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Processes of Spatialization  
under the Global Condition

Nikolas Broy  
Jens Reinke  
Philip Clart

**Migrating Buddhas and  
Global Confucianism:  
The Transnational Space-  
Making of Taiwanese  
Religious Organizations**

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Migrating Buddhas and Global Confucianism: The Transnational  
Space-Making of Taiwanese Religious Organizations  
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# Content

1	Introduction	4
2	Chinese / Taiwanese Religions and Globalization: a Review	5
3	Theoretical Framework and Research Questions	10
4	Fieldwork and Research Methods	15
5	Preliminary Observations	17
	5.1 Buddha's Light Mountain	17
	5.2 Yiguandao	20
6	Outlook	25
7	References	26

## Abstract

This project explores the global spread of the two Taiwanese religious organizations Foguangshan ("Buddha's Light Mountain") and Yiguandao ("Way of Pervading Unity") by studying their transnational religious spaces. Particularly since the gradual relaxation of political restraints in 1980s Taiwan, both religious organizations have started to spread their religious and cultural traditions on a global scale. Their endeavours connect, cross, and inhabit countries affected by Chinese migration as well as facilitate cross-border spatial arrangements such as transnational communities (including Chinese diaspora/Chinese cultural sphere/Buddhism). By focusing on three primary field sites, namely South Africa, the United States, and East Asia (China and Japan), and applying the methodological framework of multi-sited ethnography, we aim to understand the transnational organizational structures, the creation of transnational social spaces, and the dynamics of central control and decentralization of the two religious organizations.

This project is a part of the Collaborative Research Centre "Processes of Spatialization under the Global Condition", which deals with questions like what characterizes the spaces made by people, how they relate to one another, and whether resulting spatial orders are becoming increasingly complex within the context of globalization processes. Of all projects at this centre, this project is the only one dealing specifically with religion and processes of spatialization under the global condition.

# 1 Introduction

This project explores the global spread of the two Taiwanese religious organizations Foguangshan (佛光山, “Buddha’s Light Mountain”) and Yiguandao (一貫道, “Way of Pervading Unity”) by applying the theoretical framework of transnational social spaces. Particularly since the gradual relaxation of political restraints in 1980s Taiwan, both religious organizations have started to spread their religious and cultural traditions on a global scale. Their endeavours connect, cross, and inhabit countries affected by Chinese migration as well as facilitate border-crossing spatial arrangements such as transnational communities (including Chinese diaspora/Chinese cultural sphere/Buddhism).<sup>1</sup> Although both organizations proclaim a universal message, which they deem relevant for Chinese and non-Chinese individuals alike, the dynamics resulting from their roles as providers of diasporic services appear to be important for the transnational space-making of these two religious organizations. Thus, the context of their global spread is strongly shaped by the transnational processes of Chinese migration and diaspora building. Foguangshan and Yiguandao are important representatives of the “Chinese tradition” in the diaspora. Not only do they emphasize a self-proclaimed mission to bring Chinese culture to the diasporas around the globe, but they also claim to preserve this “tradition” and to protect it from the anti-religious and anti-traditional policies that marked the first decades of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Since the turn of the century, however, demographic shifts of Chinese migration worldwide and an increasing openness for “Chinese religions” in the PRC have also sparked Foguangshan’s and Yiguandao’s interest to “return” to the religious market of mainland China. This interest and the resulting initiatives create new transnational spatial configurations that further connect the Chinese diaspora with the core states of the Chinese cultural sphere (the PRC and the Republic of China, ROC).

In order to achieve an understanding of these complex processes of spatialization, we apply multi-sited ethnography as our main methodical approach. We have chosen four primary field sites that differ in their importance for and functions within the two religious organizations: starting with Taiwan, which constitutes the home base of Buddha’s Light and the Way of Pervading Unity, we will then also conduct ethnographic fieldwork in South Africa, the United States of America, and East Asia. Because the state of California in the United States is one of the main destinations of Taiwanese and Chinese migration outside of Asia, Californian branch temples of Yiguandao and Foguangshan maintain a close connection to the Taiwanese headquarters, which in turn exerts a high degree of regulation over their religious activities. The decline of Taiwanese migration to South Africa since the 1990s, on the other hand, appears to have led to a decrease in interest for the region, which in turn seems to be causing a gradual relaxation of central regulation. East Asia (China and Japan) has been selected as the third region, because it demonstrates the focus of particularly recent endeavours. The new importance attributed to the Chinese religious market has – at least in the case of Foguangshan – caused a significant shifting and redirecting of the organization’s resources in order to gain access. Thus, by including this sample we aim to study current developments of Foguangshan’s transnational space-making. While Yiguandao shares a similar agenda of returning to its country of origin, it has to keep a low profile in its activities because it is still banned in the PRC. Considering the ethical and practical issues of researching an illegal religious organization in China, we have selected Japan as the Asian field site in this case study. With a proselytizing history of almost 70 years and a relatively high proportion of local Japanese members, Japan is a suitable field site to examine Yiguandao’s transcultural and international spread in East Asia. In addition to these four primary field sites, we have already conducted supplementary field research in 2016 at two large European chapters of these organizations in Berlin (Foguangshan) and Vi-

1 We will use the terms “Chinese diaspora” and “overseas Chinese” interchangeably to describe minority Chinese-speaking communities outside of the People’s Republic of China (PRC, including Hong Kong and Macao) and the Republic of China on Taiwan (ROC, or simply Taiwan) without any indication of the nationality of individual members of these communities. Rather, “Chinese”, as it is understood here, refers to all individuals and communities across the globe who trace their origins back to Chinese ancestry and share Chinese cultural notions and practices, such as the Chinese language. Cf. Deeg, “Zwischen kultureller Identität und universalem Heilsanspruch: Chinesische religiöse Diaspora-Gemeinden im Wandel moderner gesellschaftlicher Verhältnisse: Das Beispiel der ‘Mile-dadao (Yiguan-dao)’- und ‘Foguang-shan’-Gruppen in Wien”, in H. Lehmann (ed.), *Migration und Religion im Zeitalter der Globalisierung*, Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005, pp. 51–53; G. Wang, “Greater China and the Chinese Overseas”, *The China Quarterly* 136 (1993), pp. 926–948. The term “Chinese cultural sphere” is slightly more ambiguous, but we understand it to include the diaspora as well as the PRC (including Hong Kong and Macao) and the ROC on Taiwan.

enna (Yiguandao).<sup>2</sup> In the case of Yiguandao the Vienna chapter serves as the seat of its national association and as hub of its respective European networks. Accordingly, Berlin and Vienna will be included as additional case studies, though they do not constitute primary field sites.

By comparing the transnational involvements of Foguangshan and Yiguandao in these three specific regions (South Africa, North America, and East Asia) and by assessing the interrelatedness of these involvements we aim to understand the dynamics that shape the religious transnational space-making of the two organizations. By shedding light on the hitherto neglected phenomenon of the global spread of Taiwanese (and Chinese) religious organizations, our project aims to contribute not only to Chinese Studies and the academic field of Chinese / Taiwanese religions but also to scholarly discussions about religion, migration, and transnationalism in general.

Before describing the questions and hypotheses that guide our research in greater detail, the following section of this working paper will briefly present the state of the field of research on the globalization of Taiwanese and Chinese religions. Because “Taiwanese” religions are usually analysed within the larger framework of “Chinese religions”, it is necessary not only to mention studies about Taiwanese religious organizations but also to situate previous research within the larger field of the globalization of Chinese religions. Because of the cultural proximity of the Chinese / Taiwanese and the Japanese cases in terms of cultural-historical identities and socio-ethical values, this section will also introduce a number of research works in the globalization of Japanese religions, which present important points of reference for the present project. While the third section will expound the basic questions, theoretical assumptions, and hypotheses that guide our research, the fourth section will sketch the multi-sited ethnographic approach that we advocate. The fifth and final part of this working paper is based on the existing scholarly literature, religious publications, and fieldwork conducted in Taiwan, and it introduces preliminary observations regarding the global spread of Foguangshan and Yiguandao.

## 2 Chinese / Taiwanese Religions and Globalization: a Review

The global spread of religious traditions is a fairly well-researched topic in the academic study of religions. Although it is not necessarily discussed within the analytical framework of globalization studies, the premodern spread of the so-called world religions Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism has already paved the way for a comparative and global perspective on religion.<sup>3</sup> While the increasing attention paid to globalization across academic disciplines has led a number of scholars to explore the global dimension of religion in general,<sup>4</sup> most case studies focus on transnational migration and diasporic religiosities with regard

2 For further information about these chapters, see: <http://fgs-tempel.de/de> and <http://www.andong.eu> (accessed 26 October 2016).

3 T. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005; cf. M. Juergensmeyer (ed.), *Global Religions: An Introduction*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003; U. Berner, “Early Christianity as a Global Religion”, in: A.W. Geertz, D.R. Christensen, and M. Warburg (eds.), *New Religions and Globalization: Empirical, Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives*, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2008, pp. 145–161.

4 H. Seiwert, “Religion und moderne Umwelt: Globale Perspektiven religiöser Innovation”, in: K. Rudolph and G. Rinschede (eds.), *Beiträge zur Religion/Umwelt-Forschung: Erster Tagungsband des Interdisziplinären Symposiums in Eichstätt, 5.–8. Mai 1988*, Berlin: D. Reimer Verlag, 1989, pp. 25–38; P. Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, London: Sage Publications, 1994; P. Beyer, *Religions in Global Society*, New York: Routledge, 2006; P. Beyer, *Religion in the Context of Globalization: Essays on Concept, Form, and Political Implication*, New York: Routledge, 2013; P. Beyer and L.G. Beaman (eds.), *Religion, Globalization and Culture*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007; J. Casanova, “Religion, the New Millennium, and Globalization”, *Sociology of Religion* 62 (2001) 4, pp. 415–441; J.A. Beckford, *Social Theory and Religion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 103–149; M. Geoffroy, “Theorizing Religion in the Global Age: A Typological Analysis”, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 18 (2004) 1/2, pp. 33–46; T.J. Csordas, (ed.), *Transnational Transcendence: Essays on Religion and Globalization*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009; A.W. Geertz, D.R. Christensen, and M. Warburg (eds.), *New Religions and Globalization: Empirical, Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives*, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2008.

to South Asian and African (or African-American) religions in the Americas and Europe.<sup>5</sup> When compared to this scholarship, the global spread of East Asian religions, and that of Taiwanese and Chinese religiosities in particular, represents only a minor field of research. However, the globalization of Japanese religions,<sup>6</sup> and of Japanese “new religious organizations,”<sup>7</sup> has been the subject of considerable academic interest. The fairly well-documented Japanese experience therefore represents a significant point of reference for the present project.

In particular, the global spread of the lay-Buddhist movement Sōka Gakkai (創価学会, “Society for the Creation of Values”) has attracted the attention of international scholars. Officially founded in 1930 as a lay wing of the Nichiren branch 日蓮宗 of Japanese Buddhism, Sōka Gakkai evolved into one of the largest lay-Buddhist movements in post-WWII Japan. As was the case with other religious traditions that Japanese migrants brought with them to their new homes, Sōka Gakkai remained an ethnic religion until the 1950s and served as an “identity marker” for the diaspora communities. This situation only began to change in the 1960s, when Sōka Gakkai was able to attract followers from various cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds and finally evolved into the single largest Japanese new religion in the United States. In response to the general political and cultural climate of the 1960s and 1970s, Sōka Gakkai was able to address common philosophical and ideological questions and to offer a way to save the world by “greening religion and through it politics.”<sup>8</sup> In Brazil, where there was already a considerable Japanese diaspora community, Sōka Gakkai was equally successful in establishing itself as a major religious force, particularly among people of non-Japanese origin.<sup>9</sup> While most Japanese religions abroad only gradually came to perceive the ethnic identity of their religious programmes as a hindrance to the proselytizing of second and third-generation migrants, not to mention the recruitment of people without Japanese cultural background, Sōka Gakkai was the first Japanese religious organization to deliberately develop strategies for its global spread beyond the confines of Japanese diasporas. Thus, in 1975 Sōka Gakkai’s third president Ikeda Daisaku 池田大作 (b. 1928) founded “Sōka Gakkai International” (SGI), the international organization that is explicitly charged with implementing missionary strategies on a global basis.<sup>10</sup> This unique feature attracted the attention of numerous sociologists of religion who examined its spread to and accommodation in diverse societies,

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- 5 R.B. Williams, *Religions of Immigrants from India and Pakistan: New Threads in the American Tapestry*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; T.A. Tweed, *Our Lady of the Exile: Diaspora Religion at a Cuban Catholic Shrine in Miami*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; S. Vertovec, *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Pattern*, London: Routledge, 2000; M. Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten: Geschichte und Gemeinschaften*, Marburg: Diagonal-Verlag, 1995; M. Baumann, *Migration, Religion, Integration: Buddhistische Vietnamesen und hinduistische Tamilen in Deutschland*, Marburg: Diagonal-Verlag, 2000; H.R.F. Ebaugh and J.S. Chafetz (eds.), *Religion Across Borders: Transnational Immigrant Networks*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002; K.E. Richman, *Migration and Vodou*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005; P. C. Johnson, *Diaspora Conversions: Black Carib Religion and the Recovery of Africa*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007; M.W. Foley and D.R. Hoge, *Religion and the New Immigrants: How Faith Communities Form our Newest Citizens*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007; L.A. Lorentzen (ed.), *Religion at the Corner of Bliss and Nirvana: Politics, Identity, and Faith in New Migrant Communities*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009; A.K. Nagel (ed.), *Diesseits der Parallelgesellschaft: Neuere Studien zu religiösen Migrantengemeinden in Deutschland*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2012.
  - 6 H. Nakamaki, *Japanese Religions at Home and Abroad: Anthropological Perspectives*, London, New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003; M. Ama, *Immigrants to the Pure Land: The Modernization, Acculturation, and Globalization of Shin Buddhism, 1898–1941*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2011; U. Dessi, *Japanese Religions and Globalization*, London: Routledge, 2013; U. Dessi, *The Global Repositioning of Japanese Religions: An Integrated Approach*, New York: Routledge, 2017; N. Inoue, “The Influence of Globalization on Japanese Religion”, *Journal of Religion in Japan* 3 (2014) 2–3, pp. 97–120; R.Y. Matsue, “The Globalization Process of Shin Buddhism in Brasilia”, *Journal of Religion in Japan* 3 (2014) 2–3, pp. 226–246.
  - 7 P.B. Clarke and J. Somers (eds.), *Japanese New Religions in the West*, Sandgate, Folkestone, Kent: Japan Library, 1994; P.B. Clarke (ed.), *Japanese New Religions: In Global Perspective*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000; H. Matsuoka, *Japanese Prayer Below the Equator: How Brazilians Believe in the Church of World Messianity*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007; D.A. Métraux, *How Soka Gakkai Became a Global Buddhist Movement: The Internationalization of a Japanese Religion*, Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010; E.M. Derrett, “The International Face of a Japanese ‘New Religion’: Sekai Kyusei Kyo in Brazil and Thailand”, *Religion* 13 (2011) 3, pp. 205–17.
  - 8 P.B. Clarke, “‘Success’ and ‘Failure’: Japanese New Religions Abroad”, in: P.B. Clarke (ed.), *Japanese New Religions: In Global Perspective*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000, p. 281. By “greening” Clarke refers to an increasing awareness of environmental and dietary issues.
  - 9 Clarke, “‘Success’ and ‘Failure’”; P.B. Clarke, “Globalization and the Pursuit of a Shared Understanding of the Absolute: The Case of Soka Gakkai in Brazil”, in: L. Learman (ed.), *Buddhist Missionaries in the Era of Globalization*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005, pp. 123–139.
  - 10 B. Bocking, “Of Priests, Protests and Protestant Buddhists: The Case of Soka Gakkai International”, in P. B. Clarke and J. Somers (ed.), *Japanese New Religions in the West*, Sandgate, Folkestone, Kent: Japan Library, 1994, pp. 117–131.

such as the United States,<sup>11</sup> Canada,<sup>12</sup> Mexico,<sup>13</sup> Cuba,<sup>14</sup> Brazil,<sup>15</sup> Southeast Asia,<sup>16</sup> Great Britain,<sup>17</sup> Austria,<sup>18</sup> and Germany.<sup>19</sup> Because of the proximity of the Japanese example in terms of cultural-historical identities and socio-ethical values, these case studies provide important comparative material and methodological suggestions for the present project.

