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第十二章

Secret Societies, Buddhist Fundamentalists, or Popular Religious Movements? Aspects of Zhaijiao in Taiwan

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祕密社會，佛教原教旨主義者，民間教派？ 關於臺灣齋教的一些看法

Nikolas Broy 百可思

內容提要：齋教是包括龍華，金幢，先天三派的總稱，是從中國南部到臺灣被傳過來的宗教結社。但齋教到底是如何的宗教，學術界還未清出。大陸，臺灣與日本學者一般把齋教歸於所謂民間教派或是秘密結社；不過西方學者一般說齋教是僧伽團體的勢力之外而存的居士佛教或是在家佛教的一種。本論文將闡述筆者的一些新看法。一方面，本文使用新的歷史資料；一方面，本文要使用 2010 年在臺灣做過的田野調查的一些資料。

Abstract: Zhaijiao 齋教 or “vegetarian sects” is a common designation given to the three religious traditions Longhuapai 龍華派, Jintongpai 金幢派, and Xiantianpai 先天派, which were founded during the late imperial period in southern China and have since been introduced to Taiwan. The characterization of Zhaijiao, however, is still a matter of debate. Whereas Chinese, Taiwanese, and Japanese scholars tend to regard their historical antecedents as popular religious sects or even as secret societies, Western scholarship argues that Zhaijiao represents a form of lay Buddhism that exists outside the domain of monastic influence. The present paper aims to shed more light on this contested issue. By applying historical sources that have not been used extensively yet, as well as empirical data from field research conducted in Taiwan in 2010, the paper tries to examine the weaknesses and fallacies of the different characterizations. In doing so, it hopefully will contribute to a less biased perception of Zhaijiao.

關鍵詞：齋教、在家佛教、龍華派、民間教派

Keywords: Zhaijiao (Vegetarian Sects), lay Buddhism, Dragon Flower Sect (Longhuapai), popular sects

1. Introduction¹

Zhaijiao 齋教 or “vegetarian sects” is a common designation given to three religious traditions in Taiwan. These three are the Longhuapai 龍華派 or “Dragon Flower Sect,” the Jintongpai 金幢派 or “Gold Pennant Sect,” and the Xiantianpai 先天派 or “Former Heaven Sect.” Founded during the early through mid-Qing period in southern China, they were introduced to Taiwan by the middle of the 18th century. In the study of these religions a great number of contesting definitions of what Zhaijiao is can be found. Whereas Chinese, Taiwanese, and Japanese scholars tend to regard their historical antecedents in Ming and Qing China as popular religious sects or even as secret societies,² Western scholarship argues that Zhaijiao represents a form of lay

¹ The research that provided the basis for this paper was partly conducted as a visiting scholar at the Institute for Ethnology at Academia Sinica, Taipei, from April to September 2010. I would like to express my gratitude to the institute for giving me this opportunity as well as to Prof. Zhang Xun 張珣 for her kind advice. This research in turn is part of a larger research project entitled “Religious Practice of Zhaijiao (‘Vegetarian Sects’) in Contemporary Taiwan,” conducted by the author at the Institute for the Study of Religions at the University of Leipzig, Germany from 2009 to 2011. It is funded by a research grant of the German Research Foundation (DFG) to which I would also like to express my gratitude. Furthermore I want to thank Wang Jianchuan 王見川, Lin Meirong 林美容, and Zhang Kunzhen 張崑振 for their help in the early stages of the field work. But most of all I am indebted to the numerous “vegetarian friends” without whose kindness this research would not have been possible.

² Ma Xisha 馬西沙 and Han Bingfang 韓秉方, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiao shi* 中國民間宗教史, (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2004); Shao Yong 邵雍, *Zhongguo huidaomen* 中國會道門 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1997); Lian Lichang 連立昌 and Qin Baoqi 秦寶琦, *Zhongguo mimi shehui. Di er juan: Yuan Ming jiaomen* 中國秘密社會 – 第二卷：元明教門 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2003); Takeuchi Fusaji 武内房司, “Taiwan Zhaijiao Longhua pai de yuanliu wenti: Qing mo Zhejiang de Lingshan zhengpai yu Juexing zhengzong pai 台灣齋教龍華派的源流問題. 清末浙江的靈山正派與覺性正宗派,” in *Taiwan Zhaijiao de lishi guancha yu zhanwang* 台灣齋教的歷史觀察與展望, ed. Jiang Canteng 江燦騰 and Wang Jianchuan 王見川 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1994), 5-26; Asai Motoi 淺井紀, “Mushō rōbo e no sasoi – Saikyō / Seirenkyō / Ikkandō 無生老母への誘い – 齋教 / 青蓮教 / 一貫道,” in *Kessha ga egaku Chūgoku kingendai* 結社が描く中國近現代, ed. Noguchi Tetsurō 野口鐵郎 (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 2005), 35-49; Zheng

