first to understand the characteristics of the current era and society and reveal the root causes of today's society.

How should people deal with the pain and troubles of various realities in modern society and the destruction of themselves by humans? Is it passively ignoring and letting go? Or actively take the necessary measures to solve it? This issue has been thoughtfully presented to every one of us and every compassionate Buddhist. The idea

of Taixu: Part 2: Five Elements of Learning Together" (CBETA 2023. Q1, TX03, no. 2, p. a172a1-2)

³⁹ SHI Taixu, "The Historical View of Freedom", CBETA 2023, no.14, p. a247a1-2.

⁴⁰ SHI Taixu, "The Historical View of Freedom", CBETA 2023, no.14, p. a283a5.

⁴¹ ZHAO Puchu, "Thirty Years of the Buddhist Association of China".

of "Humanistic Buddhism" came into being in this era. Saving society and humanity has become a topic of the times. In the past, people regarded Buddhism as a religion seeking the afterlife, solving the problem of ascending to heaven after death. In today's reality, such a religion no longer meets the requirements of saving society and humanity. In order to help people get rid of the pain and troubles of reality and to save society and human survival, The idea of "Humanistic Buddhism" came into being with the needs of the times. "Human Buddhism salvation" is to help people solve the pain and trouble of today's social reality and strive to realize the Megali Idea of the Buddhist Pure Land in the world. It can be seen that "Humanistic Buddhism" is the product of the current era, which is adapted to the needs of the current era. Its emergence has profound social and era roots.



CHAPTER III

CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS OF HUMANISTIC BUDDHISM IN CHINA

3.1 Taixu's Followers

Master Fafang (1904-1951) was one of the first students of Wuchang Buddhist Academy and was deeply influenced by Master Taixu. Like Master Taixu, Fafang actively promoted the reform of Buddhism and advocated that Buddhism should be a religion of accession. Master Fafang believes that Buddhism's purpose is to purify the minds and consciousness of all sentient beings, but this does not mean that Buddhism only focuses on individual liberation. Individuals, sentient beings, and even the entire society are interrelated. Therefore, true liberation must be the purity of society. In this sense, Fafang highly emphasizes the "sociality" of Buddhism. He believes all religions are social religions, and Buddhism is no exception.¹ The self-liberation of Mahayana is only an "illusory city"², and the doctrine of returning from small to large in the Buddhist scriptures is actually "leading it into the socialist ideology of Mahayana. The meaning of the Three Zangs and Twelve Branches is entirely to guide how to relieve sentient beings and various methods of relieving sentient beings."³

Master Shih Yin-shun (1906-2005), in the 1930s and 1940s, "Humanistic Buddhism" significantly impacted the Buddhist community and society. Fafang discussed Humanistic Buddhism in Siam and wrote articles such as *Building Humanistic Buddhism according to Sacred Words*. Master Shih Yin-shun first summarized and sorted out Master Taixu's humanistic Buddhist thoughts and compiled *the Complete Book of Master Taixu*. Later, he further consolidated the ideological foundation of Humanistic Buddhism in theory. On the one hand, he enriched the

¹ SHI Weishan, "The Descendant of Master Taixu's Clothes and Bowls - A Record of Contemporary Eminent Monk Fafang Master", *The Voice of Dharma*, 2012 (01), pp.40-44.

² Huacheng is a temporary illusion of the city walls. Buddhism is used as a metaphor for the realm of Mahayana. Buddha wants all sentient beings to receive the Mahayana Buddha fruit. However, fearing that others may encounter difficulties, let's first say that Mahayana Nirvana is like transforming into a city, where all sentient beings temporarily stop halfway and seek the true Buddha's fruit. See the "Lotus Sutra·Chapter 7: A Past Buddha and the Illusory City".

³ SHI Fafang, "Buddhist Views on Life", Volume 62 of the Modern Buddhist Academic Series, pages 43-54, Mahayana Culture Press, October 1980.

theoretical construction of Humanistic Buddhism initiated by Master Taixu. On the other hand, he made some amendments based on historical data and classics, making it more consistent with the spirit of Dharmamudrā of Buddhism since India. Master Shih Yin-shun mentioned in *the Outline of Humanistic Buddhism*:

First, the "core of the topic" of Humanistic Buddhism is "people, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas -- from people to cultivate Bodhisattva's line, from the perfection of Bodhisattva's line to become Buddhas"⁴ Secondly, the "theoretical principle" of Humanistic Buddhism is "the unity of law and law";⁵ Finally, the "trend of the times" of Humanistic Buddhism is young people, which is not that the old cannot learn from Bodhisattva, but that the conversion of young people should be valued in the current era.⁶ This is what Master Shih Yin-shun said about the timing of the agreement based on Humanistic Buddhism.

Master Juzan (1908~1984) in the mainland China. After the founding of the P.R.China, Master Juzan, Zhao Puchu, Master Zhengguo, Master Mingshan, Master Weixian, and Master Jinghui inherited the Humanistic Buddhist thought of Master Taixu and put forward new ideas one after another at the right time. In 1947, before the passing of Master Taixu, he presented his book *Life Buddhism* to Zhao Puchu (1907-2000) at the Jade Buddha Temple in Shanghai, expressing his trust and expectations for Zhao. In 1981, with the official implementation of the Party's religious policy, Zhao wrote *the Answer to Buddhist Knowledge*⁷, the last part of the fifth chapter of which was *To Carry Forward The Superiority of Humanistic Buddhism*, which opened the official advocacy of Mainland Buddhism for "Humanistic Buddhism" after the "Cultural Revolution".⁸ In 1983, Zhao Puchu made a report titled *Thirty Years of the Buddhist Association of China* at the second meeting of the fourth council of the Buddhist Association of China, summarized the work of the Buddhist Association of

⁴ SHIH Yin-shun, "The Moment of the Doctrine: Human Buddhism", included in Volume 1 of "Hua Yu Ji (IV)", CBETA 2023. Q1, Y28, no. 28, p. 1a1

⁵ SHIH Yin-shun, "Outline of Humanistic Buddhism", CBETA 2023, no. 14, p. 104a5-6

⁶ SHIH Yin-shun, "Outline of Humanistic Buddhism", CBETA 2023, no. 14, p. 104a5-6

⁷ ZHAO Puchu: "Answers to Buddhist Common Sense", Shanghai Dictionary Publishing House, April 2009. The "Buddhist Common Sense Answers" is the most popular reading book for learning Buddhist knowledge and an introductory book for understanding Buddhist culture. The book provides detailed descriptions of the origin, basic content, and attitude of Buddhism, using the form of answering questions to vividly express the profound Buddhist principles.

⁸ ZHENG Cheng: *Zhao Puchu and China's Humanistic Buddhism*, Source of Dharma, Vol. 26 (2008).

China in the past three decades, put forward the idea of advocating Humanistic Buddhism, and based on this, put forward guidelines for carrying forward the three fine traditions of Chinese Buddhism, namely, focusing on agriculture and Zen, academic research, and international exchanges, and placed the promotion of "Humanistic Buddhism" in the guiding position of the development of Buddhism in China as a whole. From this, the thought of "Humanistic Buddhism" has been thoroughly implemented in all aspects of the actual social life of Chinese Buddhism.⁹

Dharma Master Zhengguo (1913-1987),¹⁰ a great master of Taixu, received a strict Buddhist education in his early years. In his later years, Dharma Master Zhengguo and Zhao Puchu advocated humanistic Buddhism, particularly impacting the spread of humanistic Buddhism on the contemporary mainland. He wrote some articles about Humanistic Buddhism, such as Humanistic Buddhism Message, published in *Voice of Dharma*¹¹ magazine, pointing out that "human" is the most valuable, and the human body is rare. Among the three worlds, only humans can most easily become Buddhas.

Master Mingshan (1914-2001)¹² was the first graduate of the Jiaoshan

⁹ ZHAO Puchu, "Thirty Years of the Buddhist Association of China".

¹⁰ Master Zhengguo (1913-1987) was born in Zigong City, Sichuan Province, with a common surname of Zhang. He once shaved in Guangqu Monk, Shouning Temple, Zhongjiang County, and was ordained by Chengdu Wenshu Academy at the age of 21. He studied at the Tiantai Teaching Institute of Huayan Temple in Chongqing and the Hanzang Teaching Institute of Beibei in Chongqing. He studied Buddhism from Taixu for six years at the Hanzang Teaching Institute. After graduation, I stayed on campus to teach. In 1954, he was appointed as the director of the research department of the San Shi Society. At the invitation of the Chinese Buddhist Academy, I am also teaching Buddhism. Master Zhengguo is a "learned monk". He has been engaged in the education of cultivating monks all his life. He once served as the first vice president of the Buddhist Association of China, the president of the Beijing Buddhist Association, the vice president of the China Buddhist Academy, and the abbot of the Guangji Temple in Beijing. His works include "Basic Knowledge of Buddhism", "General Principles of Zen", and so on.

¹¹ The Buddhist magazine sponsored by the Buddhist Association of China mainly focuses on the publication of Buddhist academic works and also takes into account Buddhist news reports.

¹² Master Mingshan (1914-2001), was born in Yancheng, Jiangsu. At the age of 19, he was ordained as a monk at the Arhat Academy in Yancheng. At the age of 20, he went to Dinghui Temple in Jiaoshan, Zhenjiang to receive full precepts. In 1933, he was admitted to the Buddhist Academy. Master Mingshan once handled the affairs of Buddhist associations in Nanyue, Hengyang and other places in Hunan, founded Buddhist seminaries, and served as the abbot of temples in Hengyang, Laiyang, and Ningxiang. After the victory of the Anti-Japanese War, he returned to Dinghui Temple to serve as the supervisor and the director of teaching affairs of the Buddhist Academy. In 1947, he attended the Congress of the Buddhist Association of China and was elected as a director of the Buddhist Association of China. After the founding of New China, he successively served as abbot of Dinghui Temple and Qixia Temple, executive director and vice president of the Chinese Buddhist Association. Master Mingshan has profound Buddhist attainments, excels in poetry and calligraphy, and is the author of the "Mingshan Collection of Works"; In addition, there are also Handout of

Buddhist Academy. Later, he was admitted to the advanced research class of Wuchang World Buddhist Academy with Master Taixu as the dean. Thanks to the edification and recommendation of the master, he was an active advocate, successor, and promoter of the "Humanistic Buddhism" thought advocated by Master Taixu.

Master Weixian (1920-2013)¹³ had been close to Master Taixu for ten years since he was admitted to the Han Tibetan Academy at 16. Master Taixu, with his wisdom and compassionate wishes, is like a lamp of the turbid world. The Buddhist philosophy of life he advocated has become the direction and roadmap for the development of modern and future Buddhism, and he can be said to be the first person to initiate the modernization of Buddhism. Master Weixian studied at the Han Tibetan Academy for five years and was able to approach Master Taixu directly, personally following his teachings. After graduating from the Han Tibetan Academy of Education, the author followed Master Cedar to Dajue Temple in Kaixian County to engage in Dharma education. However, correspondence with Master Taixu is maintained. "May I ask about Fayi?" Whenever he had the opportunity to visit Chongqing, he would personally pay respects to Master Taixu, who also received this student who was highly valued in his heart with concern, encouraging him to firmly believe and promote the Dharma for the benefit of life. During the ten years that Master Weixian had been close to Master Taixu, he deeply understood the essence of Master Taixu's life in Buddhism. Therefore, Master Weixian took it as his duty to carry forward and practice Master Taixu's Humanistic Buddhist thought throughout his life.

Therefore, "Humanistic Buddhism", advocated by Master Taixu, is the leading ideology unanimously recognized by the world's Chinese Buddhism community, the basic model of modern Buddhism, and the collective wisdom crystallization of the century-old Chinese Buddhist community. Today, when we

Buddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra on Wishes of Samantabhadra and Handout of Maitreya Shangsheng Sutra.