The global spread of Chinese and Taiwanese religions has been studied largely in terms of diaspora religiosities. While work-related migration from the Chinese mainland to Southeast Asia and the Americas dates back at least to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the extensive relocation of Taiwanese residents, particularly to North America, is a fairly recent phenomenon that resulted from Taiwan's political liberalization in the late 1980s.<sup>20</sup> These migrants, who are generally referred to as "overseas Chinese" (*huaqiao* 華僑), both in emic and etic terms, or as the "Chinese diaspora", usually took their local religious traditions and practices with them, thus establishing places and spaces of ethnic and cultural identification in often unfamiliar social and cultural environments. With most of these religious practices having originated in specific localities in China or Taiwan, their very embeddedness in these local cultures thus enabled migrants to create and maintain links to their places of origin, many of which evolved into complex temple networks, especially between Southeast Asian diasporas and the ancestral temples on the southeastern Chinese coast, from where most Southeast Asian Chinese had initially emigrated in the past.<sup>21</sup> Albeit less dense, similar relationships also exist in the case of more remote Chinese communities in the United States or elsewhere.<sup>22</sup> Because of the greater distance, interaction may become less physical. Nevertheless it is still maintained via modern means of communication and remittance, such as in the case of migrants from southeastern China in Spain who have established lasting bonds by donating money to their home temple in Zhejiang province.<sup>23</sup> Apart from these temple networks, some of which have been in existence for more than a century, the globalization of transregional Chinese religious enterprises is a fairly recent phenomenon and has therefore barely been

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- 11 PE. Hammond and D.W. Machacek, *Soka Gakkai in America: Accommodation and Conversion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- 12 D.A. Métraux, *The Soka Gakkai Buddhist Movement in Quebec: The Lotus and the Fleur De Lys*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997.
- 13 Ōkubo Masayuki 大久保雅行, "The Acceptance of Nichiren Shōshū Sōka Gakkai in Mexico", *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 18 (1991) 2/3, pp. 189–211.
- 14 G. Rodríguez Plasencia, "Sōka Gakkai in Cuba", *Journal of Religion in Japan* 3 (2014) 2–3, pp. 198–225.
- 15 Clarke, "Globalization and the Pursuit of a Shared Understanding of the Absolute".
- 16 J. Clammer, "The Happiness-Making Machine: Soka Gakkai and Japanese Cultural Presence in Singapore", in: E. Ben-Ari and J. Clammer (eds.), *Japan in Singapore: Cultural Occurrences and Cultural Flows*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000, pp. 175–193; D.A. Métraux, *The International Expansion of a Modern Buddhist Movement: The Soka Gakkai in Southeast Asia and Australia*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001; Métraux, *How Soka Gakkai Became a Global Buddhist Movement*; J. Finucane, "Proselytizing, Peacework, and Public Relations: Soka Gakkai's Commitment to Interreligious Harmony in Singapore", in: J. Finucane and R. M. Feener (eds.), *Proselytizing and the Limits of Religious Pluralism in Contemporary Asia*, Singapore: Springer, 2014, pp. 103–124.
- 17 B.R. Wilson and K. Dobbelaere, *A Time to Chant: The Sōka Gakkai Buddhists in Britain*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- 18 L. Pokorný, "A Grand Stage for kōsen rufu in the Future: Sōka Gakkai in Austria, 1961–1981", in: H.G. Hödl and L. Pokorný (eds.), *Religion in Austria*, 2 vols, Wien: Praesens, 2015, pp. 1–48.
- 19 S. Ionescu, "Adapt or Perish: The Story of Soka Gakkai in Germany", in: P.B. Clarke (ed.), *Japanese New Religions: In Global Perspective*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000, pp. 182–197; M. Schweigkofler, *Sōka Gakkai International in Deutschland (SGI-D): Diskursanalytische Untersuchungen*, München: Utz, 2014.
- 20 C. Chen, *Getting Saved in America: Taiwanese Immigration and Religious Experience*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, pp.19–23.
- 21 K. Dean, and Z. Zheng, *Ritual Alliances of the Putian Plain*, 2 vols, Leiden: Brill, 2010, pp. 229–254; K. Dean, "Ritual Revolutions: Temple and Trust Networks Linking Putian and Southeast Asia", *Cultural Diversity in China* 1 (2015) 1, pp. 8–26; K.E. Kuah-Pearce, *Rebuilding the Ancestral Village: Singaporeans in China*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011; C.B. Tan, "Tianhou and the Chinese in Diaspora", in: C.B. Tan (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of the Chinese Diaspora*, London, New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 417–429; C.B. Tan, "Ancestral God, Locality God, and Chinese Transnational Pilgrimage", in: C.B. Tan (ed.), *After Migration and Religious Affiliation: Religions, Chinese Identities, and Transnational Networks*, Singapore, Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Pub. Co. Pte. Ltd, 2015, pp. 351–376.
- 22 J.H. Lee, "Contemporary Chinese-American Religious Life", in: J. Miller (ed.), *Chinese Religions in Contemporary Societies*, Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006, pp. 235–256; J.H. Lee, "Creating a Transnational Religious Community: The Empress of Heaven, Goddess of the Sea Tianhou / Mazu, from Beigang, Taiwan to San Francisco U.S.A.", in: L.A. Lorentzen (ed.), *Religion at the Corner of Bliss and Nirvana: Politics, Identity, and Faith in New Migrant Communities*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009, pp. 166–183; J.H. Lee, "Transnational Goddess on the Move: Meiguo Mazu's Celestial Inspection Tour and Pilgrimage as Chinese American Culture Work and Vernacular Chinese Religion", PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2009; K.M. Chun, "Religious Organizations in San Francisco Chinatown: Sites of Acculturation for Chinese Immigrant Youth", in: L.A. Lorentzen (ed.), *Religion at the Corner of Bliss and Nirvana: Politics, Identity, and Faith in New Migrant Communities*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009, pp. 89–123; Tan, "Ancestral God, Locality God, and Chinese Transnational Pilgrimage".
- 23 I.M. Torruella, "Transnational Ritual Practices among the Chinese Migrants in Spain", in: C.B. Tan (ed.), *After Migration and Religious Affiliation: Religions, Chinese Identities, and Transnational Networks*, Singapore, Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Pub. Co. Pte. Ltd, 2015, pp. 329–350.



researched in any depth.<sup>24</sup> While religious organizations in the PRC had to recover in a step-by-step manner from the aggressive anti-religious policies of the Mao era before turning to the rest of the world, the relatively laissez-faire policy of the ROC allowed religious organizations to develop impressive capacities in regard to public activism, proselytizing, and fundraising as early as the 1980s. Consequently, the globalization of Chinese religious organizations started in Taiwan. Accordingly, studies in the globalization of Chinese Buddhism usually focus on its Taiwanese version (see below), except for a few works that examine, for instance, the spread of the world-renowned Shaolin monastery 少林寺 and its martial arts culture to Germany,<sup>25</sup> and the emergence of global Chinese Buddhist networks in the twentieth century.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, the spread of Daoist culture to the United States<sup>27</sup> and to Brazil<sup>28</sup> is also primarily related to the migration of Taiwanese Daoists. A first step in the study of mainland Daoist globalization is David Palmer's recent work on a group of American spiritual seekers, whom he calls "dream trippers", which investigates how they appropriate and accommodate Daoism through "spiritual tourism" to religious sites on the Chinese mainland.<sup>29</sup> Probably the best-studied Chinese religious export is the Falungong 法輪功 movement; in this case, however, globalization is not so much the outcome of deliberate and strategic planning on the side of Falungong practitioners, but rather an effect that appears to have been prompted chiefly by the persecution of the movement in the PRC that has taken place since 1999.<sup>30</sup>

Scholarship in the globalization of Taiwanese religious organizations has focused largely on Buddhist organizations, such as the "Compassion Relief Foundation" (Ciji gongdehui 慈濟功德會, emic transcription: Tzu Chi) and, to a lesser degree, "Buddha's Light Mountain" (Foguangshan 佛光山). The global spread of the modern sectarian movement "Way of Pervading Unity" (Yiguandao 一貫道), however, has also been researched, though it is largely confined to Chinese-speaking academia. While scholarship on Foguangshan and Yiguandao will be discussed in section 5 of this working paper, it is reasonable to explore the international activities of the Ciji Foundation first, because it has attracted by far the most academic attention.

The lay-Buddhist humanitarian network was founded in 1966 by the nun Zhengyan 證嚴法師 (b. 1937) as a female-based grassroots charity in the poor regions of northeastern Taiwan, but it has evolved into the island's largest charitable organization and controls billions of Taiwanese dollars (NT\$)<sup>31</sup> and engages in medical aid, disaster relief, and educational activities in Taiwan and abroad. With a self-proclaimed global membership of several million people, who are organized into at least 35 national chapters and an even higher number of unofficial networks in other countries, Ciji's global welfare endeavour earned in-

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- 24 Cf. A. Laliberté, "Les religions d'Asie de l'Est mondialisées: Le rôle des états", *Revue internationale de politique comparée* 16 (2009) 1, pp. 19–39; R. Madsen and E. Siegler, "The Globalization of Chinese Religions and Traditions", in: D.A. Palmer, G.L. Shive, and P.L. Wickeri (eds.), *Chinese Religious Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 227–240; Jiang Jianyong 蔣堅永 and Xu Yihua 徐以驊 (eds.), *Zhongguo zongjiao zouchuqu zhanlue lunji* 中國宗教走出去戰略論集, Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2015.
- 25 J. Lüdde, *Die Akkulturation chinesisch-buddhistischer Kultur im Shaolin Tempel Deutschland*, Berlin: LIT, 2007; J. Lüdde, "Die Akkulturation des Chan-Buddhismus im Shaolin Tempel Deutschland", *Transformierte Buddhismen* 1 (2008), pp. 28–53.
- 26 Y. Ashiwa and D.L. Wank, "The Globalization of Chinese Buddhism: Clergy and Devotee Networks in the Twentieth Century", *The International Journal of Asian Studies* 2 (2005) 2, pp. 217–237.
- 27 E.T. Siegler, "The Dao of America: The History and Practice of American Daoism", PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2003.
- 28 D. Murray, "Daoism in Brazil: The Globalization of the Orthodox Unity (Zhengyi) Tradition", MA thesis, Queen's University, 2010; D. Murray and J. Miller, "The Daoist Society of Brazil and the Globalization of Orthodox Unity Daoism", *Daoist Studies* 6 (2013), pp. 93–114; M.O. da Costa, "Daoismo tropical: Transplantação do Daoismo ao Brasil através da Sociedade Taoista do Brasil e da Sociedade Taoista SP", PhD diss., Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, 2015.
- 29 D.A. Palmer, "Globalizing Daoism at Huashan: Quanzhen Monks, Danwei Politics, and International Dream Trippers", in: Xun Liu and V. Goossaert (eds.), *Quanzhen Daoists in Chinese Society and Culture, 1500–2010*, Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2013, pp. 113–40; D.A. Palmer, "Transnational Sacralizations: When Daoist Monks meet Global Spiritual Tourists", *Ethnos* 79 (2014) 2, pp. 169–92; D.A. Palmer, and E. Siegler, *Dream Trippers: Global Daoism and the Predicament of Modern Spirituality*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017.
- 30 N. Porter, "Falun Gong in the United States: An Ethnographic Study", PhD diss., University of South Florida, 2003; S.E. Ackerman, "Falun Dafa and the New Age Movement in Malaysia: Signs of Health, Symbols of Salvation", *Social Compass* 52 (2005) 4, pp. 495–511; D. Ownby, "The Falun Gong in the New World", *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 2 (2003) 2, pp. 303–320; D. Ownby, *Falun Gong and the Future of China*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008; A. Kravchuk, "Activity of the Chinese Religious Movement Falun Gong in Russia", *Anthropology & Archeology of Eurasia* 46 (2008) 3, pp. 36–50; C.H. Lim, "Migration as a Spiritual Pathway: Narratives of Chinese Falungong Practitioners in Singapore", *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 14 (2013) 1, pp. 57–70; W. Huang, "The Geopolitics of Religious Spatiality and Falun Gong's Campaign in New York", in: I. Becci, M. Burchardt, and J. Casanova (eds.), *Topographies of Faith: Religion in Urban Spaces*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009, pp. 129–148; S. Dalby, "Popular Qigong and Transnational Falun Gong Inside and Outside Post-Mao China", in: B.S. Turner and O. Salemink (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Religions in Asia*, London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 247–261.
- 31 At present, NT\$36 equals approximately €1.



ternational recognition when it registered with the United Nations as a non-governmental organization (NGO) in 2004.<sup>32</sup> In addition, Ciji was able to boost its international influence even further by becoming one of eight NGOs that were granted a special consultative status within the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in early 2010.<sup>33</sup> Yet despite its impressive record, the globalization of Ciji has not yet been studied in its entirety. By examining regional developments in the United States,<sup>34</sup> Canada,<sup>35</sup> Malaysia,<sup>36</sup> and the PRC,<sup>37</sup> scholars have often tried to analyse the nature of Ciji's global network.<sup>38</sup> While some scholars argue that Compassion Relief represents a "Taiwan-centred charismatic transnationalism"<sup>39</sup> that is focused on Zhengyan's leadership and the headquarters in eastern Taiwan, which is sometimes described as a "sacred land" for Ciji activists,<sup>40</sup> others emphasize that Ciji may be better understood in terms of "religious cosmopolitanism", in the sense that strong regional leaders also identify with their respective host societies, and thus exercise multiple loyalties and diverse transnational ways of life.<sup>41</sup> In addition, André Laliberté has explored how Ciji helps to create spaces for civic engagement in the highly regulated field of public philanthropy in the PRC,<sup>42</sup> thus demonstrating another mode of the spatialization of social practices.