Buddhism that exists outside the domain of monastic influence.³ Especially in the case of Taiwan, the lay Buddhist character of Zhaijiao is usually stressed.⁴ Although they agree with this, Jordan and Overmyer treat Zhaijiao in their well known study under the label of “sectarianism,” but with a different understanding than the Chinese and Japanese authors cited above.⁵

The dispute about which term might be the most appropriate to designate a given religious tradition, however insignificant it appears, is not merely an act of academic amusement. Quite the contrary, it makes a huge difference if we talk about “secret societies” or “lay Buddhists,” “sects” or “popular religion,” because each of these terms carries specific assumptions, implications, and often also value judgements, which doubtlessly affect the perception of the tradition in

Zhiming 鄭志明, “Taiwan Zhaijiao de yuanyuan yu liubian 台灣齋教的淵源與流變,” in *Taiwan minjian zongjiao lunji* 台灣民間宗教論集, ed. Zheng Zhiming 鄭志明 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1988), 35-61; Wang Jianchuan 王見川, ed., *Taiwan de Zhaijiao yu lantang* 台灣的齋教與鸞堂 (Taipei: Nantian shuju, 1996). For recent Chinese scholarship which often does not make a clear distinction between “sects” and “secret societies,” see: David Ownby, “Recent Chinese Scholarship on the History of Chinese Secret Societies,” *Late Imperial China* 22, no. 1 (2001): 139-158, esp. 144-152.

³ Hubert Seiwert, “Popular Religious Sects in South-East China: Sect Connections and the Problem of the Luo Jiao / Bailian Jiao Dichotomy,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 20 (1992): 33-59; Barend ter Haar, “The Teachings of the Dragon Flower as Continuation of Song-Yuan Lay-Buddhism,” in *The Fourth Fu Jen University Sinological Symposium. Research on Religions in China: Status quo and Perspectives*, ed. Zbigniew Wesolowski (Xinzhuan: Furen Daxue chubanshe, 2007), 31-83; Barend ter Haar, “The Dragon Flower Teachings and the Practice of Ritual,” *Minsu quyi* 民俗曲藝, no. 163 (2009): 117-159.

⁴ Hubert Seiwert, *Volksreligion und nationale Tradition in Taiwan: Studien zur regionalen Religionsgeschichte einer chinesischen Provinz* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1985), 163-198; Seiwert, “Popular Religious Sects in South-East China,” 33-59; Charles B. Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan: Religion and the State, 1660-1990* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 14-30 and 88-92 et pass.

⁵ David K. Jordan and Daniel L. Overmyer, *The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 8-10 (about their understanding of “sectarianism”) and 27-31 (about Zhaijiao).

question. For this reason it is surely no exaggeration to regard the search for “proper designations,” or *zhengming* 正名 in a Confucian sense, as a key task of academic work.

Therefore, the present paper aims to clarify the contested identity of Zhaijiao by re-evaluating the characterizations outlined above using historical and empirical data from late 19th to early 21st century Taiwan. I will present findings from historical research and field work conducted in 2010, but due to lack of space I will confine myself primarily to the Longhuapai. The characterizations in question can be divided into two main categories, since they regard Zhaijiao either as (1) a popular sect or secret society, or as (2) a lay Buddhist movement. In the main part of this paper I will discuss the following four core assumptions:

- 1) Zhaijiao as popular religious or secret sects that are sociologically sectarian: Deviance, secrecy, and exclusivity;
- 2) Zhaijiao as lay Buddhism and institutionally independent from monastic Buddhism;
- 3) Zhaijiao as a non-professional religion;
- 4) Zhaijiao as (Protestant) Buddhist fundamentalism.

2. Aspects of Zhaijiao in Taiwan – Sociologically Sectarian: Deviance, Secrecy, and Exclusivity

This characterization is held by most Chinese and Japanese scholars working historically not only on Zhaijiao, but on “popular sects” in late imperial China in general.⁶ The term “popular sects” is used to cover a broad range of religious groups and movements at the margins of governmental dominance and the institutionalized “three traditions” of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, which were organized congregationally and based on voluntary membership. Although the exact definitions of these popular religious or secret sects (*minjian jiaopai* 民間教派 or *mimi jiaomen* 秘密教門 in Chinese) might differ in each case, most of the aforementioned scholars share at least the following assumptions: (1) Sect members

⁶ Ownby, “Recent Chinese Scholarship on the History of Chinese Secret Societies,” 144-150.

share beliefs and practices different from those of their social environment, for which they are regarded as more or less deviant and are thus in a certain degree of tension with this environment. In order to avoid an increase of tension or even persecution they are (2) forced to a certain degree of secrecy, which leads to (3) the confinement of social interaction with other sect members and thus to exclusivity (of social interaction).