¹³ Master Weixian, born in Pengxi, Sichuan Province. He entered the Hanzang Buddhist Academy at the age of 14 and was highly regarded by Master Taixu, with profound Buddhist attainments. He was the chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Buddhist Association of China, the chairman of the Chongqing Buddhist Association, the president of the Chongqing Buddhist Academy, and the abbot of the Ciyun Temple in Chongqing. Master Weixian, with his rich knowledge, broad compassion, extraordinary wisdom, and comprehensive Buddhist thoughts, is revered as the "leading figure in today's Weixian Buddhism" by the Buddhist community. He has authored works such as "Essential Principles of Huayan", "Essential Principles of Fahua", "Great Righteousness of Shurangama", and "Essential Lectures on the Practice of Wishing for the Wisdom of the General People".

discuss "Humanistic Buddhism", we should not forget the contribution initiated by Master Taixu but also deeply recognize the contribution that younger generations can inherit and carry forward.

3.2 Zhao Puchu in Mainland China

Since Zhao Puchu devoted himself to the Buddhist cause in the late 1920s, he has had many opportunities to meet famous figures in the Buddhist community, especially after serving in the Chinese Buddhist Association, chaired by Master Yuan Ying (1878-1953), his contact with the national Buddhist monks and great virtues has become more frequent. At that time, many eminent monks and great virtues in the Chinese Buddhist circle did not explicitly flaunt "Buddhism in life" or "Humanistic Buddhism", but from the perspective of speech and behavioral practice, they also advocated Buddhism in life or Humanistic Buddhism in essence. In the 1930s, Zhao Puchu met Master Taixu, and they had a deep relationship. Zhao Puchu admired Taixu very much, and Taixu also held him in high esteem, which can be seen from Zhao Puchu's elegy poems for Master Taixu. The elegy wrote, "What did I do ten days ago? "Could you give me a new edition of my will? It is clear that I have only realized it now, and the first opportunity is to talk about the beginning reference vaguely." The wind and rain in the Divine Land have sunk thousands of times, and the world's glory has covered a niche. The group of people in the firehouse should not give up and come again to see the Rain You Tan." ¹⁴At the end of the poem, a supplementary note to the sentence "The first opportunity is to talk about the beginning reference "states vaguely:

"Ten days before Master (Taixu) passed away, he called the author over the phone to meet at the Jade Buddha Temple. It was a delight if nothing had happened, and presented my book "Life Buddhism" as a gift. I urged myself to work hard to protect the Dharma in the future, but eventually, I would say goodbye forever. Upon hearing someone say, the teacher informed me a few days ago that he would head to Wuxi and Changzhou. The initial unknown implies impermanence. 1947." ¹⁵

The founding of China in 1949 finally ended China's old internal and

¹⁴ ZHAO Puchu, "Collected Works of Zhao Puchu", p.7-8, Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 2003, Shanghai

¹⁵ ZHAO Puchu, "Collected Works of Zhao Puchu", p.7-8

external troubles, turbulence, and chaos and started the Chinese nation's independent modernization drive. Zhao Puchu, a group of Buddhist scholars with lofty ideals and benevolence, inherited the unfinished business of Master Taixu, adapted to the current situation, and put forward the slogan of eliminating the disadvantages of traditional Buddhism and carrying out Buddhist reform under the new political, economic and cultural environment. He, together with Juzan, Chen Mingshu, Geshe Sherab Gyatso, Zhou Shujia, and other great virtues, actively promoted the modern transformation of the mainland Buddhism opportunity. 1953, the Buddhist Association of China, a national Buddhist and educational administration organization, was founded. Master Yuanying was elected president, and Zhao Puchu was elected vice president and secretary-general. They were forced to stop their activities until the "Cultural Revolution". During this period, Zhao Puchu, who presided over the work of the Buddhist Association of China, and his colleagues vigorously publicized the true spirit of Buddhism, called on broad Buddhists to go deep into the world, actively participate in the cause of socialist construction, and strive to make Buddhism teaching in Mainland China a human development direction that serves the public, benefits the society, and adapts to the times.

In December 1980, Zhao Puchu delivered a work report to the Fourth National Congress of the Buddhist Association of China, calling on "everyone to follow the teachings of the Buddha, inherit the aspirations of the great virtues of previous dynasties, carry forward the fine traditions of Chinese Buddhism, repay the country's local kindness, repay the kindness of all living beings, and establish a pure land on earth."¹⁶ From 1981 to 1983, Zhao Puchu published his book *Answering Questions about Buddhist Common Sense* for 11 consecutive issues in *The Voice of Dharma* of the Buddhist Association of China. The book's last section is *Promoting the Advantages of Humanistic Buddhism*, which ingeniously inherited the Humanistic Buddhism thought of Master Taixu at the right time. Since then, the curtain of Humanistic Buddhism advocacy and promotion in the new era of Mainland China has officially opened. In December 1983, Zhao Puchu delivered an essential report on the *Thirty Years of the Buddhist Association of China* at the second meeting of the Fourth Council of the

¹⁶ ZHAO Puchu, "Collected Works of Zhao Puchu", p.452

Buddhist Association of China. In the form of a document, he emphasized the promotion of Humanistic Buddhism as the long-term guiding ideology for the development of Chinese Buddhism, and together with it, he proposed to carry forward the three fine traditions of equal emphasis on Chinese Buddhism, agricultural Buddhism, academic research and international friendly exchanges, It has promoted the popularization and practice of Humanistic Buddhism in Mainland China.

In March 1987, under the impetus of Zhao Puchu, the Fifth National Congress of the China Buddhist Association (CBA) decided to include "advocating the positive and progressive ideology of Humanistic Buddhism and carrying forward the fine traditions of Buddhism" in the constitution of the CBA as one of the essential elements of the purposes. In September 2002, shortly after Zhao Puchu's death, the Seventh Delegates' Conference of the China Buddhist Association included "advocating the ideology of Humanistic Buddhism" in the "General Principles". The newly elected president, Venerable Mr. Yicheng, made a report on "Inheriting the last wish of President Zhao Puchu and making concerted efforts to create a new situation for the cause of Buddhism in China," calling on the Buddhist community throughout the country to carry on Zhao Puchu's idea of Humanistic Buddhism.¹⁷

Article 3 of the Constitution of the China Buddhist Association - General Provisions, which was revamped by the Ninth National Congress of the China Buddhist Association in April 2015, stipulates: "The purposes of the Association are: to unite and lead Buddhists of all nationalities throughout the country in love of the country and the religion to carry forward the fine traditions, to pass on the excellent culture, to strengthen self-construction Safeguard legitimate rights and interests, promote Buddhist teachings, organize Buddhist undertakings, and practice the ideology of 'Humanistic Buddhism'"¹⁸ This is not only the purpose of the China Buddhist Association but also a purpose that should be understood and observed by Buddhist organizations, monasteries, and believers everywhere. The widespread dissemination and practice of "Humanistic Buddhism" has also become the most significant legacy left by Zhao Puchu.

¹⁷ Buddhist Association of China, Collection of Documents of the 50th National Congress of the Buddhist Association of China, 534 pages, Jinling Sutra Carving Office, Nanjing, 2005.

¹⁸ Official website of the China Buddhist Association (CBA) - Constitution of the China Buddhist Association, <https://www.chinabuddhism.com.cn/js/zc/2015-07-14/9173.html>

Zhao Puchu's most significant contribution is placing the concept of "Humanistic Buddhism" in the guiding position of Chinese Buddhism, emphasizing the universal significance of "Humanistic Buddhism", and actively practicing the restoration and promotion of mainland Buddhism. This is mainly reflected in the concept of "Humanistic Buddhism" as the guiding principle for the development of Chinese Buddhism, which is of great significance for the creative transformation of the Chinese Buddhist tradition. Secondly, under the guidance of this policy, the Buddhist Association of China has not only done some work in cultivating monks and talents who inherit and carry forward the concept of "Humanistic Buddhism", but "opened up a new situation in the cause of Buddhist education"¹⁹, but also established and published several Buddhist books and periodicals to promote the concept of "Humanistic Buddhism", making substantive progress in the publicity and popularization of the concept of "Humanistic Buddhism". Thirdly, under the guidance of this policy, "actively supporting social welfare and public welfare undertakings and relief work"²⁰ has made significant achievements in rewarding and caring for society, which the government has fully recognized.

In order to answer the question of "how can Buddhism be combined with people's actual life and be beneficial to the construction of social morality and spiritual civilization",²¹ Zhao Puchu set up a special section in the fifth chapter of *Answers to Buddhist Common Sense*, with the title of *Carry forwards the superiority of Humanistic Buddhism*. He pointed out in this section that Buddhism has different sects, and each sect has teachings that guide the world. In the Five Elements of Buddhism, human and heavenly elements are the worldly teachings. "The world law is something people can and should learn from the world".²² It is precisely because of the existence of the world law that predecessors have called Chinese Buddhism "Humanistic Buddhism". The

¹⁹ On September 20, 2003, at the seventh national representative meeting of the Buddhist Association of China, Elder Yicheng wrote a report on inheriting the wishes of President Zhao Puchu and working together to create a new situation in China's Buddhist cause.

²⁰ In 1993, the Buddhist Association of China held the sixth national congress and the congress to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Buddhist Association of China. The congress report proposed this slogan. Included in the compilation and publication of "Forty Years of Chinese Buddhism" in the same year.

²¹ ZHAO Puchu, "Collected Works of Zhao Puchu", Volume 1, p. 673, Chinese Language Publishing House, Beijing, 2007.

²² ZHAO Puchu, "Collected Works of Zhao Puchu", Volume 1, p. 673.

main content of worldly law is the Five Precepts and Ten Virtues, "If everyone acts according to the five precepts and ten virtues, then the people will be peaceful and happy, the society will be stable and united, and the country will be prosperous and prosperous so that there will be a peaceful and happy world, a world with a high degree of spiritual civilization. This is the goal of Humanistic Buddhism."²³ To become a Buddha, one must be good, kind, and upright. To be a good person, learn to become a Buddha. Learning Buddhism is learning Bodhisattva's actions, seeking the Buddha's teachings from above, and transforming all sentient beings from below. Zhao Puchu believes that Chinese Buddhism has an essential position in the history of human cultural development and civilization progress. As long as Chinese Buddhists continue to make efforts to achieve the goal of Humanistic Buddhism, train talent for lantern passing, manage the monastery group, and carry out academic research and international exchanges, then Chinese Buddhism will inevitably develop with the construction of the motherland. This great cause will contribute to the country's dignity, the passion for profit and happiness, and humanity's peace, progress, and happiness worldwide.²⁴

This shows that after Zhao Puchu pointed out in the Thirty Years of the Buddhist Association of China that the cause of socialist modernization is "a noble cause of solemn territory, happiness, and emotion",²⁵ he further pointed out in the Answers to Buddhist Common Sense that modern Chinese Buddhism should be a Buddhism of "solemn territory, happiness, and emotion", and should be a Buddhism that hopes for and is committed to seeking national prosperity and people's happiness and well-being. This can be said to be the core concept of Humanistic Buddhism proposed by Zhao Puchu. Zhao Puchu's Humanistic Buddhism thought is rich in content and profound in meaning, but as far as its core concept is concerned, it is a "solemn land, happy and affectionate".

3.3 Spread of Humanistic Buddhism in Mainland China

The practice has proved that Chinese Buddhism's advocacy and practice of

²³ ZHAO Puchu, "Chapter 5 of Answers to Buddhist Common Sense", p148, Donglin Temple

²⁴ ZHAO Puchu, "Collected Works of Zhao Puchu", Volume 1, p. 673.