While these works attest to a trend among Chinese and Taiwanese religious organizations towards transnational engagements, most studies have failed to address the spatial aspects of these developments. In particular, the spaces created by transnational or migrating religious actors, the varying forms of interaction between centres, peripheries, diasporas, and host societies, as well as the multifaceted and shifting meanings of religious places themselves are yet to be discussed in detail. Therefore, our project attempts to explore the transnational space-making of the two Taiwanese religious organizations Foguangshan and Yiguandao in three field sites.

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- 32 C.J. Huang, *Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009, p. 9.
- 33 United Nations, "Committee on NGOs Recommends Consultative Status for 8 Organizations, Postpones Consideration of 34 Applications", <http://www.un.org/press/en/2010/ecosoc6406.doc.htm> (accessed 7 June, 2016).
- 34 Huang, *Buddhists in Action*; H.D. Yan, "Social Entrepreneurship of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement", *American Journal of Entrepreneurship* 1 (2012), pp. 37–56; J.H. Lee, "Spreading Compassion in America: Tzu Chi U.S.A. and the New Frontier of American Civil Religion", in: *Foxue lunwenji: Renjian Fojiao ji canyu Fojiao de moshi yu zhanwang (2009 nian)* 佛學研究論文集 -- 人間佛教及參與佛教的模式與展望(2009年), Kaohsiung: Foguangshan wenjiao jijinhui, 2010, pp. 542–558; J.H. Lee, "Tzu Chi Compassion Society's Peace Work in America", *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Universities* 3 (2012), pp. 145–164; J.H. Lee and C. Hsun, "Globalization or Transnationalism? Analysis of Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation's Expansion and Development", *Chinese America: History & Perspectives* (2013): 9–22.
- 35 K. Braun, "The Tzu Chi Foundation and the Buddha's Light International Association: The Impact of Ethnicity in the Transmission of Chinese Buddhism to Canada", MA thesis, University of Alberta, 2004; A. Laliberté and M. Litalien, "The Tzu Chi Merit Society from Taiwan to Canada", in: J.S. Harding, V.S. Hori, and A.D. Soucy (eds.), *Wild Geese: Buddhism in Canada*, Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010, pp. 350–385.
- 36 Huang, *Buddhism and its Trust Networks between Taiwan, Malaysia, and the United States*; C.J. Huang, "From Diasporic to Ecumenical: The Buddhist Tzu Chi (Ciji) Movement in Malaysia", in: J. Finucane and R.M. Feener (eds.), *Proselytizing and the Limits of Religious Pluralism in Contemporary Asia*, Singapore: Springer, 2014, pp. 191–209.
- 37 A. Laliberté, "Love Transcends Borders' or 'Blood Is Thicker Than Water': The Charity Work of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation in the People's Republic of China", *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 2 (2003) 2, pp. 243–262; A. Laliberté, "Buddhist Charities and China's Social Policy", *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 158 (2012), pp. 95–117; A. Laliberté, "The Growth of a Taiwanese Buddhist Association in China: Soft Power and Institutional Learning", *China Information* 27 (2013) 1, pp. 81–105.
- 38 Cf. C.J. Huang, "The Compassion Relief Diaspora", in: L. Learman (ed.), *Buddhist Missionaries in the Era of Globalization*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005, pp. 185–209; C.J. Huang, "Buddhism and its Trust Networks between Taiwan, Malaysia, and the United States", *The Eastern Buddhist* 44 (2013) 2, pp. 1–18.; G. Fisher, "Globalizing Buddhists from Margins to Center: Mobile Charisma in the Tzu Chi Movement", *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 11 (2010) 3, pp. 451–456.
- 39 C.J. Huang, "Sacred or Profane? The Compassion Relief Movement's Transnationalism in Taiwan, Japan, Malaysia, and the United States", *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 2 (2003) 2, pp. 231–233; Huang, *The Compassion Relief Movement's Transnationalism*;
- 40 W. Huang, "Buddhists in Action: Transnational Migration and Religious Cosmopolitanism", *Encounters* 4 (2011), pp. 219–221; cf. C.J. Huang, "What Travels? Notes on a Globalizing Buddhist Movement from Taiwan", *IWM Junior Visiting Fellows Conferences* 12 (2002), pp. 1–14; C.J. Huang, "Genealogies of NGO-ness: The Cultural Politics of a Global Buddhist Movement in Contemporary Taiwan", *positions: east asia cultures critique* 17 (2009) 2, pp. 347–374.
- 41 W. Huang, "Buddhists in Action"; W. Huang, "The Discourse and Practice of a Buddhist Cosmopolitanism: Transnational Migrants and the Tzu Chi Movement", in: M. Roverso and S. C. H. Kim (eds.), *Cosmopolitanism, Religion and the Public Sphere*, London: Routledge, 2014, pp. 15–31.
- 42 Laliberté, "The Charity Work of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation in the People's Republic of China"; Laliberté, "Buddhist Charities and China's Social Policy"; Laliberté, "The Growth of a Taiwanese Buddhist Association in China".

### 3 Theoretical Framework and Research Questions

Foguangshan and Yiguandao are transnational organizations that connect, cross through, interact with, and even create a range of spatial configurations. Their endeavours focus on countries affected by Chinese migration (Taiwan, China, South Africa, the United States, etc.) as well as border-crossing spatial arrangements such as transnational communities (including Chinese diaspora / Chinese cultural sphere / Buddhism). In order to study these processes, we apply the concept of transnational social space as developed by the German sociologist Thomas Faist: “[b]y transnational social spaces we mean relatively stable, lasting and dense sets of ties reaching beyond and across the borders of sovereign states. Transnational social spaces consist of combinations of ties and their contents, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that can be found in at least two geographically and internationally distinct places.”<sup>43</sup> The concept of transnational social space and the related notion of the transnational social field were initially developed in the context of migration studies,<sup>44</sup> but they have also been applied by diverse academic disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, geography, political science, law, economics, and history. In addition, concepts of transnationalism are also widely employed in interdisciplinary fields of research such as international relations, development studies, business studies, ethnic and racial studies, gender studies, religious studies, and media and cultural studies.<sup>45</sup>

According to the typology suggested by Faist, we may distinguish between transnational kinship groups, transnational circuits, and transnational communities.<sup>46</sup> Transnational kinship groups (e.g. households, families, or clans) are the smallest transnational formation. They build an economic unit that contains dense relationships between its members and is based on reciprocity. Transnational circuit groups are economic, academic, and activist networks. They are based on exchange and are characterized by social ties of varying strength in peer networks. Transnational communities are defined by social and symbolic ties expressed in some sort of collective identity. They include village communities, the so-called world religions (Buddhism, Islam, and so on), specific religious communities (e.g. Roman Catholics, Shia Islam), and diasporas.<sup>47</sup>

For the purpose of our project, we understand Faist’s typology somewhat freely as describing different scales of transnational forms of organization. As religious communities, Foguangshan and Yiguandao are involved in all three scales. Adherents of the two religious groups may live a transnational family life. Foguangshan and Yiguandao are also involved in border-crossing academic and business networks. Moreover, they are specific representatives of transnational religions such as Buddhism and both play an important role in the Chinese diaspora. In addition, the temples, monasteries, and “Buddha halls” (*fo tang* 佛堂) designate the physical places where these three transnational spaces cross and intersect. What distinguishes these spaces from those that are produced by transnational commercial corporations or global foundations is that these constitute religious spaces. The quality of being “religious” is, of course, not a natural feature that is somehow inherent in certain places. On the contrary, places and spaces are religious because communication and interaction with and about entities designated as religious by the participating actors is condensed in them, “condensation” referring to the fact that humans are much more likely to engage in religious interactions in these places and spaces than in other sites.<sup>48</sup>

43 T. Faist, *Transnational Migration*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013, p. 54; T. Faist, *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000; T. Faist, “Diaspora and Transnationalism: What Kind of Dance Partners?”, in: R. Bauböck and T. Faist (eds.), *Diaspora and Transnationalism. Concepts, Theories and Methods*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010, pp. 9–34.

44 N. Glick Schiller, L. Basch, and C. Szanton Blanc, “Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration”, in: N. Glick Schiller, L. Basch and C. Szanton Blanc (eds.), *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity and Nationalism Reconsidered*, New York: New York Academy of Science, 1992, pp. 1–24.

45 S. Vertovec, *Transnationalism*, New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 1.

46 T. Faist, M. Fauser, and E. Reisenauer, *Das Transnationale in der Migration*, Weinheim: Beltz Juventa, 2014, pp. 63–67.

47 As distinguished from Jews outside of Israel, Faist understands the overseas Chinese communities not as a diaspora but as a transnational circuit group (see T. Faist, “Transnational Social Spaces: Evolution, Significance and Future Prospects”, *European Journal of Sociology* 39 (1998) 2, pp. 222–223). However, we follow Vertovec’s definition, who defines a diaspora as containing three characteristics: (a) a globally dispersed yet collectively self-identified ethnic group, (b) the territorial states and contexts where such groups reside, and (c) the homeland states and contexts whence they or their forebears come (Vertovec, *Transnationalism*, p. 4). Because all of these features can be detected among the overseas Chinese communities, we follow his understanding and designate them as diasporas.

48 This interpretation is inspired by H. Seiwert, “Religiöse Bewegungen im frühmodernen China: Eine prozesstheoretische Skizze”.

The temples and monasteries do not only connect Taiwan to the different immigration-receiving countries (and, to a varying degree, also to the PRC), but they also create links to a religious topography. In the case of Foguangshan, the religious topography is threefold: First, it consists of a network of the organization's temples and Buddhist centres in Taiwan and all over the globe. Secondly, it connects the temple visitors to an imagined China, which is comprised of Chinese language(s), symbols, and practices, and which is sometimes designated as a "Chinese cultural sphere" or "cultural China".<sup>49</sup> Finally, the temple provides linkages to the historical Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India as well as in Central and Southeast Asia. In connecting different places and spaces, Yiguandao's religious topography shares structural similarities with Foguangshan. Thus, besides its highly complex and heterogeneous transnational network of religious organizations, temples, and actors, the sect equally aims at connecting adherents to China both as place and imagined reality. Usually, studies of diaspora and transnationalism tend to marginalize the role of religion in favour of questions related to ethnicity and nationality.<sup>50</sup> By examining the international Yiguandao and Foguangshan chapters as transnational religious spaces and thus as a specific form of transnational social space, we take the religious aspects of transnational space building seriously, and thus hope to contribute to scholarship by pointing to the significance of these aspects.

The creation of transnational social spaces by Chinese religions is certainly not a new phenomenon. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for instance, Chinese religions were exposed to all kinds of flows of Western knowledge and technology that deeply transformed China in a hitherto unprecedented way. Similarly, these dynamic configurations were comprised of a wide range of diverse elements: religious knowledge, personnel, symbols, beliefs, practices, artefacts, and many other forms of religiously informed actions, such as charity and social engagement. Yet due to unequal power dynamics between China and the Western powers, religious and intellectual actors in nineteenth and early twentieth century China served primarily as recipients in these processes. Nevertheless, they discussed, appropriated, or refused Western (Christian) symbols, beliefs, and practices in various ways.<sup>51</sup> The present situation, however, is different: following the gradual relaxation of ROC governmental control during the 1980s, Yiguandao, Foguangshan, and other religious communities were able to establish new religious, social, educational, charitable, ecological, and economic engagements that were also increasingly directed beyond Taiwan.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the implementation of new immigration policies for highly educated Asians in the 1970s, particularly in North America and Australia, led to increasing numbers of Taiwanese business migrants to these countries.<sup>53</sup> These processes and the rapid economic development and increasing global connectedness of East Asian societies, as well as the changing demographics of migration during the latter half of the twentieth century enabled Chinese and particularly Taiwanese religious organizations to become influential actors outside of the core nations of the Chinese cultural sphere (that is, China and Taiwan). Many Taiwanese religious organizations appropriated these new transnational social spaces in order to establish their presence on a global scale.

Processes of migration and diaspora building thus provide the transnational context for the global spread of Foguangshan and Yiguandao.<sup>54</sup> However prominent, the concept of "diaspora" is used in different academic fields in various ways and it sometimes serves divergent interpretations. With regard to the study of overseas Chinese communities, "diaspora" overlaps with a variety of similar concepts, such as "Greater China", "Global China", "Chinese cultural sphere", or even "Chinese modernity".<sup>55</sup> Based on these interpretations,

in: M. Hutter (ed.), *Religionswissenschaft im Kontext der Asienwissenschaften: 99 Jahre religionswissenschaftliche Lehre und Forschung in Bonn*, Berlin, Münster: LIT, 2009, pp. 179–196; C. Kleine, "Niklas Luhmann und die Religionswissenschaft: Geht das zusammen?", *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 24 (2016) 1, pp. 47–82; N. Broy, "Bourdieu, Weber und Rational Choice: Versuch einer Weiterentwicklung des religiösen Feldmodells am Beispiel Chinas", *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 25 (2017) 2, pp. 287–324.

49 Cf. Tu Wei-ming, "Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center", *Daedalus* 120 (1991) 2, pp. 1–32.

50 Vertovec, *Transnationalism*, p. 133.

51 Cf. V. Goossaert and D.A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011; T. Jansen, T. Klein, and C. Meyer (eds.), *Globalization and the Making of Religious Modernity in China: Transnational Religions, Local Agents, and the Study of Religion, 1800–Present*, Leiden, 2014.

52 Zheng Zhiming 鄭志明, *Taiwan zongjiao zuzhi yu xingzheng 台灣宗教組織與行政*, Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 2010.