As Barend ter Haar and others have already suggested, this view entails a lot of distortions, deriving from the uncritical or sole reliance on official and literati sources that usually express a hostile attitude towards “popular sects” and were often the product of persecutions.⁷ Furthermore, only in a limited number of cases does the hostility seem to be based on actual deviance of the groups in question. More often they were regarded as heterodox only because of their social condensation outside the realm of governmental control. Accusations of Zhaijiao heterodoxy can be found in several official sources of late imperial mainland China.⁸ In the case of Taiwan, however, no indications of fundamental hostility can be traced in official writings. Although sources prior to the Japanese colonial period merely touch upon Zhaijiao rather briefly, it appears that they do not produce any negative image, but instead report quite objectively about their practices.⁹ The *Gazetteer of Danshui Subprefecture*, dated 1871, for instance, states the existence of “vegetable halls” (*caitang* 菜堂) housing men and women who pursue a vegetarian diet and engage in religious worship.¹⁰ Despite the scarcity of proper primary sources from Taiwan under Qing rule, the apparent absence of secrecy and social tension can also be derived from the location of many vegetarian temples (*zhaitang* 齋堂) within the

⁷ Barend ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 9.

⁸ Jan J. M. de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China: A Page in the History of Religions* (Amsterdam: Müller, 1903), 170-172; Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiao shi*, chapter 7.

⁹ Zhang Kunzhen 張崑振, “Taiwan chuantong zhaitang shensheng kongjian zhi yanjiu 台灣傳統齋堂神聖空間之研究,” (Ph.D. diss., National Cheng Kung University, 1999), 185-188.

¹⁰ *Danshuiting zhi* 淡水廳志, by Chen Peigui 陳培桂, TWWXCK 172, j. 11, 304.

old walls of many cities and thus in ordinary residential areas. In Tainan city, for instance, all *zhaitang* were located within the city wall, whereas four out of six Buddhist temples were located outside of it.¹¹ One of these *zhaitang*, the Dehutatang 德化堂, is located merely a five minute walk away from the Koxinga shrine and the Confucius temple, which were both places of official worship in what was then the capital of Taiwan prefecture (until 1887).

Only the case of the transformation of a vegetarian temple in Shezilin 樣仔林 (north of Tainan), mentioned in Lian Heng's *General History of Taiwan*, into an official academy in the course of the so called "White Lotus Rebellion" in northern China from 1793 to 1804 seems to indicate official mistrust.¹² According to recently uncovered prints of Buddhist texts in the Dehutatang, this temple appears to be the Kaihutatang 開化堂, one of the earliest temples of the Longhuapai in Taiwan, founded probably by the end of the 1780s or early 1790s.¹³ Nevertheless, this governmental act does not necessarily support the assumption of general official hostility against Zhaijiao, since in the course of larger religious uprisings local officials, even in other regions of the empire, were under serious pressure to "clean up" their area of responsibility. In cases like these, it was not at all rare that temples were closed almost randomly just to prove that "something had been done," whether or not the officials in charge really mistrusted the temple and community in question. In an earlier case, a so called "Luo sect" (Luojiao 羅教) had been detected in 1748 in Zhuluo County 諸羅縣 (today's Jiayi County 嘉義縣) during an official investigation following a smaller religious uprising in Fujian.¹⁴ "Luo Sect" is a common designation for religious groups somehow connected to

¹¹ For maps of Xinzhu, Lugang, Zhanghua, Jiayi and Tainan, see: Zhang Kunzhen, "Taiwan chuantong zhaitang shensheng kongjian zhi yanjiu," 37 and 40.

¹² *Taiwan tongshi* 臺灣通史, ed. Lian Heng 連橫, dated 1918, TWWXCK 128, j. 22, 579.

¹³ Wang Jianchuan 王見川, "Cong Longhuajiao dao Fojiao – Tainan Dehutatang de chengli yu qi zai jindai de fazhan 從龍華教到佛教 – 台南德化堂的成立與其在近代的發展," in *Taiwan de simiao yu zhaitang* 台灣的寺廟與齋堂, ed. Wang Jianchuan 王見川 and Li Shiwei 李世偉 (Taipei: Boyang wenhua, 2004), 143.

¹⁴ *Shiliao xunkan* 史料旬刊 (Beijing: Jinghua yinshuju, 1930-1931), vol. 29, 67a03.