²⁵ ZHAO Puchu, "Chapter 5 of Answers to Buddhist Common Sense", p148.

the idea of Humanistic Buddhism has vigorously promoted Buddhism's compatibility with socialist society and is conducive to Buddhism's adapting to the requirements of the times and the people to strengthen its construction and promote self-improvement and development. Although the idea of "Humanistic Buddhism" was first advocated by Master Taixu in modern times, contemporary Chinese Buddhists advocate the idea of Humanistic Buddhism with a new content of the times and society.

During the gradual recovery of Chinese Buddhism after the Cultural Revolution, Humanistic Buddhism was adopted as the core concept for the renewal of Buddhism to adapt to the times. During this period, there were many elders and Venerable Masters who carried out different explorations in the practice of Humanistic Buddhism. Among them were venerable Buddhist masters such as Venerable Ben Huan, new-generation Buddhist leaders such as Venerable Ming Hai, and stalwarts such as Venerable Jie Long, who promoted Buddhism on one side of the world. They represent the depth of humanistic Buddhism at all levels of Chinese Buddhism.

3.3.1 Venerable Master Benhuan, Giant of Humanistic Buddhism

Humanistic Buddhism is a Buddhist thought and movement that emphasizes the practice and application of Buddhism in the real world. Venerable Benhuan, a renowned contemporary Chinese Buddhist monk, is also an advocate and practitioner of Humanistic Buddhism. Born at the end of the Qing Dynasty, Venerable Benhuan lived through two regimes, the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China, and witnessed tremendous changes in Chinese society. Venerable Benhuan devoted his life to the cause of Buddhism and significantly contributed to the practice of humanistic Buddhism. His life and the monasteries he lived in and founded embody the spirit and contributions of Humanistic Buddhism.

3.3.1.1 Venerable Benhuan's Brief Biography

Venerable Benhuan, whose Dharma name is Xinqi, is originally from Xinzhou, Wuhan, Hubei Province, and was born in the 33rd year of the Guangxu reign in the Qing Dynasty (1907 A.D.). He aspired to become a monk from a young age and became a monk in 1930 at Xin'en Temple in Xinzhou, Hubei Province. Later, he went to Gaomen Temple in Yangzhou to study Chan Buddhism under the tutelage of Venerable Laigu. He once made a three-step pilgrimage to Wutai Mountain and wrote 19 Buddhist scriptures with his blood, totaling more than 200,000 words. He inherited

the Dharma lineage of Venerable Master Xuyun and was the 44th generation of the Linji Sect. He served as abbot of famous temples such as Bishan Temple on Wutai Mountain, Nanhua Temple in Shaoguan, Biezhuang Temple in Danxia Mountain, Guangxiao Temple in Guangzhou, Hongfa Temple in Shenzhen, spreading the Buddha's teachings, cultivating disciples, and restoring or building fourteen new temples.²⁶

Venerable Benhuan was wrongly convicted of being a "rightist" in 1958 and was imprisoned for 22 years until 1978, when he was rehabilitated and released. While in prison, not only did he not give up his practice, but he used it to deepen his Chan meditation and realize the nature of his mind. He also utilized his free time in prison to write works such as "Chantang Kaixue", which expounded on the theory and methods of Zen.²⁷

After Venerable Benhuan became the abbot of Guangxiao Temple in Guangzhou in 1987, he began his humanistic Buddhist endeavors in the Guangdong area. He was actively involved in social welfare activities, donating to constructing nine Hope Schools and two civilian hospitals. He also visited various places at home and abroad, exchanging friendships with Buddhists of all sects, nationalities, and countries and promoting the harmony and development of Buddhism.

3.3.1.2 His Major Monasteries and Buddhist Endeavors

Hongfa Temple in Shenzhen and Nanshan Temple in Sanya are two famous Buddhist monasteries founded by Venerable Benhuan. Both monasteries are dedicated to promoting Buddhism and serving the community through the "Humanistic Buddhism" philosophy.

Venerable Ben Huan began planning for the founding of Shenzhen Hongfa Monastery in 1985 and began serving as its abbot in 1992, where he resided until his death. Hongfa Monastery is a modern urban monastery in Futian District, Shenzhen City, that promotes humanistic Buddhism, propagates righteousness, and serves the community. Hongfa Temple promotes Buddhism, charity, public welfare, and

²⁶ China News Service: Elder Benhuan, China's leading Buddhist monk, passes away at Hongfa Temple (中国佛门泰斗本焕长老在弘法寺圆寂), <https://www.chinanews.com.cn/cul/2012/04-02/3793751.shtml>

²⁷ Official website of the Chinese Government, Venerable Benhuan, Honorary President of the China Buddhist Association, passed away The Religious Affairs Bureau sent out a condolence message (中国佛教协会名誉会长本焕法师圆寂 宗教局发唁电), https://www.gov.cn/gzdt/2012-04/02/content_2105936.htm

cultural education. The temple has a Buddhist Studies Research Center, Buddhist Art Research Institute, Benhuan College (formerly known as Hongfa Temple Buddhist College)²⁸, and other institutions, making positive contributions to Buddhist research, education, and cultural dissemination. Hongfa Temple conducts various Buddhist educational activities, such as sermons, meditation classes, youth summer camps, and vegetarian cultural festivals. Hongfa Temple also actively participates in social and charitable causes, such as donations for disaster relief, education assistance, and environmental protection advocacy.

Nanshan Temple in Sanya is another large Buddhist monastery founded by Venerable Benhuan in his later years. Nanshan Temple is a seaside monastery with the philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism, the mission of promoting Chinese culture, and the vision of promoting world peace. Nanshan Temple was built with the 108-meter-high Guanyin statue on the sea, the tallest Guanyin statue in China and the tallest Guanyin statue on the sea in the world. Nanshan Temple is famous for its majestic architecture, superb Buddhist art, and rich Buddhist culture. The South China Sea Buddhist College was also established at Nanshan Temple in Sanya, and to create a modern Buddhist university, it has made significant contributions to the training of Buddhist talents since its establishment.

Venerable Benhuan is a vital promoter and practitioner of contemporary Humanistic Buddhism, and he has made significant contributions to the concept and practice of Humanistic Buddhism. He believes that Buddhism is the wisdom of life and a prescription for solving earthly problems. He advocated that Buddhism should be anchored in real life and be closely integrated with society and life, contributing to social progress and people's happiness. As a contemporary Buddhist giant, Venerable Benhuan has significant social influence. His thinking and practice of Humanistic Buddhism have led to the development of the Buddhist cause in China. The concrete measures that he and his disciples have taken in practicing Humanistic Buddhism have provided new ideas for the modernization and transformation of Buddhism and new ways to integrate Buddhism with society and life.

²⁸ Formerly known as Hongfa Temple Buddhist College, which was founded in 2010, with the first students enrolling in September of the following year. In 2014, the college was renamed Benhuan College in honor of Elder Benhuan.

First, Venerable Benhuan emphasized that Buddhism should be close to society and the people and advocated the core concept of "compassion and altruism". He put forward the concept of "Humanistic Buddhism", advocating that Buddhism should be rooted in real life, closely integrated with society and life, and contribute to social progress and people's happiness. His monasteries, such as Hongfa Temple in Shenzhen and Nanshan Temple in Sanya, are places of traditional Buddhism and bases for modernized Buddhist practice. Venerable Benhuan encouraged the monks to conduct social welfare programs to provide help and services to society, reflecting the Buddhist spirit of compassion and altruism. He founded the Hongfa Temple Charitable Foundation, which carries out various charitable activities to help the disadvantaged in society. He also advocates the "Three Good Youth" activities to promote the moral development of young people.

Secondly, Venerable Benhuan actively promoted the modernization of Buddhism. He advocated "taking the precepts as the teacher" and insisted on strict precepts, and at the same time, he actively introduced modern technology to promote the modernization of temple management. At Hongfa Temple, he introduced modern management methods and promoted modern Buddhist education and cultural dissemination, making essential contributions to the modernization of Buddhism. While founding the Nanshan Temple in Sanya, Venerable Benhuan also embodied the concept of Humanistic Buddhism. He advocated "culture as the leader, service as the purpose" and actively promoted the cultural construction and public service of Nanshan Temple. Nanshan Temple has become a modern Buddhist temple integrating practice, culture, and service, significantly contributing to Buddhism's development and human civilization's progress.

In addition, Venerable Benhuan also actively promoted international Buddhist exchanges. He has led many delegations to visit overseas and exchange with Buddhist organizations worldwide, promoting international understanding and cooperation. His exchanges have not only enhanced international friendship but also contributed to the internationalization of Buddhism.

Overall, Venerable Benhuan is a master of Humanistic Buddhism who has profound attainments in Buddhist theory and practice and has made outstanding contributions to the practice and application of Buddhism. Venerable

Benhuan, the Hongfa Temple in Shenzhen, and the Nanshan Temple in Sanya, which he abided and founded, have demonstrated the spirit and values of Humanistic Buddhism and have made significant historical contributions to the development and prosperity of Buddhism in contemporary China. Their practices and contributions have provided strong support and impetus for the development and progress of the Buddhist cause. They set an example and model for the concept and practice of Humanistic Buddhism.

3.3.2 Venerable Jinghui Integrates Chan Dharma with Life

Zhaozhou Berlin Temple, located in Zhaozhou Town, Zhao County, Shijiazhuang City, Hebei Province, is a famous temple in northern China. Zhaozhou Berlin Temple, too, once had some influence in history but declined during historical changes. It used to be an important temple of Chan Buddhism in China, the home of Chan Master Zhaozhou's "Eat Tea" and the source of Zhaozhou's Chan tea culture. In 1988, Venerable Jing Hui, the then president of the Hebei Provincial Buddhist Association, began to preside over the restoration and reconstruction of the Berlin Monastery, where he founded the Hebei Provincial Buddhist Association, the largest Buddhist association in China. He founded the Hebei Province Buddhist College and Chan magazine and proposed the idea of "Living Chan". After centuries of vicissitudes, this temple, with its deep historical background, still shines with the light of Buddhism and provides a holy place for people to seek peace of mind.

Venerable Jing Hui, Dharma name Miaocong, was born in Xinzhou, Hubei Province, in 1933 and received the bhikkhu precepts at the age of 18 at the Yunmen Temple in Guangdong Province in 1951, where he was able to serve the modern Chan master, Venerable Xuyun, and then enrolled in the China Buddhist College in 1956, where such Buddhist masters as Zhou Shujia, Venerable Mingzhen, Venerable Zhengguo, and Zhao Puchu highly appreciated him. After the reform and opening up, he successively served as the editor-in-chief of Dharma Voice magazine and the abbot of Berlin Monastery, Four Ancestors Monastery, and Yuquan Monastery. Venerable Jing Hui passed away on April 20, 2013, at the Four Ancestors Monastery in Huangmei County, Hubei Province, at the age of 81, having served as the vice president of the China Buddhist Association and the president of the Hebei Provincial Buddhist Association. During his lifetime, Venerable Jinghui advocated Chan life with the aim

of "Enlightened Life, Devoted Life" and had a vast influence by organizing "Life Chan Summer Camp" and other forms, which enabled an unlimited number of people to experience and understand the Chinese Chan culture closely and learn the wisdom of life from it.