53 Chen, *Taiwanese Immigration and Religious Experience*, pp. 19–23.

54 S. Chandler, "Spreading Buddha's Light: The Internationalization of Foguang Shan", in: L. Learman (ed.), *Buddhist Missionaries in the Era of Globalization*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005, pp. 162, 167–170; I. Brown, "Agama Buddha Maitreya: A Modern Buddhist Sect in Indonesia", *Contributions to Southeast Asian Ethnography* 9 (1990), pp. 122–123; P. Clart, "Opening the Wilderness for the Way of Heaven: A Chinese New Religion in the Greater Vancouver Area", *Journal of Chinese Religions* 28 (2000), pp. 138–141.

55 G. Hamilton, "Overseas Chinese Capitalism", in: Tu Wei-ming (ed.), *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education*

we understand Chinese diaspora as a complex, fractured, and contested transnational spatial formation that connects overseas Chinese communities in specific places with the core nations of the Chinese cultural sphere (China, Taiwan) through shared imaginations, symbols, and practices. Thus, the Chinese diaspora constitutes what Appadurai would probably label “Chinese ethnoscaapes”, or a landscape of all moving Chinese groups and individuals that share and contest imaginations about these spaces.<sup>56</sup>

Both Foguanshan and Yiguandao are important representatives of the “Chinese tradition” in the diaspora. Besides claiming a universal religious appeal, they also emphasize a self-proclaimed mission to bring Chinese culture to the Chinese diasporas around the globe. To a degree, their global development mirrors earlier transplantations of Chinese religiosities, in that they are connected to economically or politically motivated migration processes.<sup>57</sup> In fact, the majority of Foguanshan and Yiguandao temples and centres are located in regions or countries that have or have had a significant overseas Taiwanese / Chinese population. Yet Foguanshan and Yiguandao differ from their predecessors in terms of managerial structure, size, and financial power, which leads to qualitative distinctions from earlier forms of religious transnational space-making. Amongst other things, for example, we can detect an increased effort to proselytize people of non-Chinese origins.

The tension that exists between the provision of religious services for a diaspora community on the one hand and efforts to proselytize across ethnic and cultural borders on the other is addressed in Diana Wong and Peggy Levitt’s study of the spread of the Muslim Tablighi Jamaat movement and Foguanshan to Malaysia.<sup>58</sup> The authors introduce a useful analytical distinction between “migrant religions” and “travelling faiths”. While the first form of mobile religion is considered to travel only “within the local ethnic confines of the migrant (and home) population”, travelling faiths are understood as “religious movements with universal claims around which a religious community forms”, where travel in order to proselytize is common.<sup>59</sup> Through their religious outreach strategies to a variety of actors in diverse geographical, cultural, and social settings, travelling faiths appropriate new spaces and reterritorialize in hitherto unprecedented ways. Some are more successful in traversing cultural boundaries, while others remain largely in their respective ethnic or cultural domains.<sup>60</sup>

Yet it would be wrong to assume that specific diaspora communities in a particular place are static or monolithic configurations.<sup>61</sup> Depending on the specific histories of the various diasporas, shifting political circumstances may alter the dynamics of migration, which in turn play out within the transnational social spaces created by Foguanshan and Yiguandao. When the post-apartheid government of South Africa terminated its diplomatic relations with the ROC in order to establish formal relations with the PRC in 1998, for instance, the withdrawal of Taiwanese businesses and the concomitant increase of mainland Chinese involvement led to a significantly stronger presence of PRC Chinese nationals in the Foguanshan temple community in Bronkhorstspuit.

We are interested in the dynamics of these two potentially conflicting objectives of universal religion and diasporic providers of “cultural services”, particularly because they imply distinctive spatial configurations: one of “crossing practices”, which traverses national, ethnic, and cultural boundaries; and one of “dwelling”, which aims at finding one’s place primarily within a differentiated and even fractured diaspora community,

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and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996, pp. 328–342; C. Lever-Tracy and D.I. Noel Tracy, *The Chinese Diaspora and Mainland China: An Emerging Economic Synergy*, Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1996; A. Smart and J. Smart, “Transnational Social Networks and Negotiated Identities in Interactions between Hong Kong and China”, in: M.P. Smith and L. Guamizo (eds.), *Transnationalism from Below*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998, pp. 103–129; A. McKeown, “Conceptualizing Chinese Diasporas 1842 – 1949”, *Journal of Asian Studies* 58 (1999) 2, pp. 306–337; D. Nonini and A. Ong, “Chinese Transnationalism as an Alternative Modernity”, in: A. Ong and D. Nonini (eds.), *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*, New York: Routledge, 1997, pp. 3–33; A. Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1999; D. Shambaugh (ed.), *Greater China: The Next Superpower*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995; G. Yang, “The Internet and the Rise of a Transnational Chinese Cultural Sphere”, *Media, Culture & Society* 25 (2003) 4, pp. 469–490.

56 A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 33–34.

57 Cf. Lee, “Contemporary Chinese-American Religious Life”.

58 D. Wong and P. Levitt, “Travelling Faiths and Migrant Religions: The Case of Circulating Models of *da’wa* among the Tablighi Jamaat and Foguanshan in Malaysia”, *Global Networks* 14 (2014) 3, pp. 348–362.

59 *Ibid.*, pp. 348–349.

60 *Ibid.*, pp. 349–350.

61 Vertovec, *Transnationalism*, p. 100; P. Werbner, “Complex Diasporas”, in: K. Knott and S. McLoughlin (eds.), *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities*, New York: Zed Books, 2010, pp. 74–78.

but also within the imagined community of a larger “Chinese cultural sphere” that is not bound to a specific place (such as mainland China or Taiwan), but is defined by shared cultural notions, symbols, and practices. However, because of the heterogeneous character of the Chinese diaspora in terms of nationality, the provision of “cultural services” and the spread of a universal religious message – and thus “practices of crossing and dwelling” – do not exclude each other per se, but are in fact often highly intertwined. For instance, due to legal restrictions on public religious activities in the PRC, Yiguandao and Foguangshan tend to proselytize PRC nationals in diaspora communities rather than in the mainland itself. In so doing, both organizations provide diasporic services while at the same time hoping to bring back the Buddhist Dharma or the Dao to China.

By distinguishing these forms of spatial practices, we draw somewhat freely on the vocabulary suggested by Thomas Tweed<sup>62</sup> in that religions may help to map, build, and inhabit spaces on the one hand (dwelling), but they also assist in marking and traversing boundaries on the other (crossing). The term “imagined community” is, of course, borrowed from Benedict Anderson’s seminal work on nationalism.<sup>63</sup> As suggested above, these two forms of mobile religion are not necessarily to be considered in strict opposition to each other, but they may form complex configurations and contestations within one religious organization.

As the results of other projects in religious globalization suggest, the interests, aims, and interpretations among actors at the religious centres (e.g. Taiwan) and the peripheries (South Africa, the United States, etc.) may be significantly different from one another, as pragmatic requirements do exist, which relate to issues of cultural translation, political concessions, legal assimilation, and also needs and circumstances of specific migrant communities in a particular place. Therefore, we may assume the existence of multiple configurations and interpenetrations of organizations, networks, and individual groups, which could not have been foreseen or planned by the religious headquarters in the first place. The dynamics of centres and peripheries do not only exist between Taiwanese headquarters and overseas branches, but also between these international sections themselves. In the case of Foguangshan, for example, branches located in countries with smaller Chinese overseas communities (e.g. South Africa) appear less exposed to regulation from the Taiwanese centre than branches in the core regions of Chinese immigration (e.g. the USA).

Accordingly, the global development of heterogeneous religious networks in conjunction with “central” and “peripheral” contestations of power, interests, and aims leads to the emergence of complex transnational configurations that do not only affect the religious organizations themselves, but also the spatial formations they inhabit. In order to map these various processes of transnational space-making, the present project proposes the following hypotheses:

- 1 The framework of the transnational spread of Yiguandao and Foguangshan is shaped by processes of “Chinese” (including Taiwanese, Hong Kong, PRC Chinese, etc.) migration and diaspora building. However, the transnational development of the two organizations is also accompanied by a strong rhetoric of spreading the Dharma / Dao cross-ethnically beyond the confines of the Chinese diaspora. The actual extent of these efforts, however, remains to be examined by ethnographic fieldwork.
- 2 Providing religious services for first-generation migrants is at times in conflict with efforts to proselytize non-Chinese and the naturalized descendants of migrants, who are often much less attached to the culture and language of their parents or grandparents. However, providing religious services for PRC Chinese individuals living abroad can also be seen as an attempt to proselytize across borders and is therefore a “practice of crossing” as well as a “practice of dwelling”. Provision of religious and cultural services for the diaspora and efforts to proselytize non-Chinese individuals are thus highly intertwined.
- 3 The transnational social spaces created by Foguangshan and Yiguandao are not static; they rather constitute dynamic processes. Concerning the transnational endeavours of Foguangshan, for instance, we can assess a shift in attention towards the PRC over the last decades. While there are similar developments in process in the case of Yiguandao, they are rather unstable and correspond directly to shifts in the overall political situation in the PRC, to the unstable attitudes of the

62 T.A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006, pp. 80–163.

63 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 2006.



Communist Party towards religion, and to the fluctuating relationships with Taiwanese governments, particularly because the sect is still considered illegal on the mainland.

- 4 We understand the diaspora temples, monasteries, and Buddha halls as the physical places that are at the heart of the transnational social spaces. They are the places where the dynamics described above play out. Not only do they connect sending countries with receiving countries in migration processes, but they also link them to an extending religious topography. Therefore, we understand these places as transnational religious spaces that constitute a specific variant of transnational social spaces.

Based on these hypotheses, our project is guided by the following questions:

- 1 Development of transnational social spaces: What are the specific ties, linkages, and positions that led to the establishment of these transnational social spaces in Taiwan and in the overseas branches? How does the global spread of Yiguandao and Foguangshan relate to patterns of Chinese migration and diaspora building, and how do these dynamics in turn affect the ordering and regulating of transnational social spaces and the relationship between them (such as the complex and dynamic hierarchizations of “centres” and “peripheries”, for instance)? How are the religious centres and peripheries related to each other? Is there one or are there many centres? What are the relationships between the particular peripheries? How have these spaces changed over time and what developments have led to these shifts (e.g. the increased importance of the PRC in the proselytizing endeavours of Taiwanese religious organizations)?
- 2 Transnational actors: What groups of actors, both mobile and immobile, inhabit the transnational social spaces created by the two organizations, in Taiwan but particularly also in the host countries? What kinds of interactions occur with the host society? What are the dynamics at the fringes of the transnational social spaces? How do other fractures and alliances within the Chinese diaspora, such as those based on nationality, specific dialects, geographic origin, or duration of settlement in receiving countries influence social space-making? Are there specific intergenerational dynamics that occur? Do these dynamics relate to interactions between Chinese and non-Chinese inhabitants of these transnational social spaces?
- 3 Content of transnational social spaces: What travels through the transnational social spaces? What kinds of texts, practices, objects, and resources travel to which places, and why? This question stresses the importance of linguistic and cultural translation of religious contents. How is the content that has been designed at the centres actually employed by local actors? What kind of problems may arise from the cultural contextualization of religious beliefs and practices? Following the theoretical debates in cultural and translation studies, we understand “translation” not merely as a literary practice, but also as an open-ended process of contextualizing verbal expressions and non-verbal cultural entities (objects, practices, rituals) in order to make them meaningful for specific actors in specific contexts. These processes are closely linked to the power relations among the actors involved as well as to the asymmetries of global relations.<sup>64</sup> In addition, we intend to explore the question of what constitutes the religious dimension of diasporic temples, monasteries, and Buddha halls as transnational social spaces. Can such transnational religious spaces that are produced in physical places (such as temples) through the interactions of religious actors be distinguished from non-religious transnational social spaces? Are they linked to religious topographies? How do the actors “on the ground” understand them and make them meaningful for their lives?

64 Cf. D. Bachmann-Medick, “Translation: A Concept and Model for the Study of Culture”, in: B. Neumann and A. Nünning (eds.), *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012, pp. 23–44; B. Wagner, “Kulturelle Übersetzung: Erkundungen über ein wanderndes Konzept”, in: A. Babka and U. Knoll (eds.), *Dritte Räume: Homi K. Bhabhas Kulturtheorie; Kritik, Anwendung, Reflexion*, Wien: Turia + Kant, 2012, pp. 29–42.



We assume that these dynamics will play out differently in different communities. By comparing the ways in which these aspects manifest themselves in three specific regions, namely South Africa, North America, and East Asia, we hope to show how central regulation and peripheral contestation shape the dynamics of the religious transnational space-making of Yiguandao and Foguangshan.

## 4 Fieldwork and Research Methods

In order to study the global spread and transnational space building of Foguangshan and Yiguandao, we adopt the methodological framework proposed by the concept of multi-sited ethnography,<sup>65</sup> which is the framework most commonly used to examine transnational social spaces.<sup>66</sup> By considering multiple fieldwork sites, multi-sited ethnography allows us to identify the links and practices of the two organizations that span geographically dispersed places.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, it enables us to recognize the simultaneity of the transnational practices of Foguangshan and Yiguandao that take place in multiple localities.<sup>68</sup> To address these dynamics, our case studies will involve extensive ethnographic fieldwork in Taiwan and in three primary field sites across the globe: South Africa, the United States, and East Asia. By comparing several locations, we wish to highlight the dynamics of centres and peripheries, which do not only exist between the Taiwanese headquarters and the overseas branches but also among the overseas branches themselves.

Because both organizations were founded or are based in Taiwan, where they constitute some of the largest religious communities in terms of membership, temples, resources, and engagements, extensive fieldwork was needed at the outset in order to properly understand the situation “at home”. This was conducted in the spring and winter of 2017, but preliminary fieldwork observations outside of Taiwan are already available and will be demonstrated in section 5. While the earliest engagements of Foguangshan and Yiguandao in South Africa date back to the late 1980s, thus pioneering Taiwanese cultural endeavours on the continent, they appear to have diminished after the post-apartheid government terminated its diplomatic relations with the ROC in order to establish formal relations with the PRC in 1998. The withdrawal of Taiwanese businesses and the concomitant decrease in Taiwanese migration appears to have made South Africa less important for the Taiwanese headquarters. Nevertheless, this field site constitutes an important and rare opportunity to observe the transculturation of Chinese religiosities in Africa. By contrast, the US plays a crucial role in the internationalization efforts of both organizations, because it has been the single most important site of Chinese and Taiwanese migration outside of Asia during the past decades. Due to this prominent role as seen by the Taiwanese headquarters, American branches are much more tightly regulated than other international chapters. Accordingly, South African temples may have a higher level of autonomy in regard to religious activities, temple organization, and the outreach efforts to non-Chinese locals. Asia is also an important field of research, because both Yiguandao and Foguangshan started their internationalization with East and Southeast Asia. As the country of origin of both religious traditions, the PRC has become of strong interest particularly for Foguangshan’s transnational aspirations. Regarding Yiguandao, initial fieldwork experiences in Taiwan suggest Japan as a compelling example of its internationalization. Japan was not only among the first places outside of China to which Yiguandao spread during the late 1940s; the Japanese chapters also have a fairly long history of acculturation, so that we can detect a relatively high proportion of non-Chinese members and activists (see below). In addition to these three primary field sites (South Africa, the United States, and East Asia), we conducted supplementary field research in 2016 at two large European chapters of these organizations, namely in Berlin (Foguangshan) and Vienna (Yiguandao). In

65 E.G. Marcus, “Ethnography in/ of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography”, *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995) 1, pp. 95–117.

66 Faist, Fauser, and Reisenauer, *Das Transnationale in der Migration*, p. 144.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 165.

68 A. Amelina and T. Faist, “De-naturalizing the National in Research Methodologies: Key Concepts of Transnational Studies in Migration”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 35 (2012) 10, p. 2.

both cases, the local chapters serve as the seats of national associations and as hubs of their respective European networks. Accordingly, Berlin and Vienna will be included as additional case studies.

Therefore, our sample of four major and one minor field site allows us to examine five regions of the world that are not only geographically remote from each other, but that also vary in terms of their cultural, social, political, and religious affinities and respective contexts, as well as in terms of their importance for the respective headquarters. Because both subprojects focus on similar regions, we retain a high level of comparability between these two case studies. Based on the collection of first-hand data at the Taiwanese headquarters and the various local chapters, we will be able to adequately analyse the imagination, creation, and negotiation of transnational spatial arrangements as well as the dynamics of flows and controls that emerge from these processes. Following the initial plan,<sup>69</sup> both researchers conducted fieldwork for approximately five months at the Taiwanese centres in early 2017, which is being followed by ethnographic engagements lasting approximately two months in each field site in 2017/2018. These undertakings will be supplemented by occasional visits and short-term stays at the two European centres introduced above.

Most of the ethnographic engagement in the Foguanshan case study will be conducted at the principal temples in the respective research regions: Foguanshan Headquarters in southern Taiwan, Nanhua Temple in South Africa, Xilai Temple in the United States, and Dajue Temple in Jiangsu Province, PRC. Because of the highly decentralized nature of Yiguandao networks and organizations, however, there is no single such institution that could be utilized in a similar way as the primary site of fieldwork. As it appears from published Yiguandao materials as well as from initial fieldwork in Taiwan, the numerous and often small-scale Buddha halls are quite independent from the respective headquarters of their branches. Instead, they are linked to the Taiwanese centres mainly through individual networks and usually maintain close ties with the home temples of the respective missionaries.

By employing the approach of multi-sited ethnography, we aim to collect empirical data from three sources: 1) observation (participant and non-participant), 2) qualitative interviews, and 3) the collection of printed primary sources. Since we aim to understand how religious actors themselves imagine, create, and contest spaces, our fieldwork will not employ pre-structured questionnaires or analytical categories, because these would be very likely to distort the field setting by imposing non-native concepts and frameworks on the actors. Rather, we will engage the field through participant observation and loosely structured interviews, allowing us to focus on the religious actors and their actions. Through the application of these research methods in multiple sites, we aim to understand transnational space building in Foguanshan and Yiguandao by following the movements of people and objects<sup>70</sup> as well as by studying the transactions between those who have moved and those who have stayed behind.<sup>71</sup>

Besides considering literature on transnationalism and migration, our research is, of course, also influenced by other academic discussions about religion and globalization,<sup>72</sup> particularly Japanese religions and globalization,<sup>73</sup> theorizations of religious and cultural hybridizations, bricolage, transplantations, and transculturations,<sup>74</sup> and inquiries into the spatial dimensions of religious globalization.<sup>75</sup>

69 Finanzierungsantrag, *Geplanter Sonderforschungsbereich 1199. Verräumlichungsprozesse unter Globalisierungsbedingungen*, Leipzig: Unpublished Manuscript, 2015, pp. 109–111.

70 Marcus, *Ethnography in / of the World System*, p. 106.

71 Levitt and Glick Schiller, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity", p. 1012.

72 Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*; Beyer, *Religions in Global Society*; Ebaugh and Chafetz, *Religion Across Borders*; Csordas, *Transnational Transcendence*.

73 I. Prohl, "New Religions in Japan: Adaptations and Transformations in Contemporary Society", in: J.K. Nelson and I. Prohl (eds.), *Handbook of Contemporary Japanese Religions*, Leiden: Brill, 2012, pp. 241–67; Dessi, *Japanese Religions and Globalization*; Dessi, *The Global Repositioning of Japanese Religions*.

74 M. Pye, "The Transplantation of Religions", *Numen* 16 (1969) 1, pp. 234–239; M.R. Mullins, "The Transplantation of Religion in Comparative Sociological Perspective", *Japanese Religions* 16 (1990) 2, pp. 43–62; M. Baumann, "The Transplantation of Buddhism to Germany: Processive Modes and Strategies of Adaptation", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 6 (1994) 1, pp. 35–61; J. Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange*, 3rd edn, London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015; D.P. Goh, "Chinese Religion and the Challenge of Modernity in Malaysia and Singapore: Syncretism, Hybridisation and Transfiguration", *Asian Journal of Social Science* 37 (2009) 1, pp. 107–137; V. Altglas, *From Yoga to Kabbalah: Religious Exoticism and the Logics of Bricolage*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

75 K. Knott, *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis*, London: Equinox Pub, 2005; E. McAlister, "Globalization and the Religious Production of Space", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44 (2005) 3, pp. 249–255; Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*; J. Corrigan, "Spatiality and Religion", in: B. Warf and S. Arias (eds.), *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, London, New York: Routledge, 2009, pp. 157–172; M.A. Vásquez, "Studying Religion in Motion: A Networks Approach", *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 20 (2008) 2, pp. 151–118; M.A. Vásquez, *More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 261–319; M.A. Vásquez and K. Knott, "Three Dimensions of Religious Place Making in Diaspora", *Global Networks* 14

## 5 Preliminary Observations

### 5.1 Buddha's Light Mountain

"Buddha's Light Mountain" or Foguangshan 佛光山 is a Taiwan-based Han-Chinese Buddhist organization that is highly active on a global scale. Alongside the aforementioned humanitarian Buddhist network Ciji, the organization and its founder Xingyun 星雲 are considered the most famous representatives of *renjian Fojiao* 人間佛教, a modernist form of Buddhism that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Usually translated as "Humanistic Buddhism", *renjian Fojiao* represents a reform movement within Chinese Buddhism that seeks to correct the perceived overemphasis of "magical" elements and funeral culture, by developing a religion that corresponds to the changes of the modern world. China's encounter with Western imperialism in the nineteenth century and the resulting upheavals caused the Chinese to engage in efforts to modernize, in order to strengthen their country against the intruders. Knowledge systems and practices associated with "Chinese tradition", such as Confucianism and Buddhism, were made responsible for China's perceived backwardness and inability to compete with the Western powers. Many Chinese intellectuals of that time blamed Buddhism for being supposedly superstitious, escapist, and/or ritualistic. In addition, Protestant missionaries who were often supported by Western political and military forces also criticized Buddhism, while at the same time presenting Protestant Christianity as a modern religion concerned with charity and the welfare of the Chinese people. In response, Buddhist reformers such as the famous monk Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947) set out to reform their religion. They took part in the intellectual debates of the time and advocated a modern, world-affirming approach to tradition. This was to be achieved by promoting modern education through Buddhist seminaries and the establishment of charities.<sup>76</sup>

Xingyun, the founder of Foguangshan, was born in 1927 in Jiangsu province. Inspired by Taixu, he became interested in the efforts of the reformers in 1945. Four years later he followed the nationalist KMT (Kuomintang) to Taiwan, who had lost the Chinese civil war to the Communist Party of China (CPC). Similarly, many monastics left China during this time in fear of the anti-religious policies of the CPC to seek refuge in Taiwan, and in lesser numbers also in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong. As a result, the small island located at the periphery of the Chinese mainland became the new centre of Chinese Buddhism. When Xingyun founded Foguangshan in 1967, he could not have expected that it was to become the largest Buddhist organization on the island. With its headquarters located in Kaohsiung county in southern Taiwan, Foguangshan runs over 200 branch temples and practice centres worldwide. In addition to its global network of temples and practice centres, the organization maintains five universities and academic institutes in the US, the Philippines, Australia, and Taiwan as well as Buddhist seminaries, libraries, tea houses, vegetarian restaurants, translation and publishing centres, bookstores, Buddhist art galleries, and mobile medical clinics. Furthermore, it has also established an orphanage, a retirement home, a high school, and a television station.<sup>77</sup>

Xingyun served as the abbot of Foguangshan from its founding in 1967 until his resignation in 1985. Since then, the abbot of Foguangshan has been elected by all (monastic) members through public vote, and formally serves as the chairperson of the organization. Nevertheless, Xingyun continues to be the most influential person within Foguangshan today. In 1991, "Buddha's Light International Association" (Guoji Fogaohui 國際佛光會), abbreviated as BLIA) was founded in Los Angeles, California. The organization is often understood as Foguangshan's lay arm, yet it also welcomes monastic members.<sup>78</sup> We

(2014) 3, pp. 326–347; L. Obadia, "Globalisation and New Geographies of Religion: New Regimes in the Movement, Circulation, and Territoriality of Cults and Beliefs", *International Social Science Journal* 63 (2012) 209–210, pp. 147–157; I. Becci, M. Burchardt, and J. Casanova (eds.), *Topographies of Faith: Religion in Urban Spaces*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013; L. Kong and O. Woods, *Religion and Space: Competition, Conflict and Violence in the Contemporary World*, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.

76 C.B. Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan: Religion and the State, 1660–1990*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999; D.A. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001; Lai Rongdao, "Praying for the Republic: Buddhist Education, Student-Monks, and Citizenship in Modern China (1911–1949)", PhD diss., McGill University, 2013; J. Ritzinger, *Anarchy in the Pure Land: Reinventing the Cult of Maitreya in Modern Chinese Buddhism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

77 S. Chandler, *Establishing a Pure Land on Earth: The Foguang Buddhist Perspective on Modernization and Globalization*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004; Shi Yongdong 釋永東, *Renjian Fojiao shijie zhanwang 人間佛教世界展望*, Taipei: Lantai, 2016; Jiang Canteng 江燦騰, *Zhanhou Taiwan hanchuan Fojiao shi 戰後臺灣漢傳佛教史*, Taipei: Wunan, 2011; Jiang Canteng 江燦騰, *Renshi Taiwan bentu Fojiao 認識臺灣本土佛教*, Taipei: Taiwan shangwu, 2012.

78 Chandler, *Establishing a Pure Land on Earth*.

have chosen the term “Foguang community” to address both the monastic core membership as well as lay members.

Today, Foguangshan’s temple network spans six continents. In 2016, the organization had 46 temples and practice centres in 8 countries throughout Asia (not including Taiwan) and maintained 40 temples and practice centres in the Americas, 14 in Europe, 14 in Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea, and 8 in Africa, which adds up to 124 facilities in 31 countries in total. The earliest temples were founded in the 1980s, and were primarily established in Malaysia and the US. While the peak time of temple building was during the 1990s, the first facilities in the PRC were established after 2007. These numbers reflect the waves of Taiwanese migration and the organization’s newly emerging access to the Chinese religious market.<sup>79</sup>

Some research has already been conducted on the global spread of Foguangshan. By far the most important English language study is the work of Stuart Chandler, a scholar in religious studies.<sup>80</sup> His work was published in the early 2000s and laid the foundation for research on this important contemporary Han-Chinese Buddhist organization. Another piece of work that has to be mentioned here is a recent monograph by the monastic Shi Yongdong 釋永東, who is a professor at the Graduate Institute for Religious Studies at Foguang University in Jiaoxi. Based both on interviews and on her knowledge as an insider of the organization, it constitutes a rich source of information about the global spread of Foguangshan.<sup>81</sup> In addition, we find several relevant articles, some dealing with the topic on a general or comparative level,<sup>82</sup> others focusing on specific localities, such as Singapore,<sup>83</sup> Malaysia,<sup>84</sup> Canada,<sup>85</sup> Brazil,<sup>86</sup> Austria,<sup>87</sup> Africa,<sup>88</sup> and Australia.<sup>89</sup> Other articles dedicated to the founder’s hagiography in popular media,<sup>90</sup> the relationship between Foguangshan, *renjian* Buddhism, and ritual,<sup>91</sup> or Foguangshan and sport<sup>92</sup> also briefly touch upon this issue. In addition, several essays on the topic have been published in Foguangshan’s own academically oriented books and publications. Of particular interest is a group of articles dealing with spreading the Dharma on a global scale,<sup>93</sup> as well as observations related to specific places, such as the US (Shi Miaoyi 2004),<sup>94</sup> the Netherlands,<sup>95</sup> and Berlin.<sup>96</sup> Finally, there are a number of Master’s theses, some of which approach the topic in a more

79 Shi Yongdong 釋永東, *Renjian Fojiao shijie zhanwang* 人間佛教世界展望, pp. 166–186.

80 S. Chandler, “Globalizing Chinese Culture, Localizing Buddhist Teachings: The Internationalization of Foguangshan”, *Journal of Global Buddhism* 3 (2002), pp. 46–78; Chandler, *Establishing a Pure Land on Earth*.

81 Shi Yongdong 釋永東, *Renjian Fojiao shijie zhanwang* 人間佛教世界展望.

82 J. Nagata, “The Globalisation of Buddhism and the Emergence of Religious Civil Society: The Case of the Taiwanese Fo Kuang Shan Movement in Asia and the West”, *Communal / Plural: Journal of Transnational & Crosscultural Studies* 7 (1999) 2, pp. 231–248.; Chue Ming, “International Buddhist Sangha and Global Connection: A Case Study of the Master Hsing Yun”, *Danubius* 32 (2014), pp. 189–224.

83 J.M.T. Chia, “Buddhism in Singapore: A State of the Field Review”, *Asian Culture* 33 (2009), pp. 81–93.

84 Wong and Levitt, “Travelling Faiths and Migrant Religions”.

85 L. Verchery, “The Woodenfish Program: Fo Guang Shan, Canadian Youth, and a New Generation of Buddhist Missionaries”, in: J.S. Harding, V.S. Hori, and A.D. Soucy (eds.), *Wild Geese: Buddhism in Canada*, Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010, pp. 210–235.