Venerable Jing Hui's Chan philosophy of "Enlightened Life, Devoted Life" essentially interprets the idea of Humanistic Buddhism. Venerable Jing Hui creatively inherited the ideas of Chinese Buddhism, especially Chan Buddhism, such as "Buddha's teachings are on earth" and the realism style. In order to carry out the idea of "Buddhism on earth", he created a new concept of Buddhism rooted in real life and the Chan practice system of Living Chan, which advocates "caring for life, realizing life, and dedicating life". He advocates "caring for life, realizing life, and dedicating life" and "practicing in life and living in practice". According to Prof. Fang Litian of the Renmin University of China, Venerable Jing Hui's concept of Living Chan has three innovations: First, it emphasizes "putting faith into life," "practicing in life and living in practice," and calls for the universal integration of Chan into life and the realization of Zen's transcendence and the expression of Zen's meaning in life. It calls for the universal integration of Chan into life, the realization of Chan's transcendence in life, and the embodiment of the Chan mood. Secondly, the practice should be realized in the present moment, every minute, and every second of the day. Thirdly, it emphasizes enlightenment and devotion, "devotion in enlightenment, enlightenment in devotion". Fang Litian believes that through the theory and practice of Living Chan, Venerable Jing Hui has provided an essential way for the practice of Humanistic Buddhism. "Buddhism must follow the path of integration with society, must be concerned with society, and must become dependent on the living practices of all beings." This is the starting point and destination of Venerable Jing Hui's "Living Chan".

Venerable Jing Hui paid particular attention to the development of Buddhist education, built schools and institutes, and endeavored to cultivate talented people who could adapt to the management of contemporary monasteries, propagation of the Dharma and benefit the living beings, academic research, and academic exchanges with foreign countries, and for the first time attempted to write several teaching materials for Buddhist institutions. Together with academic friends from universities, colleges, and national research institutes, we have been actively carrying out academic research and

academic exchanges in close connection with the development of society, developing the cultural construction of monasteries, raising funds to subsidize institutions of higher education to strengthen the research of the humanities and the discipline of Buddhism, and organizing the "Hebei Chan Culture Forum" in Hebei and Hubei for many times, He has also organized the "Hebei Chan Culture Forum" and "Huangmei Chan Culture Forum" in Hebei and Hubei, and published the proceedings of the conferences, making unique contributions to the development of Chinese Buddhist culture and Buddhist academic research.

In addition, Venerable Jinghui has created and inherited the traditional way of promoting Buddhism in China, adapted to modern society's development. Venerable Jing Hui collected and organized the life and teachings of Elder Xuyun, compiled and printed "The Record of the Teachings of Monk Xuyun", "The Continuation of Monk Xuyun's Dharma Compendium", and finally compiled and printed "The Complete Works of Monk Xuyun"; he also collected and advocated the printing of an extensive series of books on Buddhism, such as "The Great Collection of the Great Teaching of the Great Teachings of the Qianlong Emperor", which provided the Buddhist community, the humanities, and social sciences, and the people from all walks of life with the rich materials and convenient conditions necessary for them to understand and study Buddhism.

Despite the long and challenging experiences in his life, he was always self-improving and persisted in his studies and academic research. During his presidency of monasteries worldwide, he emphasized connecting with and bringing into play the teachings and thoughts of the original Buddhist texts during his sermons and preaching activities such as Seven Days of Meditation and Seven Days of Nembutsu. Venerable Jing Hui has written many books and poems in his life, including "*Twin Peaks Chan Discourse*", "*Keeping the One and Not Moving*", "*The Door into Zen*", "*The Key to Living Chan*", "*A Drop of the Altar Sutra*", "*Chinese Buddhism and Living Chan*", "*The Dharma of Being a Human Being*", "*Chan in the Present Moment*", "*Chan Words for Living*", "*Chan Rhythm of the Sutra Window*", and so on.

Venerable Jing Hui revived the important Chan monasteries in northern China with his efforts and brought Hebei Buddhism back from the brink of death to the development path. In order to implement the concept of "Living Chan", he held more

than ten consecutive summer camps for university students at Berlin Chan Temple, spreading Buddhism to young people and creating conditions for the revival of Buddhism in the future.

3.3.3 Venerable Xue Cheng's Use of Multiple Languages to Communicate Contemporary Buddhism

Venerable Xue Cheng, who once served as president of the China Buddhist Association and abbot of Longquan Temple in Beijing, has also made notable contributions to the practice of Humanistic Buddhism. He advocates the integration of Buddhism with reality, focusing on implementing the practice into daily life so that believers can experience the wisdom and power of Buddhism through practice. Humanistic Buddhism emphasizes the application of Buddhist teachings in daily life and the positive impact of Buddhism on society. Venerable Xue Cheng has made a difference in many areas, including education, media innovation, and social charity, and his practical activities reflect the modernization and socialization of Buddhism.

Venerable Xue Cheng emphasized Buddhist education and invested much energy in constructing and managing Buddhist colleges. Venerable Xue Cheng actively promoted the reform of Buddhist education, advocated the concept of modern Buddhist education centered on quality education, and advocated the cultivation of high-quality monks with modern awareness and international vision. He has served as vice president and president of the China Buddhist College, the Fujian Buddhist College, and the Famenji Buddhist College. He is committed to cultivating Buddhist talents and promoting the development of Buddhist education.

Venerable Xue Cheng pioneered technological innovation in the Chinese Buddhist community. Through new media technology, Venerable Xue Cheng has innovated the dissemination of Buddhism in terms of form and content, bringing Buddhist teachings closer to modern society and enhancing the interaction and connection between Buddhism and society. Under his leadership, Beijing Longquan Temple has actively utilized new media to spread Buddhism and traditional Chinese culture, such as opening a multilingual microblog, the public platform "Longquan Animation", and producing the "Xuecheng's New Words" series of animations, which are his innovative attempts in the field of new media. 2006, Venerable Xuecheng opened a blog that has been called the "first blog in Chinese Buddhism". "the first

Chinese Buddhist blogger"; in the spring of 2012, at the age of 45, Venerable Xuecheng opened a multilingual microblog full of fame; in July 2014, Venerable Xuecheng published his first comic book, "Trouble is self-seeking", the story revolves around the young monk Xian Er; in October 2015, his team completed the robot --In October 2015, his team completed the research and development and production of the robot "Xian Er Robot Monk", which was jointly produced by Longquan Temple's venerable masters, monks, volunteers, and AI experts, and is capable of dialoguing with people on its own.

Venerable Xuecheng has also made significant contributions to social charity. He emphasizes the act of charity to dissolve the greed of the human heart so that more of the economic wealth can be given back to society. In addition, he has participated in several charitable projects, such as establishing the Beijing Benevolence Charity Foundation. He has promoted various social service programs, such as school donations and relief of emergencies.

Compared to Venerable Jinghui, Venerable Hok Cheng has focused more on using technology, media, and social charity activities in Humanistic Buddhism. Venerable Jinghui, on the other hand, has contributed to the cultivation of Buddhist cultural quality and the cause of Buddhist Dharma propagation.

Overall, Venerable Xue Cheng has made many efforts to promote the practice of Humanistic Buddhism, and his activities are not only limited to the religious field but also actively expanded into social services and cultural dissemination, reflecting Buddhism's vast influence and positive role in modern society.

3.3.4 The Unique Practice of Venerable Ming Hai

Zhaozhou Bailin Temple, located in Zhao County, Hebei Province, is famous in northern China. Zhaozhou Bailin Temple, too, was once influential in history but declined for a time in the vicissitudes of history. It used to be an important temple of Chan Buddhism in China, the home of Chan Master Zhaozhou's "Eat Tea" and the source of Zhaozhou's Chan tea culture. In 1988, Venerable Jing Hui, the then president of the Hebei Provincial Buddhist Association, began to preside over the restoration and reconstruction of the Bailin Temple, where he founded the Hebei Provincial Buddhist Association, the largest Buddhist association in China. He founded the Hebei Province Buddhist College and Chan magazine and proposed the idea of "Living Chan". After centuries of vicissitudes, this temple, with its rich historical background, still shines

with the light of Buddhism and provides a holy place for people to seek peace of mind.

The current abbot of Bailin Temple, Monk Ming Hai, has inherited Venerable Jing Hui's philosophy while emphasizing Buddhist education and Chan practice as the center of monastic and personal Dharma propagation. Monk Ming Hai graduated from the Department of Philosophy of Peking University in 1991 and became a monk under Venerable Jing Hui the following year. Since then, he has been practicing under Venerable Jing Hui for a long time and has been deeply influenced by his "Living Chan" philosophy. He has made remarkable achievements in propagating the Dharma and benefiting the living, actively promoting the adaptation of Buddhism to modern society, and devoting himself to the dissemination and popularization of Buddhist culture. He is an advocate of "Living Chan", which advocates the integration of Buddhism into daily life so that more people can benefit from Buddhism. He also actively participates in social welfare programs and contributes to social harmony. He has authored such books as "Venerable Master Ming Hai on Living Chan", "Venerable Master Ming Hai on the Wisdom of Zen", and "Venerable Master Ming Hai on the Meaning of Life".

In December 2020, Venerable Master Ming Hai was elected Vice President of the 10th Council of the China Buddhist Association, and the following year, he served as Executive Vice President of the China Buddhist Academy. Under his presidency, the Chinese Buddhist Academy embarked on a series of reforms to carry on the Buddhist tradition and to strengthen students' religious practice and moral cultivation.

In the practice and promotion of Humanistic Buddhism, Venerable Ming Hai has always adhered to keeping abreast of the times. Venerable Jing Hui put forward the concept of Living Chan, which advocates integrating practice into daily life, making meditation closer to the heart. Venerable Ming Hai further believes that Chan is not a distant practice but can be practiced anywhere and anytime in daily life. By combining Chan practice with life, people can better understand the true meaning of Chan and find inner peace in the hustle and bustle of the world. "Living Chan" inherits the traditional Buddhist concept of meditation and suggests that life is a way of practicing Chan everywhere and always. This aligns with Humanistic Buddhism, which emphasizes the importance of real life and practice in the service of society.

In order to further promote Humanistic Buddhism, Venerable Ming Hai promoted the cooperation between the Hebei Provincial Buddhist Association and the Bailin Temple to set up the Chan magazine. This magazine became an essential window for publicizing Buddhist culture and promoting Humanistic Buddhism. Under his auspices, the Bailin Temple in Zhaozhou became one of the first monasteries to open a website. Through the dissemination of magazines and websites, more people could understand and accept Buddhist concepts, thus expanding the influence of Buddhism.

In terms of education, Venerable Ming Hai emphasized the study of Buddhist classics and paid attention to the popularization of modern knowledge. Venerable Ming Hai promoted the Hebei Provincial Buddhist Association to establish the Hebei Provincial Buddhist College in Bailin Temple. This institute trained several young monks in modern knowledge and Buddhist literacy and supported the development of Buddhism in China. After leading the Chinese Buddhist Academy, Venerable Ming Hai planned and held more special lectures and academic seminars and led students and teachers to go out for study and group practice.

Overall, Venerable Ming Hai, as a new generation of Buddhist leaders, has inherited the traditional Buddhist philosophy of cultivation and actively practiced the concept of Humanistic Buddhism. He integrates spiritual practice into his daily life, finds magazines to promote Buddhism, and focuses on cultivating Buddhist talents. Venerable Ming Hai's efforts enhance Buddhism's influence in contemporary society and provide an essential platform for us to understand and practice Buddhist teachings.

3.3.5 A Different Approach by Venerable Jielong

Located on the shore of the Taihu Lake, Shoushen Temple in Changxing, Zhejiang Province, was once historically renowned in the northern part of Zhejiang Province. Changxing Shoushen Temple is a typical temple in the southern region of China. Since its restoration, Changxing Shoushen Temple has been built by two generations of abbots, Yuancheng and Jielong, and has become a representative temple with a particular scale and local influence.

The current abbot of Changxing Shoushen Temple, Monk Jie Long, possesses a profound cultivation in Buddhist studies and a wide range of intellectual backgrounds. He has a unique insight into the understanding and transmission of Buddhism, and he hopes to integrate Buddhism's wisdom and compassionate spirit into

real life and contribute to the harmony and progress of society. Monk Jielong is a contemporary monk with a new-age mindset who is passionate about the art of calligraphy and the culture of Chan tea and actively engaging in charitable and public service endeavors. He is committed to promoting the practice and development of Humanistic Buddhism in the local community through his active participation in social affairs and by combining the concept of Humanistic Buddhism with traditional Buddhist rituals.

Venerable Monk Jai Long has profound attainments in calligraphy, has organized numerous calligraphy exhibitions, and has created numerous calligraphic works. He is committed to passing on and promoting the traditional art of Chinese calligraphy and conveying the wisdom and beauty of Buddhism through his calligraphic works. He believes calligraphy is an art form that can express the realm of the mind and the concept of Buddhism, the expression of the mind, and the art of Zen. Through the creation of calligraphy, one can cultivate one's body and enhance one's realm. His calligraphy works have unique artistic value and contain thoughts and explorations of Buddhism on earth. He also promotes Chan tea culture and actively participates in its promotion and transmission. He organizes Chan tea parties and tea ceremony lectures to teach people the essence and philosophy of Chan tea. He believes that Chan tea is an integral part of Buddhist culture, which can help people purify their minds and gain wisdom. Chan tea culture emphasizes inner tranquility and peace, seeking spiritual purification and self-awakening through tea tasting and practice. He hopes that more people can experience peace of mind and happiness through the spread of Chan tea culture.

In addition to his love for Buddhist art and culture, Monk Jielong is also very concerned about charitable causes. He actively participates in the activities of local charitable organizations and personally serves as the vice president of the local charity association because of his passion for public welfare. He has carried out a series of charitable programs to help students, people in need, and people with disabilities. He believes that the fundamental purpose of Buddhism is to help the world with compassion and that helping others is an essential way of practicing Buddhism. He believes that charity is a concrete embodiment of the Buddhist spirit of compassion and that through charitable acts, more people can be helped to achieve happiness and peace.

Monk Jielong actively promotes Humanistic Buddhism by combining the concept of Humanistic Buddhism with traditional Buddhist rituals. He believes that Humanistic Buddhism is the modernization and transformation of Buddhism and the inevitable requirement for Buddhism to integrate with the times and society. He integrates Buddhism into social life, making Buddhism closer to people's lives and better serving society.

Monk Jai Long's practice of Humanistic Buddhism provides valuable experience for the modernization and development of Buddhism. He is an exemplary practitioner of Humanistic Buddhism, setting an example for people from all walks of life. Monk Jai Long's practice of Humanistic Buddhism is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

They are promoting Buddhism through the art of calligraphy and Chan tea culture. Monk Jie Long believes calligraphy and Chan tea are essential parts of Buddhist culture, which can help people purify their minds and gain wisdom. Through calligraphy creation and promotion of the Chan tea culture, he allowed more people to understand Buddhism and feel its charm.

Actively participate in charitable and public welfare programs. Monk Jielong believes that the fundamental purpose of Buddhism is to help the world with compassion, and helping others is an essential way of practicing Buddhism. He practices the Buddhist concept of compassion by providing help to the underprivileged in society through charitable public welfare.

He combines the concept of humanistic Buddhism with traditional Buddhist rituals. According to Grand Monk Jielong, Humanistic Buddhism is the modernization and transformation of Buddhism and the inevitable requirement of integrating Buddhism with the times and society. He integrates Buddhism into social life, making Buddhism closer to people's lives and better serving society.

Through his active participation in social affairs, Venerable Monk Jai-lung promotes the development of Humanistic Buddhism, contributes to the progress and harmony of society, and provides valuable experience for the modernization of Buddhism. His love and efforts have inspired more people to pay attention to Buddhism, art, and public welfare. Monk Jielong's behavior and philosophy have shown us the harmonious symbiosis between Buddhism and modern society, and his deeds and spirit

will continue to inspire and influence more people.

Contemporary Chinese Buddhism embodies the idea of "Humanistic Buddhism" in conjunction with the new trends and levels of modern human culture and civilization. All temples and Buddhist organizations are actively practicing the idea of "Humanistic Buddhism", focusing on the reality of life, emphasizing the purification of the human heart and the completion of the personality, supporting the righteous and dispelling the evil, establishing a positive spirit, and serving the construction of spiritual civilization. At the same time, they have become good helpers of the government and supportive solid forces of the society in the areas of propagating the Dharma and benefiting the living, cultivating virtue for a hundred years, helping people experiencing poverty and people in need, assisting students and charitable organizations, and environmental protection and public welfare.

3.4 The Practice of Humanistic Buddhism in Taiwan

3.4.1 Hsing Yun and Its Global Promotion of Humanistic Buddhism

Since the opening of Fo Guang Shan in 1967 and the establishment of the temple, it has always been in the position of practicing Humanistic Buddhism. After more than 30 years of efforts, the Humanistic Buddhism promoted by Fo Guang Shan has gained international recognition and attention.

Fo Guang Shan respects and embraces different religions and ideas and advocates integration. For example, in order to blend Buddhism from different sects, the Chinese Tibetan Cultural Association was established, the Xianmi Buddhist Conference was held, the International Buddhist Sangha Seminar was held, and the World Buddhist Friendship Association was held in the United States and Australia, and even in Bodh Gaya, India, to teach the three primary international precepts, so that women who study Buddhism in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Europe and the United States have the opportunity to successfully seek to receive the precepts, and restore the integrity of the two religious groups, Make Buddhism more sound and complete.

Fo Guang Shan also conducts inter-religious exchange activities. Hsing Yun has talked with Pope John Paul II of the Catholic Church, was invited to hold a meeting for the New Year's Congress of the United States, led a delegation to the mainland to

promote law and visit relatives, hoping to promote world peace through respect and tolerance among religions, countries, and races.

Fo Guang Shan's specific direction is to implement Humanistic Buddhism to advocate the purification of the soul and pay attention to the practice of life. Over the years, in addition to holding various summer camps, workshops, short-term monastic activities, Eight precepts, teaching the five precepts at home, Bodhisattva vows precepts, and other dharma meeting activities, we also held Buddhist meditation sessions on Saturdays around the world. Fo Guang Shan's Humanistic Buddhism attaches great importance to the Buddhist family, the spread of faith, and especially the education of Buddhism. Therefore, Fo Guang Shan has established many Buddhist schools and universities worldwide. Humanistic Buddhism attaches great importance to life etiquette, so Fo Guang Shan branches all hold Coming of age, Buddhist wedding ceremonies, conversion ceremonies, and funeral ceremonies for believers hoping to achieve the goal of "living Buddhism and living Buddhism" through Buddhist life etiquette.²⁹

Buddhism cannot be separated from the world. Fo Guang Shan, with the human nature, lifestyle, altruism, joy, times, and universal nature of Humanistic Buddhism, upholds the Buddha's original intention of attaching importance to living, teaching, and benefiting people in different time and spaces, promotes Humanistic Buddhism, and creates a pure land of Buddha. For example, in order to make Buddhists attach importance to their worldly life, Fo Guang Shan founded Foguang Jingshe to provide the elderly with an order; Established a Da Ci Nursery to care for orphaned children; The establishment the Foguang Clinic, Yunshui Hospital, Wanshou Garden enables people to live, die, and die in Fo Guang Shan; Especially, the establishment of the Merit Master Association allows individuals who have contributed to Buddhism to demonstrate their merits in the present life, without having to wait until their rebirth to benefit from the afterlife.

3.4.2 Tzu Chi, A Global Charitable Foundation under the Umbrella of Humanitarian Buddhist Protection

The "Buddhist Relief Tzu Chi Merit Association" was established by

²⁹ SHIH Hsing Yun, "*Buddhist Light Textbook · Buddhist Light Science*", Fo Guang Shan Publishing House: 95.

Master Cheng Yen on March 24, 1966. This organization gradually developed into the Tzu Chi Merit Scholarship Association, known today. Tzu Chi aims to "help the poor and educate the rich" and carries out four significant causes: "charity", "medical treatment", "education", and "humanities". The Tzu Chi philosophy consists of two main parts: firstly, the purpose of establishing the Tzu Chi organization itself; The second is the core concept of Tzu Chi's organization to attract and mobilize the public.³⁰

1. Compassion is the heart, and helping the world is the aspiration - the purpose of the Tzu Chi Merit Association. The fundamental spiritual resources of Tzu Chi's charitable work come from Buddhism's basic philosophy and teachings and have gradually improved with the development of the cause.

The relatively complete and mature expression of Tzu Chi's purpose is in the Tzu Chi Charity Foundation's "Tzu Chi Chronicles": firstly, based on retaining the content above, there is a more systematic expression of "compassion is for the heart, and helping the world is for the will", and the goal of "compassion is for the heart, and helping the world is for the will" is to help the poor and teach the rich. Secondly, regarding the code of conduct for Tzu Chi volunteers, The value objectives have precise requirements: "All Tzu Chi members should practice Tzu Chi's good ways with integrity and mindfulness, and take practical participation... simultaneous interpreting has a good reputation for generations, leaving beautiful memories of their lives, and making future generations proud of what we have done today... On the path of Bodhisattva, we should be bold and progressive, let love fill our society, and let our society have a good cycle. These Buddhist disciples are both blessed and wise, faithful and mindful. I wish to work with all Tzu Chi members. Encourage them together."³¹

2. The concept of mobilizing the public through charity - accumulating merit, returning merit, alleviating disasters, and prolonging life. So, what kind of philosophy attracts Tzu Chi members to participate in Tzu Chi's charitable causes? Ding Renjie's empirical research points out that popular concepts such as the accumulation of merit, the return of merit, the elimination of disasters and the extension of life, and

³⁰ The mission of the Tzu Chi Merit Association is to teach the rich and help the poor and help the rich. It is sourced from the official website of the Tzu Chi Charity Foundation in Mainland China.

³¹ Tzu Chi Global Consulting Network: Tzu Chi Message (tzuchi. org): <https://tw.tzuchi.org/about-us/%E6%85%88%E6%BF%9F%E5%BF%97%E5%B7%A5/%E6%85%88%E6%BF%9F%E5%BF%97%E8%A8%80>

the cultivation of Fukuda play a vital role.³² In each issue of the "Recruitment Notice for Members," Tzu Chi links heartfelt donations to the daily growth of merit and promises that Master Cheng Yen will recite the "Medicine Master's Mantra" for them on the 24th day of each month in order to help them overcome disasters and prolong their lives. Master Cheng Yen said, "If one reveres the Three Treasures sincerely, they can receive great merits and repay their loved ones. If their parents are alive, they can increase their blessings and rely on their merits to escape hardship." "Everyone has their bank of blessings, and doing good deeds and accumulating good deeds means depositing in the bank, and vice versa, withdrawing funds." "Tzu Chi is a great blessing field that allows everyone to plant blessings and continue to reap the fruits of blessings in the next life. However."³³

3.5 Overview

The development of the Humanistic Buddhism movement is a long and challenging process. Although the representatives of Humanistic Buddhism left precious ideological resources and practical experience, further innovation in theory and practice is still needed to promote the healthy development of Humanistic Buddhism. Overall, it helps solve contemporary society's problems, solve contemporary people's spiritual confusion, and improve their spiritual life. It is not only a principle to promote the fine traditions of Buddhism but also a direction for Buddhism to adapt to modern development. The development process of Humanistic Buddhism is the concrete practice of enriching and beautifying modern civilization. In this regard, many questions can be explored, and here, we will discuss one question: why does Buddhism serve people?