86 R. Shoji, “Reinterpretação do Budismo Chinês e Coreano no Brasil”, *Revista de Estudos da Religião* 3 (2004), pp. 74–87; D. Lopes and R. Shoji, “Diploma de Monge: Legitimação da Sangha Brasileira e de Mediadores com a Comunidade Chinesa na Fo Guang Shan”, *Revista de Estudos da Religião* [junho] (2008), pp. 103–121.

87 M. Deeg, “Zwischen kultureller Identität und universalem Heilsanspruch”.

88 Master Hui Li, “Fo Kuang Shan in Africa: Heritage and Future Plans”, in: M. Clasquin and J.S. Krüger (eds.), *Buddhism and Africa*, Pretoria: University of South Africa, Unisa Press 1999, pp. 55–66.

89 S. Pacey, “Heterotopia and the Southern Heaven: Xingyun’s Antipodean Buddhist Mission”, in: L. Manderson, W. Smith, and M. Tomlinson (eds.), *Flows of Faith: Religious Reach and Community in Asia and the Pacific*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2012, pp. 123–142.

90 J.M.T. Chia, “Toward a Modern Buddhist Hagiography: Telling the Life of Hsing Yun in Popular Media”, *Asian Ethnology* 74 (2015) 1, pp. 141–165.

91 Xue Yu, “Re-Creation of Rituals in Humanistic Buddhism: A Case Study of FoGuangShan”, *Asian Philosophy* 23 (2013) 4, pp. 350–364.

92 J. Yu, “Promoting Buddhism through Modern Sports: The Case Study of Fo Guang Shan in Taiwan”, *Physical Culture and Sport Studies and Research* 53 (2011) 1, pp. 28–38.

93 Lu Keng 陸鏗 and Ma Xiping 馬西屏, “Xingyun dashi yu renjian fojiao quanqiu hua fazhan zhi yanjiu 星雲大師與人間佛教全球化發展之研究”, *Pumen xuebao* 普門學報 40 (2007), pp. 1–30; Shi Manju 釋滿具, “Renjian Fojiao honghua wenti luelun 人間佛教全球弘化問題略論: yi Meiguo weilì 以美國為例”, in: Cheng Gongrang 程恭讓 and Shi Miaofan 釋妙凡 (eds.), *2013 Xingyun dashi renjian fojiao lilun shijian yanjiu (xia)* 星雲大師人間佛教理論實踐研究 (下), Kaohsiung: Foguang wenhua, 2013, pp. 482–498.

94 Shi Miaoyi 釋妙益, “Cong Meiguo Xilaisi kan Fojiao bentuhua 從佛光山美國西來寺看佛教本土化”, *Pumen xuebao* 普門學報 24 (2004): 313–354.

95 Shi Miaoyi 釋妙益, “Cong xingyun dashi bentuhua linian kan Foguang quanqiu hongfa zhi wenhua shiying ji chengxiao: yi Helan Hehuasi weilì 從星雲大師本土化理念看佛光全球弘法之文化適應及成效:以荷蘭荷華寺為例”, in: Cheng Gongrang 程恭讓 and Shi Miaofan 釋妙凡 (eds.), *2013 Xingyun dashi renjian fojiao lilun shijian yanjiu (xia)* 星雲大師人間佛教理論實踐研究 (下), Kaohsiung: Foguang wenhua, 2013, pp. 500–539.

96 Shi Miaoyi 釋妙益, “Cong Bolin Foguangshan dewen zu kan Deguo hongfa chengxiao ji Fojiao bentuhua 從「柏林佛光山德文

general manner<sup>97</sup> while others focus on specific regions, such as New York,<sup>98</sup> Canada,<sup>99</sup> Malaysia,<sup>100</sup> the Philippines,<sup>101</sup> Australia,<sup>102</sup> and Brazil.<sup>103</sup>

Besides conducting fieldwork in Taiwan, we have chosen three case studies to examine Foguangshan's transnational religious space building, namely investigations in Xilai Temple in Los Angeles, USA (emic transcription: Hsi Lai Temple); Nanhua Temple in Bronkhorstspruit, South Africa; and the recently (re)constructed Dajue Temple in Yixing 宜興, Jiangsu province, PRC. By choosing these three research sites, we aim to analyse the complex dynamics of centre and periphery in relation to diaspora religion and cross border proselytization. We hope to show how these dynamics are influenced by different degrees of regulation from the headquarters and the dynamics of Chinese diasporas. We also include in our considerations the recent shift of Foguangshan's focus to the PRC, and the resulting redirecting of its resources.

Xilai Temple is the biggest of Foguangshan's 25 temples and practice centres in the United States. Construction of the temple was completed in 1988, making it the fourth Foguang facility to be founded in the United States. Along with Malaysia, where the organization has established 20 temples and centres since 1980, the US can be seen as the heart of Foguangshan's transnational activities. Besides hosting a huge range of ceremonies, religious services, retreats and education programmes, Xilai Temple also maintains a translation and publishing centre, and hosts the worldwide BLIA headquarters. Interestingly, it is also the only Foguangshan temple outside of the People's Republic whose abbot is a PRC national.<sup>104</sup>

The next field site, Nanhua Temple, constitutes probably the largest Buddhist temple on the African continent and serves as the African headquarters for Foguangshan. Construction of the temple began in 1992. The City Council of the small South African town of Bronkhorstspruit (located east of Pretoria) donated six hectares of land to the organization in order to attract Taiwanese investors. Since then, further buildings have been erected in addition to the temple itself, including Nan Hua Buddhist Temple Guesthouse, the African Buddhist Seminary (ABS), Nan Hua Village, an assembly hall, and a Pure Land Chan retreat centre, which includes a large meditation hall, a monastic residence, and residences for the meditation practitioners. The temple oversees branches in other South African cities, such as Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, Newcastle, Durban, and Cape Town, and also various branches in the Congo and Lesotho. Besides providing a space for religious activities, the temple is highly involved in many cultural and charitable activities and community outreach projects, such as computer courses for the unemployed and prison programmes.

While culturally and geographically close to Taiwan, the situation on the Chinese mainland, homeland of the organization's founder Xingyun, is entirely different. Political restrictions on foreign religious organizations pose very concrete limits on the spread of Foguang Buddhism in China. Yet it appears that the PRC under Xi Jinping has begun to display a new openness for "traditional Chinese religions" in general and for Foguangshan in particular.<sup>105</sup> This has resulted in a new effort by Foguangshan to take root in China. The

組] 看德國弘法成效及佛教本土化", in: Cheng Gongrang 程恭讓 and Shi Miaofan 釋妙凡 (eds.), *2014 renjian fojiao gaofeng luntan-renjian fojiao zongyao* 人間佛教高峰論壇-人間佛教宗要, Kaohsiung: Foguang, 2015, pp. 640-666.

- 97 Sun Baozhuang 孫寶專, "Fei yingli shiye zuzhi zhi guojihua fazhan celue: yi Foguangshan weili 非營利事業組織之國際化發展策略: 以佛光山為例", MA thesis, Zhongshan University, 2006; Dai Meihua 戴美華, "The Study of International Strategy in Non Profit Organization - Take Tzu Chi and Fo Guang Shan for Example 非營利組織國際化策略之研究—以慈濟與佛光山為例", MA thesis, Yu Da University of Science and Technology, 2007; Liao Jiawen 廖嘉雯, "The Strategy of a Taiwanese NGO's Participation in the UN: the Case Study of the Buddha's Light International Association 台灣非政府組織參與聯合國之策略—以國際佛光會為例", MA thesis, Nan Hua University, 2008; Luo Qixin 羅綺新, "FGS' cultural image in global perspective 佛光山教團全球化之文化意象", MA thesis, Foguang University, 2009; Li Meilan 李美蘭, "A Study of Fo Guang Shan - The Blue Ocean Strategy 佛光山藍海策略之研究", MA thesis, Foguang University, 2015.
- 98 J. Chen 陳家鈴, "The Participation of Chinese Immigrants and Their Religion, Views from the FGS 從佛光山紐約道場看紐約華人宗教參與和社會適應", MA thesis, National Taiwan Normal University, 2012.
- 99 Braun, *The Tzu Chi Foundation and the Buddha's Light International Association*.
- 100 Li Ziyi 李姿儀, "Kuaguo zongjiao yu zaidi shehui: yi Malaixiya Foguangshan weili 跨國宗教與在地社會: 以馬來西亞佛光山為例", MA thesis, National Chi Nan University, 2011; Lin Weiting 林威廷, "Development of Fo Guang Shan in Malaysia's Chinese Community - Research study on Fo Guang Shan Monastery in Johor Bahru 佛光山在大馬華人社區中的發展-以柔佛州新山禪淨中心為研究", MA thesis, Foguang University, 2011.
- 101 M.A.R. Gorgonio, "The Study of the Impact of the Influence of Humanistic Buddhism Music on the Participants of the "Biography of the Buddha" Musical Production in the Philippines 人間佛教音樂與非佛教徒中之影響研究: 以菲律賓"佛陀傳-悉達多太子"為例", MA thesis, Foguang University, 2009.
- 102 Wei Weiwei 韋薇薇, "Localization of Humanistic Buddhism in Australia: Nan Tien Temple as example 人間佛教在澳洲本土化研究: 以南天寺為例以南天寺為例以南天寺為例", MA thesis, Foguang University, 2013.
- 103 Zhu Siwei 朱思薇 (Shi Miaoshang 釋妙上), "Fojiao xilai nanmei de fenxi tantao. yi Foguangshan renjian fojiao zai Baxi de fazhan wei yanjiu 佛教西來南美的分析探討: 以佛光山人間佛教在巴西的發展為研究", MA thesis, Nanhua University, 2008.
- 104 This information was retrieved from informal conversations during fieldwork in Taiwan in early 2017.
- 105 I. Johnson, "Is a Buddhist Group Changing China? Or Is China Changing It?", *New York Times*, 24 June 2017.



organization has even managed to have the so-called “Foguang Ancestral Temple, Monastery of the Great Awakening” (Foguang zuting Dajuesi 佛光祖庭大覺寺) reconstructed in Yixing 宜興, Jiangsu Province. So far, Foguangshan has succeeded in establishing seven facilities on the Chinese mainland, including a library, cultural centres, a tea house, and two temples. Due to legal restrictions for foreign religious groups in the PRC, Foguangshan had to relinquish some of its control over the temple to get access to the Chinese religious market – a hitherto unprecedented concession. By expanding its global temple network to the PRC, Foguangshan hopes to reconnect Chinese Buddhism to its place of origin.

## 5.2 Yiguandao

The second Taiwanese religious organization that this project will examine is the “Way of Pervading Unity” (Yiguandao, emic transcription: “I-Kuan Tao”). Although considered “China’s first religious export to the world” by some scholars,<sup>106</sup> the global spread of Yiguandao has been addressed only marginally by the Chinese-speaking academia, and it has been almost completely overlooked by international scholarship. This modern sectarian movement emerged in the late nineteenth century from local offshoots of the “Sect of Former Heaven” (Xiantian dao 先天道), which itself has had a significant presence in Chinese diasporas in Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore since the 1860s.<sup>107</sup> Xiantian dao is one of many Chinese sectarian religions, such as the “Virtue Sect” (Dejiao 德教) and the “Sect of True Emptiness” (Zhenkongjiao 真空教), that have been largely eradicated on the Chinese mainland, but were able to establish themselves in Chinese communities outside of the Chinese mainland, particularly in Southeast Asia.<sup>108</sup> In recent years, some of them have been able to set up local chapters in the United States and Australia, and now seek to “come home” to the Chinese mainland.<sup>109</sup>

Although the twentieth-century global spread of Yiguandao followed the patterns of Chinese and Taiwanese migration, the motif of reaching out to the world appears to be much older. As early as the 1880s, when Yiguandao was still a marginal religious group in Shandong province in eastern China, sectarian scriptures proposed that its religious teachings will “save [people] at home and abroad” (*pudu hainei haiwai* 普渡海內海外).<sup>110</sup> Likewise, during its unprecedented expansion throughout the Chinese mainland in the 1930s, ambitious leaders aspired to spread their moral teachings in order to redeem global modernity by outbalancing “Western materialism” with “Eastern spirituality” and particularly with Confucian ethics,<sup>111</sup> a topic that has prevailed in Yiguandao discourses until today.<sup>112</sup> But it was only after the Second World War and the

106 Song Guangyu 宋光宇, *Tiandao gouchen: Yiguandao diaocha baogao* 天道鉤沉: 一貫道調查報告, Taipei: Yuanyou, 1983, p. 206.

107 M. Freedman and M. Topley, “Religion and Social Realignment among the Chinese in Singapore”, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 21 (1961) 1, p. 13; M. Topley, “The Great Way of Former Heaven: A Group of Chinese Secret Religious Sects”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 26 (1963), pp. 362–392; Lin Wanchuan 林萬傳, “Taigu Xiantian dao yuanliu ji fangwen jishi 泰國先天道源流暨訪問記實”, *Minjian zongjiao* 民間宗教 1 (1995), pp. 139–152; You Zi’an 游子安, “Niju seiki Sentendō no Kanton, Honkon kara Betonamu e no denbō to henyō 二〇世紀・先天道の広東・香港からベトナムへの伝播と変容”, in: Takeuchi Fusaji 武内房司 (ed.), *Ekkjōsuru kindai Higashi Ajia no minshū shūkyō: Chūgoku, Taiwan, Honkon, Betonamu, soshite Nihon* 越境する近代東アジアの民衆宗教: 中国・台湾・香港・ベトナム、そして日本, Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2011, pp. 47–82; Takeuchi Fusaji 武内房司, “Sentendō kara Kaodaikyō e 先天道からカオダイ教へ”, in: Takeuchi Fusaji 武内房司 (ed.), *Sensō saigai to kindai higashi-ajia no minshū shūkyō* 戦争・災害と近代東アジアの民衆宗教, Tokyo: Yūshisha, 2014, pp. 265–289; Wei Dingming 危丁明, *Shumin de yongheng: Xiantian dao ji qi zai Gang Ao ji Dongya diqu de fazhan* 庶民的永恆: 先天道及其在港澳及東南亞地區的發展, Taipei: Boyang wenhua, 2015; Wang Chenfa 王琛發, “Qinglian jiao yuanliu 青蓮教源流”, in: Lin Rongze 林榮澤 (ed.), *Yiguandao xue yanjiu. Juan san: Guowai Yiguandao yanjiu (1)* 一貫道學研究 卷三: 國外一貫道研究 (1), Xinbeishi: Yiguan yili bianji yuan, 2017, pp. 315–362.