Buddhism has always believed that the compassionate and selfless spirit of caring for all beings benefiting and loving others is the key to the success or failure of believers in their practice and is a prerequisite for achieving personal liberation. The Buddhist concept of 'happiness and affection' is not an abstract dogma or empty slogan but a necessary spiritual factor implemented in every practice. Every practice advocated

³² DING Renjie, *"Helping others in the social context: a case study of Buddhism in Taiwan Buddhist Tzu Chi meritorious society"*, first edition of LinkedIn Publishing Company, 1997, P.106-107

³³ CHENG Yen, *"Words of Meditation"*, Fudan University Press, 2010, p45-50

by Buddhism is not solely aimed at meeting the personal needs of practitioners but is closely linked to the care of sentient beings. That is to say, every achievement or progress made by a practitioner is directly proportional to their dedication to sentient beings, and the accumulation and growth of personal merits are always synchronized with the improvement of their ability to save sentient beings.

Since the 1980s, the development of Buddhism in terms of temple economy and organizational scale has been remarkable. However, these cannot serve as symbols of the modernization of Buddhism. In the History of China, the pursuit of the expansion of the temple economy, the large number of Buddhist pagodas and scriptures, and the rich clothing and food of monks were often essential factors that led to the corruption and decline of Buddhism. Material wealth cannot be used as the standard to measure the healthy development of Buddhism. The modernization development of Buddhism first aims to creatively promote Buddhism's inherent compassion and dedication spirit in response to the needs of the real society.

Whether to serve society or be content with receiving offerings, Buddhism has accumulated positive and negative experiences and lessons in its long-term historical development. One of the essential reasons why anti-Buddhists throughout history have proposed the exclusion of Buddhism is to oppose monastic monks who only seek to receive offerings and live a peaceful life without farming or weaving. In the History of China, many eminent monks and great virtues have strongly criticized the ethos of being proud of being generous, ashamed of being honest, proud of worshiping the powerful, and ashamed of making friends with the poor. Buddhism serves society precisely by promoting the fine tradition of Buddhism, which is not satisfied with receiving offerings but takes solving the difficulties of believers as its responsibility. Buddhism is not meant to serve the wealthy or specific ethnic groups of a specific social class but to serve the vast number of believers from various social classes.

CHAPTER IV

CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES OF HUMANISTIC BUDDHISM IN CHINA

4.1 Innovations in Humanistic Buddhism

As previously recounted, one of the Buddhist ideas proposed by Master Taixu in 1925 in response to the chaotic social environment and the current state of Buddhism was Life Buddhism. Life Buddhism mainly emphasized that Buddhism should focus on human life and the future rather than the afterlife and ghosts. Life Buddhism's goal is to realize Buddhism's practice through the improvement of life, the enhancement of the afterlife, the liberation of birth and death, and the enlightenment of the Dharma realm. It criticizes the Buddhism of ghosts and gods, the Buddhism of mountains and forests, the Buddhism of scripture and confession, and the Buddhism of waiting for death, all of which are nasty or negative worldly abuses in Chinese Buddhism. By criticizing them, the positive aspects of Chinese Buddhism were brought into full play.

Master Taixu advocated life Buddhism. The "Life Buddhism" system was complete, but before it could be fully developed and put into practice, Master Taixu relocated westward. Since then, "Life Buddhism" has been passed on under "Humanistic Buddhism". Humanistic Buddhism is a Buddhist movement developed by Shih Yin-shun, Xing Xing, Zhao Puchu, and many other visionary Buddhists based on Master Taixu's teachings, which primarily emphasizes that Buddhism should be attuned to, rather than isolated from, modern society and the times. Humanistic Buddhism aims to propagate the Dharma through earthly purification, altruistic behavior, joyfulness, participation in the times, and a vision of universal charity.

Humanistic Buddhism and Life Buddhism share common innovations about traditional Buddhism. They both break away from traditional Chinese Buddhism, which emphasizes only the appearance of transcendence of worldly life and the afterlife and return to the Buddha's original earthly nature and life. They believe Buddhism is about solving earthly problems, not escaping or denying them. They both advocate that one should learn the Bodhisattva's practice with a mortal body, do the business of

entering the world with the spirit of leaving the world, and serve society with altruism in mind.

Although the ideological basis of humanistic Buddhism originates from life Buddhism, there are still noticeable differences between them. The most immediate difference is that they have different historical backgrounds, theoretical emphases, and modes of practice. Life Buddhism was proposed during the Republican period, mainly in the face of the turmoil and chaos of Chinese society then, as well as the decline and plight of the Buddhist community. Life Buddhism focuses more on personal cultivation, inner transformation, and pursuing the hereafter and Nirvana. Humanistic Buddhism was proposed after the founding of New China, which mainly faced the change and opening of Chinese society and the revival and development of the Buddhist community. Humanistic Buddhism focuses more on social participation, environmental improvement, and constructing the present world and the Pure Land.

4.2 Problems of Tzu Chi Practice

Tzu Chi is one of the most influential Buddhist organizations of our time, having spread its footprint across five continents. Its specific practices are detailed in the relevant sections of Chapter Three. The success of Tzu Chi is beyond doubt, but its practices are not without room for discussion. Of course, this is not specific to Tzu Chi; they are so successful that they can be used as a paradigm for discussion.

The core of Tzu Chi's endeavor is humanitarianism, which is carried out through the four primary missions of "charity," "medical care," "education," and "humanism." The Tzu-Chi cause is centered on humanitarianism and is carried out in four major areas: charity, medicine, education, and humanism. It is undoubtedly very significant that they have opened foundations, created schools, assisted in disasters, and helped people experiencing poverty. From the perspective of secular endeavors, Tzu Chi has achieved great success. However, as a group with a Buddhist background, from a Buddhist perspective, its pitfalls are likewise becoming more apparent. Tzu Chi has gone further and further away from preaching Humanistic Buddhism. In their Humanistic Buddhism paradigm, we see the shadow of another Buddhist movement:

Engaged Buddhism.¹

Engaged Buddhism emerged in the context of Thailand's introduction of foreign investment after World War II, which, to a certain extent, destroyed Thailand's traditional agrarian society, thereby causing severe harm to the economic development of rural areas in various regions of Thailand. Thailand's traditional rural economy and environment are highly integrated with Thailand's indigenous Buddhist values.² When the traditional rural economy collapsed due to the impact of the modern profit-oriented agricultural model, the ethical relations of the traditional society also collapsed and disintegrated. The collapse of traditional values also threatened the development of Buddhism. Engaged Buddhism emerged as a way to save the country from the economic and value crises of the time and continue the development of Buddhism in Thailand.³

These monks dealt with the social crises of the time in the following ways:

1) In response to the pollution of agricultural land, the monks mainly used their status to gather people to fight against agricultural pollution; 2) Improving the community system, such as educating mothers and children, building farmers' associations or farmers' cooperatives, and founding rural banks; 3) Crossing the provinces with the monastic orders of different regions to gather the strength of the people to develop the rural economy; 4) Integrating and cooperating with the NGO network of the national civil society; and 5) Integrating with the NGO network of the national civil society and the national civil society to develop the rural economy. NGOs network and cooperate with them in order to solve current problems more effectively; 5. Regarding culture and politics, local monks use local traditions to counterbalance the core of the Bangkok state.⁴

Of course, Tzu Chi's approach is still a practice of humanistic Buddhism, significantly different from engaged Buddhism. The differences in the societies, cultures, and realities of China and Thailand have also significantly impacted the

¹ Paul Fuller. "An Introduction to Engaged Buddhism", London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021

² Lau, Lawrence Y.K. "Sulak Sivaraksa as the Pathfinder of Bouddhisme Engagé in Thailand", Asia - Pacific Research Forum No. 66, 201912

³ Lau, Lawrence Y.K. "Engaged Buddhism in Thailand: from Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu to Sulak Sivaraksa Lau", *Hsuan Chuang Journal of Buddhism*, Issue 31, 201903

⁴ Lau, Lawrence Y.K., "Le Bouddhisme engagé and Civil Society: A Study of Buddhist Public Engagement in Thailand and Malaysia", Taoyuan: Dharma Realm Press, 2006

development of Buddhism. Engaged Buddhism has a powerful element of resistance, which the Humanistic Buddhism movement does not have - even in the Chinese context, the term "social movement" would not be used to refer to Humanistic Buddhism. The term "social movement" does not even refer to Humanistic Buddhism in the Chinese context.⁵

However, Tzu Chi and Engaged Buddhism are similar in deeply involved in social activism. This practice often receives much criticism. Specifically, too much social involvement is not in keeping with the identity of monks and the image of monks that is expected by the general public - at least in China, the public perception of Buddhist monks is that they are not allowed to engage in such activities and that they can only stay in monasteries.

In addition to attracting social criticism, Tzu Chi's success is often challenging to sustain in the long term. Tzu Chi's great success is built on the involvement of massive amounts of social resources. These vast amounts of human and financial support are difficult for most monasteries to emulate. Alternatively, this practice also exerts tremendous pressure on Buddhism.

This pressure includes at least these two points. Using vast sums of money is more likely to attract social criticism and government regulation. People criticize Buddhism for not having this wealth, even though it will be used wisely for education, disaster relief, and other charitable causes. Nevertheless, people will ask why Buddhism has access to this great wealth. Especially in a secular country like China, the attitude of some groups towards traditional religions, including Buddhism, is not very friendly.

In addition, the mobilization of huge resources has put enormous pressure on Buddhism. It must spend more energy on fundraising, program implementation and supervision, and recruiting more professionals. All of this distracts energy that should be focused on cultivation and liberation.

Moreover, acquiring, mobilizing, and disposing of vast resources are challenging to sustain, especially when the human heart is hard to satisfy. Tzu Chi has engaged in many charitable endeavors; one would expect him to give in more areas. All

⁵ Lau, Lawrence Y.K., "Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Radicalism, Civil Society and Political Perspective of Modern Buddhism", Taipei hsien :Symposium of Confucianism/Buddhism Communication and Philosophy of Culture (9th), 2006.03.11

of this can put pressure on the long-term conduct of charitable endeavors. This is especially true when Han Buddhism is not so specialized to engage in large-scale philanthropy.

4.3 Analysis of Practice in Mainland China

Humanistic Buddhism is a Buddhist practice that emphasizes attention to the real world and human society, focusing on the benefit of all beings and social welfare. The Humanistic Buddhism movement has a long history and broad influence in mainland China. In recent years, Chinese Buddhism in mainland China has experienced unprecedented development, especially in promoting the Humanistic Buddhism movement. However, some problems and challenges have emerged in the process.

Some Humanistic Buddhist groups have overly pursued personal fame, fortune, and secular influence, leading to deviations in their practice methods and concepts and even sparking controversy and criticism; secondly, some Humanistic Buddhist groups have some problems in their social welfare endeavors, such as the non-transparent use of funds and mismanagement of funds; and lastly, some Humanistic Buddhist practitioners lack an in-depth understanding of the Buddha's Dharma and practical experience, making it difficult for them to achieve the goals of liberation and Buddhahood truly—the goal of liberation and Buddhahood.

Neglect of traditional teachings: In promoting Humanistic Buddhism, some monasteries have overemphasized social services and public welfare activities while neglecting Buddhism's basic teachings and practices. Master Taixu has always emphasized the compatibility of Buddhism with worldly teachings. However, the worldly truth is only a step in transitioning to the truth. Buddhism must still retain its qualities and fulfill its function of transforming people's hearts and benefiting society. The root of Humanistic Buddhism is still to be detached from the secular world, and it is a path of practice that actively seeks liberation. Humanistic Buddhism is a means, a method, not a fundamental end. If humanistic Buddhism remains only at the level of service to society and public welfare activities, then the original intention of Buddhism is lost.

Commercialization Tendency: Some monasteries have been too

commercial in their promotional activities, leading to the loss of religious purity. This is also a straightforward problem. Commercialization is linked to the first point; they can be said to have a cause-and-effect relationship. It is precisely because of the neglect of the traditional Buddhist teachings that amid worldly activities, the practice of less desire and contentment in the face of material things, which a bhikkhu should uphold, is gradually lost. Under such circumstances, excessive profit-seeking and commercialization have taken advantage of the situation.

Isolation from Society: Although Humanistic Buddhism has become a political correctness in Chinese Buddhism today, monasteries still do not take it seriously. As opposed to being overly worldly, some monasteries do not understand Humanistic Buddhism well. Still, even though Humanistic Buddhism emphasizes interaction with the society, some monasteries maintain the traditional closed attitude, keeping a distance from the society and the believers.

In terms of successful experiences, the Humanistic Buddhism movement in mainland China has achieved remarkable results in promoting the integration Buddhist practice with modern society. For example, some traditional methods of Humanistic Buddhist practice have been integrated into the modern education system, enabling more young people to have access to and learn about Buddhist practice; at the same time, there are also many Humanistic Buddhist groups dedicated to carrying out charitable works, helping the poor and disadvantaged, and making positive contributions to society.

Integration with the needs of modern society: Many monasteries have successfully integrated Buddhist teachings with the needs of modern society, such as conducting ecological conservation and mental health education. Traditional Buddhism, which stays solely within the red walls of the monastery and is indifferent to changes in the outside world and the needs of its followers, certainly has its specific historical background. However, it is undoubtedly contrary to the teachings of the Buddha. In today's society, especially in the face of fierce religious competition, Buddhism must change itself and focus more on the needs of its followers and society.

Emphasis on practice and experience: Emphasizing the practical experience of the faithful, encouraging them to participate in the day-to-day affairs of the monastery and public service activities, thereby deepening their understanding of

Buddhism. This is also an improvement in the situation in traditional monasteries. In traditional monasteries, believers can only serve the monastery and assist the sangha. In contrast, when the sangha has insufficient capacity, the faithful are willing and able to play a more significant role. This is a common need for both monasteries and the faithful.

Integration with new media: Utilizing new media for propaganda and education makes Buddhist teachings more vivid and close to the life of modern people. In a new era where more and more people are contacting Buddhism and getting information through the Internet and new media, Buddhism must also follow this trend.

In promoting the Humanistic Buddhism movement in mainland China, Chinese Buddhism has some problems that deserve reflection and some successful experiences. There is a need to strengthen further the management and supervision mechanism to ensure that the behavior of practitioners is in line with moral norms and social-ethical requirements, and there is also a need for more in-depth study and understanding of the Dharma in order to better serve the society and benefit sentient beings. An in-depth analysis and summary of these issues will be of great significance in guiding the future development of Chinese Buddhism.

4.4 Overview

As Humanistic Buddhism has developed, its modes of practice and influence have become increasingly prominent. This chapter delves into the specific practice of Humanistic Buddhism and its role in modern society. We can learn about the shortcomings of Humanistic Buddhism in practice and summarize its successes over the decades.

Diversity of Practice: Humanistic Buddhism significantly differs among monasteries and regions. Humanistic Buddhism encompasses various practice areas, from ecological conservation to public charity to spiritual care, reflecting its broad social impact.

Integration with modern society: Through the case studies, we can see that many monasteries have successfully integrated traditional Buddhist teachings with the needs of modern society. This integration not only promotes the spread of Humanistic

Buddhism but also makes it more in line with the spiritual needs of modern people.

Application of technology: Modern technology, especially the Internet and social media, has provided a new platform for the spread of Humanistic Buddhism. Many monasteries utilize these tools for online pujas, education, and propaganda, bringing Buddhist teachings closer to the younger generation.

Challenges and Problems: Despite the remarkable success of Humanistic Buddhism in mainland China, it faces a series of challenges and problems. For example, how to maintain the purity of the religion, how to deal with the relationship with business, and how to maintain a harmonious relationship with traditional Buddhism are all issues that need further exploration.

Overall, the development of Humanistic Buddhism in mainland China is a complex and multi-faceted process. The future development of Humanistic Buddhism requires further research and exploration. With the changes in society, Humanistic Buddhism also needs to constantly adjust and update its practices and strategies to meet the needs of modern society. Through in-depth research and analysis, we can better understand its role and significance in modern society.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 From Life Buddhism to Human Buddhism

The worry of over-emphasizing the humanistic aspect of "Humanistic Buddhism": "people-oriented" has become "over-emphasizing the humanistic aspect". On the one hand, the utilitarian demands of "dead" Buddhism and "ghost" Buddhism have not been weakened by the promotion of "Humanistic Buddhism"; on the other hand, the wind of secularization of Buddhism has an uncontrollable trend. On the other hand, the trend of secularization of Buddhism has been unstoppable. When the later generations hear the term "earthly", they will quickly be downgraded to "earthly" and "non-Buddhist"; when they hear the phrase "to be implemented in the daily life", they will again indulge in the complexity of the daily life and neglect the practice of Chan enlightenment and insight into karmic origins.

Over-emphasizing the humanistic nature is to ignore the lofty and sacred nature of Buddhism from the core of Buddhism so that Buddhism is distorted into a religion that takes Buddhism as its form of existence and aims at satisfying the needs of earthly nature. Buddhism becomes an earthly embellishment, responsible only for creating good earthly dharma. The part that applies to the world is recognized, and the part that transcends the world is intentionally or unintentionally hidden or deleted. Buddhist teachings, spirituality, and traditions have gradually become dust-covered and dimmed or even reduced to secular packaging and embellishments under the coercion of Buddhist culture, petty Buddhism, philosophical rationality, poetry, wine, tea, chicken soup for the soul, and flowery moonlight. Buddhism's holy relics, holy places, holy sites, and other physical resources are surrounded by the purpose of economic fame and fortune, plunged into the evil tide of Buddhism and precariousness. Consumption of Buddhist beliefs, dissolution of Buddhist sanctities, and the plundering of resources for the codification of Buddhist beliefs have become more and more intense. The purity and independence of the Buddhist faith have fallen step by step in the specious dissemination of the "Dharma" and the environment of mixed existence. The Mahayana illumination style and the Bodhisattva spirit of compassion have been

secularized into harmony. Buddhism has to be vulgarized and dwarfed to please the world as a footnote to "follow the world" and "always obey all living beings". The over-emphasis on human beings is not based on the fundamental needs of life, but rather, in the name of Buddhism, falls into the trap of being based on greed, anger, and obsession. This over-emphasis on the human being has already departed from Master Taixu's original purpose of "making the Buddha's journey the destination for believers."

In the 1940s, Master Taixu was already alert to and analyzed the problem of Shih Yin-shun's "over-emphasis on the human being". The master opposed Shih Yin-shun's so-called "rationalistic" study of Buddhism, arguing that Shih Yin-shun's work was "trapped in the narrow view that the Buddha did not speak the Mahayana in Ceylon or that the Mahayana was communicated from the Hinayana Communicators", and pointing out that the Mahayana Dharma was realized from the Buddha's fruition evidence rather than the "man-made suspense of remembering and writing". "artificially developed from the teachings of the Hinayana Communicators". From a fundamental point of view, the "development theory" essentially leads to the conclusion that "Mahayana is not the Buddha's theory" and that while the surface "honors Longshu", the substance cannot be fully adhered to. Therefore, what Shih Yin-shun calls "Humanistic Buddhism" has a severe tendency to "confuse the worldly with the worldly", "over-emphasizes the humanistic, and makes religious beliefs inferior", and is "a confusion between Buddhism and Confucianism". It is "a confusion between Buddhism and Confucianism". It is the root cause of the secularization phenomenon in the popularization of Buddhism, which can be called a mild version of "Mahayana non-Buddhism".

Master Taixu pointed out that the natural source of Shih Yin-shun's thought was not the original Buddhism's pure teachings but a confusion of Buddhist and Confucian thought. "To emphasize the human world should be a characteristic of China. However, Wang Shaolun, a recent author, said that 'China has over-emphasized the people, not only God, so that religious beliefs are not high; not only materialism so that natural sciences are not developed, which is the root of the endangered disease in modern times', which is over-emphasizing the human world, and the infinite number of living beings down below, and the supreme Buddha up above, which is suitable to save the deficiencies of Confucianism, and is sufficient to fulfill the energies of the national

race." ¹

Master Taixu's discussion was written four years before his death and can be regarded as the final word of his later years. However, its influence was far more significant than that of Humanistic Buddhism, which has become a direct descendant of Life Buddhism and is now famous. The problem of secularization of Buddhism, which the master foresaw as "mixing the world with the world", has been occurring from time to time today, and the "study of Buddhism" may become a "study without Buddha". The problem of secularization of Buddhism has been occurring from time to time today. "Buddhist Studies" may become "study without Buddha," and "Humanistic Buddhism" may become "Buddha abandoning the earth", which is inevitably worrying!

In *The Essentials of Buddhism*, the Master writes that worldly goodness must be based on worldly goodness. In his *Essentials of the Buddha's Teaching*, the Master writes that the worldly good dharma must be based on the worldly good dharma. To over-emphasize the human being is to over-emphasize the self-view and self-righteousness of human beings so that religious beliefs will not be high, and those who insist on the existence of the real will not be able to conform to the Buddhist Way.

5.2 Caution Against Secularization

Humanistic Buddhism is about focusing on the world and helping to heal the physical and mental ailments of the secular masses by participating in secular life. This is secular charity and philanthropy, but it is more than that. It is the practice of the Dharma. However, it is precisely because of this involvement in secular activities that one becomes more susceptible to secular infections. Buddhism is supposed to be out of the world and sacred. Nevertheless, Humanistic Buddhism is, in a sense, dissolving this sacredness.

The Sangha is the core group of Buddhism, and the Sangha mainly guides the development of Buddhism, so the secularization of Buddhism first changed from within the Sangha. This is mainly manifested in the violation of the Buddha's teachings, the breaking of the constraints of the precepts, and the lack of the practice of the holy paths of Right View, Right Karma, and Right Destiny. The moral code and norms of a

¹ SHI Taixu, *"Re-consideration of 'Buddhism in India'"*, p234

religion are reflected in the self-discipline of its followers. If a religious follower fails to abide by the rules of his or her religion for personal gain, it is a sign that the follower has begun to become secularized. Therefore, secularization of the sangha had already occurred during Buddha's time, especially after Buddha's death.

The sangha mourned in deep sorrow when the Buddha had just attained nirvana. However, a bhikkhu was particularly happy about this, thinking that from now on, he could live freely without following the Buddha's teachings or the precepts he had laid down. It is written in Volume 4 of the Nagarjuna Sutra: "At that time, there was a monk among them who said: "Do not worry, the World Honored One is gone, I will be free to go on with my life. The old man always said, "When I should do this, I should not do this, and from now on, I will do as I please." Volume 54 of the Tetragrammaton says: "Then there was Trujunga Siddhanta, who, amid the crowd, said to the bhikkhus, 'Elder, stop, do not cry out in sorrow, for I am liberated from him by the side of the Mah ābhārata. When he was there, he taught us several times whether we should or should not, whether we should or should not, whether we should or should not. We are now at liberty to do what we wish to do and not to do what we wish not to do.'" This account is also found in the Shanmai Torah. A similar account is also in the Pali version of the Ritsu-minor texts.