108 Cf. Luo Xianglin 羅香林, *Liuxing yu Gan Min Yue ji Malaiya zhi Zhenkongjiao* 流行於閩粵及馬來亞之真空教, Hongkong: Zhongguo xuehui, 1962; C.B. Tan, *The Development and Distribution of Dejiao Associations in Malaysia and Singapore: A Study on a Chinese Religious Organization*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985; Yoshihara Kazuo 吉原和男, “Dejiao: A Chinese Religion in Southeast Asia”, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 15 (1988) 2/3, pp. 199–221; B. Formoso, *De Jiao: A Religious Movement in Contemporary China and Overseas: Purple Qi From the East*, Singapore: NUS Press, 2010.

109 Formoso, *De Jiao: A Religious Movement in Contemporary China and Overseas*, pp. 190–196; B. Formoso, “Dejiao, a Chinese Religious Movement in the Age of Globalization”, *Journal of Chinese Religions* 38 (2010) 1, pp. 36–58.

110 *Linian yili* 歷年易理, ascribed to Wang Jueyi 王覺一 (1835?–1912?), reprint dated 1941, in: Wang Jianchuan 王見川 (ed.), *Minzhong jingdian: Yiguandao jingjuan, Liu Bowen jinrang yu qita* 民眾經典: 一貫道經卷、劉伯溫錦囊與其他, Taipei: Boyang wenhua, 2011, vol. 1, pp. 7, 12.

111 Cf. P. Duara, “The Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism”, *Journal of World History* 12 (2001) 1, p. 108; See the catechism *Yiguandao yiwen jieda* 一貫道疑問解答, preface dated 1937, in: Wang Jianchuan 王見川 (ed.), *Minzhong jingdian: Yiguandao jingjuan, Liu Bowen jinrang yu qita*, vol. 1, pp. 195–196.

112 H. Seiwert, “Religious Response to Modernization in Taiwan: The Case of I-kuan Tao”, *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 21 (1981), pp. 43–70; Su Mingdong 蘇鳴東, *Tiandao gailun* 天道概論, Tainan: Tianju shuju, 1989 [1978], pp. 205–219.



restoration of international travel in East Asia that sectarian leaders were able to dispatch missionaries, first to East and Southeast Asia. However, because the sect was considered a major hindrance to the establishment of the new communist China, it was almost entirely eradicated in mainland China through mass campaigns in the early 1950s.<sup>113</sup> Following the unstable period of government persecution and internal disputes resulting from the untimely death of the charismatic leader Zhang Tianran 張天然 (1889–1947), Yiguandao began to split into numerous and quite independent branches. In Taiwan, this trend had been facilitated through continued, albeit less severe, repression under the KMT regime from the 1950s to the 1980s, when local and personal networks were privileged over cross-branch interaction in order to keep a low profile.<sup>114</sup>

Before being forced underground on the mainland in 1949, many branches were able to establish themselves elsewhere, primarily in Taiwan and Hong Kong, but also among Chinese migrants in Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia.<sup>115</sup> Probably because of continued repression in China and Taiwan, individual aspirations, and difficulties in cross-border communication, these branches developed quite independently from each other. This is why Yiguandao today is a highly decentralized and transnational religious movement with various divisions and local hubs that are dispersed not only in Taiwan, but also in Hong Kong, Korea, Southeast Asia, and Brazil. While contemporary Taiwanese adherents claim that “the Dao will be spread throughout the world from its home base in Taiwan” (*li zu Taiwan, dao chuan shijie* 立足臺灣道傳世界),<sup>116</sup> branches located in Hong Kong, Korea, or the United States pursue globalization in their own right. Accordingly, the global spread of Yiguandao is not a mere bilateral movement that emanates from Taiwan, but a complex and multi-layered process that includes various centres. The establishment of the “General Yiguandao Association of the ROC” (*Yiguandao zonghui* 一貫道總會, henceforth abbreviated as YGDZH) in 1988, which followed the sect’s legalization in Taiwan in 1987, paved the way for the facilitation of inter-branch communication and cooperation.<sup>117</sup> However, this institution has no authority in religious or organizational matters, but merely serves the purposes of intra-sect exchange and representation vis-à-vis the state.

Because of the enormous heterogeneity of the movement, the present project will confine itself primarily to the global spread of Taiwanese branches. After the sect was able to consolidate itself as a major religious force in the Taiwanese religious landscape with a self-proclaimed domestic membership of several million,<sup>118</sup> the spread of Yiguandao to North America, Europe, and Africa has followed Taiwanese business migration since the late 1970s.<sup>119</sup> Today, Yiguandao claims 30 million followers worldwide, who are organized in 14 registered national religious associations and more than 30 similar institutions that are not designated as “religious” associations.<sup>120</sup> These are, at least nominally, overseen by the “World I-Kuan Tao Headquarters,”<sup>121</sup> set up in Los Angeles in 1996. The fact that Yiguandao’s international office is located in the United States may have much to do with the sect’s ambitions to be accredited as an international NGO by the United Nations, which were fulfilled in 2004. In the late 1990s, the aforementioned Buddhist Ciji organization had primarily been denied formal registration as an NGO by the UN because of the location of its headquarters in Taiwan, in a state that the UN does not recognize as such due to the “one China policy” of the PRC.<sup>122</sup> Accordingly, Ciji established a nominal headquarters in the United States, a UN country, and was finally registered as an NGO in 2004. As it was suggested to me in conversations with one representative of the YGDZH in spring 2017, however, it appears that current leaders do not work very actively in this area. Instead, they put their faith into more “natural” (the word used was *ziran* 自然) and organic developments from the ground up. While

113 Sun Jiang 孫江, “Ikkandō to kindai seiji: ‘Handō kaitōmon’ no chin’atsu o chūshin ni 一貫道と近代政治--「反動会道門の鎮圧」を中心に”, *Chūgoku kenkyū geppō* 中国研究月報 48 (2004) 9, pp. 23–40; C.T. Hung, “The Anti-Unity Sect Campaign and Mass Mobilization in the Early People’s Republic of China”, *The China Quarterly* 202 (2010), pp. 400–420.

114 D.K. Jordan and D.L. Overmyer, *The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986, pp. 240–245; Y. Lu, *The Transformation of Yiguan Dao in Taiwan: Adapting to a Changing Religious Economy*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008, pp. 49–53, 55–60.

115 Mu Yu 慕禹, *Yiguandao gaiyao* 一貫道概要, Tainan: Tianju shuju, 2002, pp. 130–132, 134–136, 136–152, 156–167, 172–179, 184–193.

116 See the “words of the chairman” of the General Yiguandao Association of the ROC, reprinted in its monthly journal *Yiguandao zonghui huixun* 一貫道總會會訊, #278 (2014/11), 4–7.

117 Shinohara Hisao 篠原壽雄, “Taiwan Ikkandō no atarashii ayumi: Kaikin to sōkai seiritsu o chūshin ni shite 台湾一貫道の新しい歩み - 解禁と総会成立を中心に”, *Komazawa daigaku bungakubu kenkyū kiyō* 駒澤大学文学部研究紀要 49 (1991), pp. 1–130.

118 C.T. Kuo, *Religion and Democracy in Taiwan*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008, pp. 66–67.

119 For an insider overview, cf. Mu, *Yiguandao gaiyao* 一貫道概要, pp. 60–227.

120 Interview with present chairman Li Yuzhu 李玉柱, March 2017, Taipei.

121 *Yiguandao shijie zonghui* (一貫道世界總會), <http://www.with.org> (accessed 7 December 2017).

122 Huang, “What Travels? Notes on a Globalizing Buddhist Movement from Taiwan”, p. 5.

this particular representative was not very specific regarding reasons for this shift, it seems to be the case that Yiguandao's highly fragile relationship with the PRC and the sect's intent to "reconquer" the mainland at some moment in the future are at stake here.

While there exists quite a number of case studies about the local spread and adaptation of the sect in Hong Kong,<sup>123</sup> Korea,<sup>124</sup> Japan,<sup>125</sup> Thailand,<sup>126</sup> Malaysia,<sup>127</sup> Singapore,<sup>128</sup> and Indonesia,<sup>129</sup> there are only a few works that explore Yiguandao's spread to Western societies, such as Canada,<sup>130</sup> the United States,<sup>131</sup> Great Britain,<sup>132</sup> and France.<sup>133</sup> One research project designed by Buddhologist Max Deeg at the University

- 123 E.A. Irons, "Tian Dao: The Net of Ideology in a Chinese Religion", PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, 2000; S. Billioud, "Le rôle de l'éducation dans le projet salvateur du Yiguandao", *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 33 (2011), pp. 211–234; Ng Ka-Shing 伍嘉誠, "Yiguan Dao in Hong Kong: A Case Study of Its Organizational Characteristics and Conversion Experiences of Adherents", *Journal of the Graduate School of Letters, Hokkaido University* 9 (2014), pp. 41–53.
- 124 Lee Gyung-Won 李京源, "Hanguo Yiguandao fazhan gaishu 韓國一貫道發展概述", *Huaren zongjiao yanjiu* 華人宗教研究 4 (2014), pp. 147–166; Lee Gyung-Won 李京源, "Yiguandao zai Hanguo de fazhan yu qi zaidihua tese 一貫道在韓國的發展與其在本地化特色", in: Lin Rongze 林榮澤 (ed.), *Yiguandaoxue yanjiu. Juan san: Guowai Yiguandao yanjiu (1) 一貫道學研究. 卷三: 國外一貫道研究 (1)*, Xinbeishi: Yiguan yili bianji yuan, 2017, pp. 25–41; Lin Rongze 林榮澤, *Yiguandaoxue yanjiu. Juan er: Wenxian yanjiu yu zhuanti 一貫道學研究. 卷二: 文獻研究與專題*, Taipei: Yiguan yili bianji yuan, 2014; Lin Rongze 林榮澤, "Daode chuanyan: Tianjin 'Daodetang' dao Riben 'Daodehui' de fazhan 道德傳衍: 天津「道德壇」到日本「道德會」的發展", in: Lin Rongze 林榮澤 (ed.), *Yiguandaoxue yanjiu. Juan san: Guowai Yiguandao yanjiu (1) 一貫道學研究. 卷三: 國外一貫道研究 (1)*, Xinbeishi: Yiguan yili bianji yuan, 2017, pp. 161–181; Xiao Weiyi 蕭維毅, "Yiguandao jiuduguan zhi tantao: yi Hanguo Daodehui wei li (1948–1955) 一貫道救渡觀之探討: 以韓國道德會為例 (1948–1955)", in: Lin Rongze 林榮澤 (ed.), *Yiguandaoxue yanjiu. Juan san: Guowai Yiguandao yanjiu (1) 一貫道學研究. 卷三: 國外一貫道研究 (1)*, Xinbeishi: Yiguan yili bianji yuan, 2017, pp. 122–158.
- 125 Lai Lianjin 賴連金, "Nihon ni okeru Ikkan dō to dōtoku shisō 日本における一貫道と道德思想", *Ajia bunka. Sōgō bunkashi* アジア文化: 総合文化誌 19 (1995), pp. 193–198; Lai Lianjin 賴連金, "Guanyu Yiguan dao zai Riben fazhan de guocheng 關於一貫道在日本發展的過程", *Minjian zongjiao* 民間宗教 3 (1997), pp. 341–350; Lin, "Daode chuanyan".
- 126 Soo Khin Wah [Su Qinghua 蘇慶華], "The Recent Development of the Yiguan Dao Faji Chongde Sub-Branch in Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand", in: P. Clart and P. Crowe (eds.), *The People and the Dao: New Studies in Chinese Religions in Honour of Daniel L. Overmyer*, Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2009, pp. 109–125; Lin Yusheng 林育生, "Taiguo Yiguandao de fazhan yu jingji shehui bianqian 泰國一貫道的發展與經濟社會變遷", *Ya Tai yanjiu luntan* 亞太研究論壇 61 (2015), pp. 55–85; Lin Yusheng 林育生, "Tai ni okeru Ikkan dō no soshiki hatten to ningen no ryūdōsei タイにおける一貫道の組織発展と人間の流動性", *Higashi-Ajia kenkyū* 東南アジア研究 53 (2016) 2, pp. 189–216.
- 127 Soo Khin Wah [Su Qinghua 蘇慶華], "Xian jieduan de Yiguandao yanjiu: yi Malaixiya wei li 現階段的一貫道研究: 以馬來西亞為例", in: Yang Songnian 楊松年 and Wang Kangding 王慷鼎 (eds.), *Dongnanya huaren wenxue yu wenhua* 東南亞華人文學與文化, Singapore: Xinjiapo Yazhou yanjiuhui deng lianhe chubanshe, 1995, pp. 309–311; Soo Khin Wah [Su Qinghua 蘇慶華], "A Study of the Yiguan Dao (Unity Sect) and Its Development in Peninsular Malaysia", Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 1997; Soo Khin Wah [Su Qinghua 蘇慶華], "The Recent Development of the Yiguan Dao Faji Chongde Sub-Branch in Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand", *Hong Mingqian* 洪銘謙, "Yiguandao de 'zaidihua' fazhan yu 'wenhua chuancheng': yi Faji Chongde Taiguo daochang wei li 一貫道的「在地化」發展與「文化傳承」: 以發一崇德泰國道場為例", in: L. Rongze 林榮澤 (ed.), *Yiguandaoxue yanjiu. Juan san: Guowai Yiguandao yanjiu (1) 一貫道學研究. 卷三: 國外一貫道研究 (1)*, Xinbeishi: Yiguan yili bianji yuan, 2017, pp. 247–278; Jiang Liujing 江柳靜, "Malaixiya qiaosheng Yiguandao Faji chongde guixin zhi tanjiu 馬來西亞僑生一貫道發一崇德皈信之探究", MA thesis, Guoli Jinan guoji daxue, 2014.
- 128 Song Guangyu 宋光宇, *Tiandao chuandeng: Yiguandao yu xiandai shehui* 天道傳燈: 一貫道與現代社會, Banqiao: Sanyang, 1996, pp. 423–490; Song Guangyu 宋光宇, "Zongjiao chuanbo, shangye huodong yu wenhua rentong: Yiguandao zai Xinjiapo de chuanbo yu fazhan 宗教傳播、商業活動與文化認同——一貫道在新加坡的傳播與發展", *Guoli Taiwan daxue wenshizhe xuebao* 國立臺灣大學文史哲學報 47 (1997), pp. 213–258; Song Guangyu 宋光宇, "The Heavenly Way Transmits the Light: The Yiguandao and Contemporary Society", *Chinese Studies in History* 44 (2010) 1, pp. 76–90; Soo Khin Wah [Su Qinghua 蘇慶華], "The Recent Development of the Yiguan Dao Faji Chongde Sub-Branch in Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand", Goh Yu Mei 吳玉美, "Huanjing, tiaojian, jueze: Xinjiapo Yiguandao Baoguang Jiande he Faji Tian'en (qunying) zuxian fazhan yanjiu 環境、條件、抉擇: 新加坡一貫道寶光建德和發一天恩 (群英) 組線發展研究", MA thesis, Department of Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore, 2011; F.K.G. Lim, "The Eternal Mother and the State: Circumventing Religious Management in Singapore", *Asian Studies Review* 36 (2012) 1, pp. 19–37; F.K.G. Lim, "We Are Not a Religion: Secularization and Religious Territoriality of Yiguan Dao (Unity Way) in Singapore", in: J. Finucane and R.M. Feener (eds.), *Proselytizing and the Limits of Religious Pluralism in Contemporary Asia*, Singapore: Springer, 2014, pp. 171–190.
- 129 Brown, *Agama Buddha Maitreya*; Shen Yeying 沈晔滢, "Yinni hou xinzhixu shidai de huaren zongjiao fuxing: yi Yiguandao zhi fazhan wei li 印尼後新秩序時代之華人宗教復興: 以一貫道之發展為例", *Taiwan Dongnanya xuekan* 台灣東南亞學刊 10 (2015) 2, pp. 105–128.
- 130 Clart, "Opening the Wilderness for the Way of Heaven".
- 131 Irons, "Tian Dao".
- 132 Yang Hongren 楊弘任, "Zongshe zongjiao de zhongjie yu zhuanyi: Yingguo Yiguandao daochang minzuzhi fenxi 綜攝宗教的仲介與轉譯: 英國一貫道道場民族志分析", in: Cheng Gongrang 程恭讓 and Zhong Yunying 鍾雲鶯 (eds.), *Dao zai minjian: Zhonghua minjian zongjiao wenhua luntan lunwenji (2013) 道在民間. 中華民間宗教文化論壇論文集 (2013)*, Xinbeishi: Zhonghua wenhua guoji jiaoliu cunjinhui, 2013, pp. 332–349; Yang Hongren 楊弘任, "Zongshe yu zhuanyi: Yiguandao zai Yingguo de xingdongzhe wangluo fenxi 綜攝與轉譯: 一貫道在英國的行動者網絡分析", in: Huang Yinggui 黃應貴 (ed.), *Richang shenghuo zhong de dangdai zongjiao* 日常生活中的當代宗教, Taipei: Qunxue chubanshe, 2015, pp. 235–274; Yang Hongren 楊弘任, "Yiguandao de wenhua kuajie: Yingyuxi guojia de daochang lunshu yu shizuo 一貫道的文化跨界: 英語系國家的道場論述與實作", in: *Yiguandao 'Wenhua jiaoliu yu shijie gonghao' xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 一貫道「文化交流與世界共好」學術研討會論文集, 2016, pp. 264–278.
- 133 S. Billioud, "De Taiwan à Maison-Alfort, réflexions sur la globalisation du Yiguandao", "La Religion des Chinois en France", Colloque international, Paris, 18 May 2016.