The principle of the Buddha's precept-making was that no offense should be committed. After the establishment of the Sangha, the number of lay monks increased, and the life of the Sangha became more and more complicated. Many people with lesser foundations entered the Bhikkhu Sangha, and thus, problems occurred that violated ethics and morality. As a result, Buddhist precepts were established one after another. This was to maintain the sangha's purity and dignity and protect the bhikkhus's noble virtues rather than restrict their freedom. Those who could not accept this rule were free to leave voluntarily and without any intention of coercion. However, the fact is not so simple, as in the case of the Sutra, some bhikkhus who want to live in the monastic community are unwilling to abide by the Buddhist system, which must lead to the secularization of Buddhism, slowly modifying the basic principles of Buddhism.

During its spread, Buddhism underwent both the baptism of time and the modification of local customs. Buddhism has developed in China for more than two thousand years. However, at a later stage, its shackles became more apparent, and its

secularization became more and more intense, significantly when China's social system changed; these phenomena became more prominent. At the end of the Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republic of China, as the Venerable Master Shih Yin-shun said, "The ancient system of the jungles within Buddhism was old and could not adapt to the new drastic changes. The quality of the monks was low, bound by the ancient system, and destroyed by society. The quality of the monks declined, and the ancient system and the ravages of society bound them. What else could the great masters of Chan Buddhism do besides building temples and towers? Chinese Buddhism had entered an unprecedented stage of danger. Master Taixu saw through this and therefore spoke out to advocate the renewal of the teaching system."² Today, the proposal of humanistic Buddhism can be said to provide an excellent opportunity to develop Buddhism in China. However, Humanistic Buddhism electricity is subsequently secularized. The situation is quite similar to that of the Tang Dynasty, more than a thousand years ago, as described in the Guang Hong Ming Jie (广弘明集), "Since the modern times, more temples have been established, not seeking a place of idleness, not seeking a place of leisure and openness, not seeking a place of peace. The situation is similar to the Tang Dynasty over a thousand years ago. The building is rugged, and the roofs and tiles are wrong. Recruitment of concealment, luring the treacherous. Alternatively, there are close to the outline of the residence, near and far the slaughter dealers, dust full of room, stink and fishy Yingdao or amicable planting beds and fields, and farmers and other streams; or evaluation of goods to seek wealth, and the merchants and people compete for profit; or entrusted to the nobility and the rich, in order to boast of the rich; or accounted for the good fortune and bad luck, martyred with the reputation so that the source of clarity gradually turbid, wandering into the muddy."³

The most prominent aspects of the recent secularization of Buddhism are the secularization of Buddhist rituals and inappropriate commercialization, which are described below:

5.2.1 Secularization of Buddhist Rituals

There can be no religion without rituals. During the primitive Buddhist

² SHIH Yin-shun, "A General Discussion of the Chinese Buddhist System", p76

³ SHI Daoxuan, "广弘明集·四部备要", Chung Hwa Book Company, p23

period, monks went out to beg for food, listened to the Buddha's sermons daily, and practiced meditation. Early Buddhism initially did not have a sutra ceremony. The Buddha warned his disciples that if they had any faults, they should dare to confess them, and repentance would lead to peace and happiness. However, as society changed, so did the Buddhist rituals, and there were more and more types of sutra Buddhist ceremonies.

Buddhist teachings are the carrier of the Buddha's spirit. Buddhist rituals are a way to soothe the heart, transform people's lives, and spread Buddhism, so studying the teachings and solemn rituals is very important. However, we must understand that Buddhist rituals are only a convenient way to attract beings and are not fundamental to Buddhism. To seek good fortune and avoid bad luck is a simple psychological need of people, and it is not wrong to beg the gods to protect us and send us hope. However, some Buddhist monks have overly catered to this secular mentality and have even utilized it to attract the public's attention with different rituals. Especially in modern times, in addition to normal monastic Buddhist activities, some places also engage in a series of so-called Buddhist activities such as car enlightenment and cell phone and cell phone number enlightenment. Such excessive catering to the world's needs, which is directly linked to the creation of economic benefits, not only can not enlighten people but also mislead people, so people misunderstand Buddhism. Shih Yin-shun also said, "Adapting to Chinese folklore, we may as well have Sutra and Confession ceremonies," but the proliferation of "Sutra and Confession ceremonies" in China has always been perceived as a phenomenon of the decline of the Buddha's teachings. It can be said that this behavior has lost the significance of Buddhism, and we should reflect deeply on this.

5.2.2 Illegitimate Commercialization

Buddhism is not opposed to legitimate business dealings, but the involvement of monks in business is never to be practiced. In ancient China, the most famous temples were situated in the mountains with beautiful scenery and quietness, so the temples maintained the ethereal and fantastic atmosphere of "the light of the mountain pleases the birds, the shadow of the pool empties the hearts of the people". However, now it is very different. Many of our temples have become a downtown with a solid commercial flavor.

Commercialization is always entangled with the secularization of Buddhist rituals. Buddhism does not deny legitimate commercial behavior, especially in today's monasteries. Conditions of existence have changed dramatically in the social environment, but the monastery openly sells the first incense of the New Year at a high price. The first bell is against the Buddha's holy teachings. Is it possible that whoever burns the first incense of the New Year will have the most well-being and fulfillment in the coming year?

Under the influence of the modern commercial society, some monks are engaged in investment and stock speculation; some monasteries have become entrepreneurial and corporatized, with monasteries running companies and monks becoming "businessmen". All of the above will lead Buddhism into secularization step by step. Of course, this is also a manifestation of secularization.

When the Buddhist faith becomes a means of competition in the social economy, the sacredness of Buddhism will be lost, leading to the decline of Buddhism's edification function and being criticized by the world. Whether burning the first incense or ringing the first bell, the essence is to take advantage of the greed of some people in the world, and at the same time, it also promotes people's greed and egoism, which is contrary to the original intention of Buddhism, which is to be clear of desire, to be indifferent to fame and fortune, and to break the egoism. The popularization of Human Buddhism is to break down these superstitions among ordinary people, to establish people's correct knowledge and insight, and to deeply understand the truth of "you reap what you sow", "do good deeds", and "karma".

5.3 Conclusion

In the 21st century, the pace of life is tight, materialistic desires are rampant, people's hearts are thin, and everything has dramatically changed between the present and the past. The times and karma are different, and so are the roots of all beings. A new era has a new mission to be initiated and undertaken. Of course, we should no longer impose the typical standards of the ancient sages on modern monks and nuns. However, as modern monks or nuns, we should at least be ashamed of our inability to succeed in the ancient virtues of weak behavior. In any case, one should not be ashamed

of oneself, but should not be ashamed to criticize the Chinese masters, who have painstakingly abided by the Dharma and renewed the Buddha's wisdom, for "eagerly seeking to prove themselves"!

Monks are spiritual guides, not direct creators of wealth. If Humanistic Buddhism brings to society the adverse effects of looking to money, putting personal interests above all else, diluting the concept of Buddhist subjectivity, lowering the level of Buddhist morality, and wavering Buddhist beliefs, then Humanistic Buddhism will fail. From the standpoint of Buddhism itself, Buddhism was originally the pursuit of liberation and emancipation, not only pursuing liberation but also enabling others to achieve liberation. This is the spirit of self-development and altruism. People often say, "Do no evil, do good, and purify one's mind; this is Buddhism". The first is common to all religions, while the second, "purify one's mind," is unique to Buddhism, focusing on one's inner spirituality. Because of this, Buddhism's outlook on life and values are different from those of other religions.

The spirit of Humanistic Buddhism is to leave the world without forgetting to enter the world and to enter the world without forgetting to leave the world. If one forgets to enter and leave the world, one will become secular; if one forgets to enter and leave the world, one will be detached from the real world and all living beings. Therefore, we should enrich the connotation of Humanistic Buddhism, expand its guiding role in real life, establish the connection between Humanistic Buddhism and traditional Chinese culture and national ethics, organically combine the basic precepts of Buddhism with social morality and behavioral norms, and play a positive role in protecting the ecological environment, maintaining social public order, and eliminating social disharmony. Buddhism must adapt to the times and be acceptable to the people, but not at the cost of lowering standards.

At the same time, we must oppose secularization in order to safeguard the sanctity of Buddhism's transformation into secularism. Only then will Buddhism be purified in the spiral of secularization and anti-secularization. It is when Buddhism is popularized (universalized), not secularized, that it will not lose its distinctive character of guiding believers and benefiting society, and will become one of the guidelines for human beings in the twenty-first century to deal with themselves as well as with the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature.

5.4 Prospect

The Buddhist community has a long way to go in promoting the development and prosperity of Humanistic Buddhism. Master Nebula said that to realize Humanistic Buddhism, it is necessary to "go to the cities, penetrate the society, care for the masses, transcend national boundaries, and propagate the Dharma globally". There are five main criteria for testing the success of the popularization of Humanistic Buddhism:

- (1) Whether it is in line with the teachings of Buddhism.
- (2) The degree of social acceptance of Humanistic Buddhism.
- (3) Whether the influence of Humanistic Buddhism is long-term or short-lived.
- (4) Whether the Taoist style of Buddhism has changed for the better or remains the same.
- (5) The extent to which it solves people's difficulties in believing in Buddhism.

The way to popularize humanistic Buddhism is to enhance its characteristics continuously and, in this process, achieve the four characteristics. 1) Characterization, i.e., monks should be like monks, and Buddhist believers should be like Buddhist believers. As a monk, one must first abide by the Buddhist precepts and improve one's character through the study of doctrine to be genuinely worthy of the believers' reliance and the world's trust. Dignity does not come from asking for it but from others' heartfelt trust and respect for a monk's character. The second thing is to undertake the responsibility of propagating the Dharma and benefiting the living beings for the benefit of society. Cultivation is a personal matter, and the propagation of the Dharma is the responsibility of the sangha, and the two should not be neglected. 2) Middle way, meaning that everything we do should not go to extremes. This is the fundamental spirit of the Buddha's manifestation in the world. Asceticism is not Buddhism; neither is hedonism. 3) Democratization means that within Buddhism, everyone can participate pretty in managing Buddhist affairs. The Karmapa method is a peculiarly Buddhist method of deliberation or meeting and is a manifestation of the democratization of Buddhism. Its function is to be transparent externally and to supervise each other internally, and its purpose is to establish guidelines for monastic

life. 4) Equalization, i.e., the equality of different sects of Buddhism and different ways of practice. The so-called 84,000 Dharma doors of Buddhism allow people with different roots to choose different Dharma doors to practice, and those who practice differently from themselves should not be excluded or denigrated.

There are also three characteristics of Universal Humanistic Buddhism: first, the characteristics of the world and the world; second, the characteristics of the nation. And third, the characteristics of the times. The so-called worldly and initiatory characteristics mean that we must face practical problems, solve practical problems, and be close to the thinking of the believing masses, and at the same time, we must not forget the fundamentals of the world, which is the practical lesson of Humanistic Buddhism; the so-called national characteristics mean that we must be in line with the traditional culture of the various nationalities and be pleasing to local people, and in line with local people's habits and acceptance; and the characteristics of the times mean that we must be in line with the course of the times, not lagging behind the times, and at the same time not rejecting those who have a different way of practicing. The characteristics of the times mean that they must be consistent with the development of the times and must not lag behind them while at the same time reflecting the positive ideas of humanistic Buddhism. In order to promote the popularization of humanistic Buddhism, it is necessary to have a deep understanding of its connotations and theoretical essence; otherwise, it will mislead all beings and lead to secularization and vulgarization.

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BIOGRAPHY

NAME

YANG LI

TELEPHONE

+8613530111080

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Sep.,2015~Jul.,2019

Bachelor's Degree, Benhuan Academy, China

Oct., 2022~Sep., 2024

Working toward the M.A. in Global Buddhism,

Institute of Science Innovation & Culture,

Rajamangala University of Technology

Krungthep, Thailand