of Vienna in the early 2000s was, most unfortunately, called off, and the only available publication can merely present preliminary observations on the Yiguandao offshoot “Great Way of Maitreya” (Mile dadao 彌勒大道) in Vienna.<sup>134</sup> Most studies agree that any participation in Yiguandao activities is primarily ethnically based, characterized by a sense of cultural belonging and the search for familiar social, moral, and religious values.

As far as can be gleaned from sectarian publications as well as from conversations with members in Taiwan, Yiguandao appears to be fairly successful in its efforts to proselytize local people in South Africa.<sup>135</sup> After the establishment of the first Buddha hall in Bloemfontein in 1988, Taiwanese missionaries had founded at least 26 temples by 2001, which are located largely in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, and Cape Town.<sup>136</sup> In 2011, the “I-Kuan Tao Association of R.S.A.” was formally established and it is still the only organization of its kind on the entire continent.<sup>137</sup> In addition to reaching out to the less fortunate by means of public charity,<sup>138</sup> the sect appears to have proselytized a considerable cohort of its native South African membership by holding classes and introductory sessions in remote villages. These activities are usually performed by local Taiwanese members and supported by visiting volunteers from Taiwan.<sup>139</sup> However, the factual extent and character of these efforts have yet to be corroborated by fieldwork, particularly because recent criminal events (such as a hostage crisis that involved sect members as victims) have forced some Taiwanese nationals to return to their home country. In addition, the YGDZH has issued advices for its Taiwanese members not to visit South Africa at the moment due to security reasons.<sup>140</sup>

While South Africa represents a fascinating and rare case of transculturation of Chinese religiosities in Africa, Yiguandao appears to serve a radically different role in the vibrant Chinese migrant communities of California. The presence of the sect in the United States dates back to the late 1960s, when the first Buddha halls were established in American Chinatowns, particularly California,<sup>141</sup> a hotspot of Taiwanese and Chinese migration. Having founded more than 600 temples and claiming a membership of over 200,000, Yiguandao sees itself as one of the most important Chinese religious organizations in California, on a par with Foguangshan and Ciji.<sup>142</sup> Founded as a non-profit organization in 2006, the “Great Tao Foundation of America” oversees and coordinates various religious and charitable activities,<sup>143</sup> by which Yiguandao aims to affect American society.<sup>144</sup> Located in the city of El Monte in Los Angeles County (an important Chinese enclave) and thus in the vicinity of another Chinese migrant hotspot, Hacienda Heights, home to Foguangshan’s Xilai Temple, the American Buddha halls seem to serve mostly diasporic needs.

The final field site of the project, Japan, has arguably the longest history of proselytization, as the first missionaries were dispatched from the northern Chinese industrial city of Tianjin to the important Japanese port city of Kobe as early as 1944.<sup>145</sup> Following the eradication of Yiguandao on the Chinese mainland, proselytization continued mostly from Taiwan. Probably because of the lack of central control, some local chapters branched off and developed into independent organizations. One particularly interesting example is a tradition that calls itself Tendō 天道 (Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese Tiandao, “Way of Heaven”, an alternative appellation for Yiguandao), whose main temple is located near Kobe in western

134 Deeg, “Zwischen kultureller Identität und universalem Heilsanspruch”; For a more detailed exploration of the global spread and development of Mile dadao, based on a case study in Japan, see: Wang Yuanshan 汪圓善, “Mile Dadao de zongjiao xingtai 彌勒大道的宗教型態”, MA thesis, Zongjiaoxue yanjiusuo, Furen daxue, 2005, pp. 270–341.

135 See, for instance, the following articles in *Jichu zazhi* 基礎雜誌, #97 (1997/1), 48–51; #103 (1997/7), 41–43; #219 (2007/3), 26–29; *Yiguandao zonghui huixun* 貫道總會會訊, #238 (2011/7), 24–28; #267 (2013/12), 52–53; #280 (2015/1), 22–25.

136 Mu, *Yiguandao gaiyao* 一貫道概要, pp. 223–225.

137 *Yiguandao zonghui huixun*, #240 (2011/9), 4–11.

138 Yang Liuchang 楊流昌, “Tiandao chuanqi: Yiguandao zai Taiwan de chuanbo yu yingxiang 天道傳奇：一貫道在台灣的傳播與影響”, PhD diss., Zhongyang Minzu Daxue, 2010, pp. 67–77.

139 See the many reports printed in Yiguandao journals: *Jichu zazhi*, #221 (2007/5), 12–19; #222 (2007/6), 28–33; #231 (2008/3), 22–25; #237 (2008/9), 44–47; #238 (2008/10), 36–40; #251 (2009/11), 31–35; #262 (2010/10), 33–36; #290 (2013/2), 28–29; #300 (2013/12), 8–13.

140 Interview with a “conversion master” (*dianchuanshi*, 點傳師) of the Jichu Zhongshu branch 基礎忠恕, location: Xiantian daoyuan 先天道院, Taipei; 9 August 2016.

141 Cf. Mu, *Yiguandao gaiyao* 一貫道概要, pp. 201–209.

142 *Ibid.*, p. 209.

143 The Great Tao Foundation of America, <http://greatao.org/html.html> (accessed 7 December 2017).

144 For a detailed insider account of various social activities from the early 1990s to the early 2010s, see: Chen Zhengfu 陳正夫, *Chengxian qihou: Yiguandao maixiang shijie de hongyuan* 承先啟後：一貫道邁向世界的宏願, Taipei: Zhengyi shanshu chubanshe, 2015.

145 Lin, “Daode chuanyan”, p. 176.

Japan.<sup>146</sup> After having branched off in 1990 from Tiandao – a rival Yiguandao tradition that equally claimed legitimacy after the death of paramount leader Zhang Tianran in 1947 – the group appears to have adopted a number of elements that are specific to the religious landscape of Japan, such as performing fire rituals (Jp. *goma* 護摩) to avert misfortunes.<sup>147</sup> Similarly, Fayi Chongde 發一崇德 (“Promotion of Unity and Veneration of Virtue”), the most successful branch among the 12 Taiwanese branches present in Japan, claims a high percentage of Japanese adherents, and publications are primarily written in Japanese. Having founded its first temple in eastern Japan in 1976, the branch recently celebrated forty years of proselytization in Japan.<sup>148</sup> As is the case in South Africa and the United States, activities are coordinated by a national association. In this case, the association was formally established in 2006 and is based in Saitama Prefecture 埼玉県, northwest of Tokyo.<sup>149</sup> Similar to the way early Yiguandao leaders intended their teachings to compensate for the shortcomings of “Western materialism”, Yiguandao in Japan seems to speak particularly to those who are looking for that allegedly traditional “Asian spirituality”<sup>150</sup> Accordingly, it appears to operate both as a “migrant religion” and a “travelling faith”.

Because the three field sites await detailed examination by fieldwork, the notes presented here can only represent mere preliminary observations that are mostly based on sectarian views (publications and conversations with Taiwanese members). Nevertheless, it seems evident that proselytization follows the patterns of migration precisely, most of which is motivated by economic reasons. Because most Yiguandao members are laypersons, in the sense that they do not make a living from their religious profession, it is reasonable to suppose that everyday needs represent the driving force behind migration movements. While it might appear that non-religious motives are prioritized over religious ones, this way of thinking does not pose any problem to the members. Thus, emic discourses easily link the two spheres of interest by proposing to “bring the Dao to wherever your work brings you” (*shengyi zuo dao na, daowu jiu kai na* 生意做到哪, 道務就開哪).<sup>151</sup> Accordingly, globalization does not seem to be the outcome of strategic planning, but it is rather closely related to migration as well as to individual activities. On an organizational level, World I-Kuan Tao Headquarters aims to facilitate communication and cooperation between these efforts. At least formally, each branch is expected to be responsible for one national association and thus for the management of one region. In regard to the three sites mentioned above, domestic affairs are managed by the branches Jichu Zhongshu 基礎忠恕 in the USA, Fayi Chongde in Japan, and Baoguang Yushan 寶光玉山 in South Africa. This division of labour appears to be a part of Yiguandao’s initiative to develop a worldwide network of sect associations while allowing both local chapters and branch headquarters a great amount of autonomy. Nevertheless, it remains to be explored through fieldwork how these different and sometimes conflicting aspirations play out, and how they are positioned in regard to ethnic, cultural, religious, and economic questions.

146 For a detailed self-introduction of the group, its history and activities, see the official website <http://tendo.net/v3> (accessed 9 August 2017).

147 <http://tendo.net/v3/kuyo/dogu.php> (accessed 7 December 2017). Some information regarding the evolution of this specific group were brought up by Tiandao members during informal conversations at “Tiandao College” (Tiandao xueyuan 天道學院) in Shulin district, New Taipei City, 27 April 2017.

148 See the bilingual issue of its mouthpiece journal *Fayi Chongde zazhi* 發一崇德雜誌, #148 (2017/2), 42–71 and the anniversary publication: *Hatsuichi Sūtoku Nihon dōjō yonjū-nen kinenshi* 發一崇德日本道場四十年紀念誌, edited by Ten’ichi temple 天一宮 (Chichibu: no publisher, 2016), which is written entirely in Japanese.

149 Chen, *Chengxian qihou*, 177–179.

150 Ibid.

151 This saying is ascribed to Gao Jincheng 高金澄 (1924–2008) alias Binkai Laoren 斌凱老人, former long-time leader of Yiguandao’s Andong branch 安東組, and it is depicted in a memorial hall dedicated to his legacy. The building is located at the new headquarters at Andong Milesan 安東彌勒山, just south of Hsinchu in northwestern Taiwan (fieldtrip by the author, 22 February 2017). On the usage of this slogan by other Yiguandao activists, see also Lu, *The Transformation of Yiguan Dao in Taiwan*, 82–83.

## 6 Outlook

We hope that this working paper has demonstrated that research into the global spread and transnational engagement of Taiwanese religious organizations constitutes a promising and fruitful academic endeavour that will help us to shed light on processes of space-making by transnational or migrating religious actors, as well as investigating the varying forms of interaction between centres, peripheries, diasporas, and host societies, and the multifaceted and shifting meanings of religious places themselves. Accordingly, we aspire to contribute not only to the study of Chinese transnationalism and the academic field of Chinese/Taiwanese religions but also to scholarly discussions about religion, migration, and processes of transnational space-making in general.



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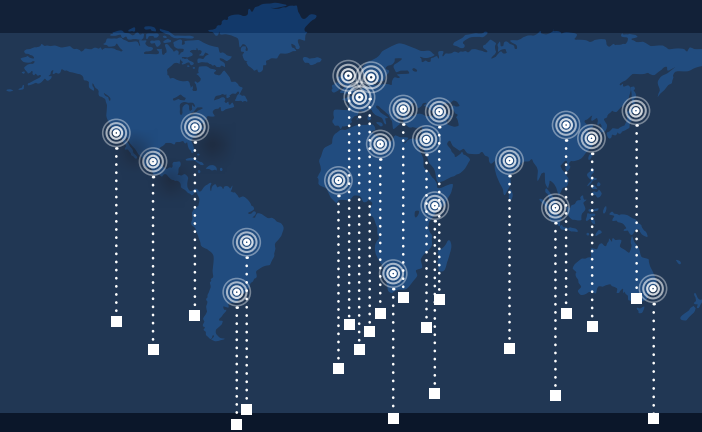
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# NOTES

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