Patriarch Luo, whom the Longhuapai also regard as their founder. But due to the lack of further information, the identity of this Luo Sect is not certain.

The numerous sources of the Japanese colonial period also do not exude any hostility, instead describing Zhaijiao as a very devout form of lay Buddhism.¹⁵ Moreover, the detailed surveys and registers compiled during the Japanese period since 1915, as well as the nationwide surveys of 1959 and 1983, uncovered that most vegetarian temples were by no means places of secrecy and deviance, but were in fact well integrated into their respective local societies.¹⁶ The only case of subversion that has commonly been brought into connection with vegetarian sects during the colonial period is the so called Xilai'an-incident 西來庵事件, otherwise known as the Tapani-incident 噍吧嘰事件 of 1915. This violent rebellion against Japanese rule was led by adherents of the Xilai temple in Tainan. Although several of its participants pursued a vegetarian diet and met leading members of vegetarian sects in Taipei, Xinzhu, Miaoli, and Taizhong prior to the uprising, the temple itself did not belong to any Zhaijiao tradition. According to Paul Katz' research, it was dedicated to a plague god.¹⁷ Although some Zhaijiao members were imprisoned because of their contact to the rebels, and even though it is to this day a contested issue to what degree Zhaijiao adherents had actually been recruited to participate in the rebellion, the attitude of the colonial government towards Zhaijiao did not change significantly after its suppression.

¹⁵ Tainaka Chizuru 胎中千鶴, "Nihon tōchiki Taiwan no Saikyō ni kan suru ichi shiten 日本統治期臺灣の齋教に関する一視點," *Shi'en* 史苑 60, no. 2 (2000), esp. 53-58.

¹⁶ Copies of the unpublished surveys and registers entitled *Jibyō chōsasho* 寺廟調查書 (1915-1918), *Jibyō daichō* 寺廟台帳 (from the 1920s to the early 1940s) and the later *Taiwan sheng zongjiao diaochashu* 臺灣省宗教調查書 (1959 and 1983) are held by the Library of the Institute of Ethnology and in the Taiwan special collection of the Joint Library of Humanities and Social Sciences, both Academia Sinica, Taipei. Hereafter I will use ZJDCS followed by administrative unit and year to refer to the *Taiwan sheng zongjiao diaochashu*. The numbers given are those of the copies which may differ from copies held in other libraries.

¹⁷ Paul Katz, *When Valleys Turned Blood Red: The Ta-pa-ni Incident in Colonial Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 93ff. and 104.

Quite contrary to its alleged deviance and secrecy, in some cases the founding of a *zhaitang* gained support from local or official elites even during the late imperial period, as in the case of the Zhonghetang 中和堂 in Zhanghua city 彰化, which appears to have been founded in 1870.¹⁸ Several early votive tablets that are still preserved today attest to the amount of official support the temple and its community received. The oldest of these, entitled “the benevolent ferry of universal salvation” (*cihang puji* 慈航普濟) and dated 1870, was created by Shi Longling 石龍凌 of Taiwan prefecture. One tablet entitled “*xifang zizai* 西方自在” and dated 1874 was created by a certain Chen Qingxi 陳慶禧, who served as “Hanlin Bachelor” (*shujishi* 庶吉士) in the imperial academy Hanlinyuan 翰林院 – an assignment granted only to extraordinarily promising students.¹⁹ Another one of the same year and entitled “*baohan zengfeng* 寶翰增豐” was inscribed by Xu Rongsheng 徐榮生, working as vice-general (*fuzhen* 副鎮) in Fujian and Taiwan.²⁰ Moreover, the tablet listing the benefactors of the temple names a certain Liao Zhenyuan 廖振元, who held the fifth rank and served as head of the Office of the Judicial Secretary in the Provincial Administration Commission (*buzhengsi liwen* 布政司理問).²¹ Book printing projects could also sometimes be subsidized by members of the literati elite. Printing blocks recently uncovered in the Dehuatang in Tainan dating from 1835 and 1836 list the names of several tribute students (*gongsheng* 貢生) and office holders, along with Longhua adherents as sponsors.²²

Unfortunately, we do not know to what extent rituals and festivals conducted by vegetarian temples in pre-Japanese Taiwan attracted and involved non-members. But even the earliest sources from about 1915 attest to the attraction of Zhaijiao

¹⁸ On the founding date, see Lin Meirong 林美容, *Taiwan de zhaitang yu yanzi – minjian Fojiao de shijiao* 臺灣的齋堂與巖仔 – 民間佛教的視角 (Taipei: Taiwan shufang, 2008), 128.

¹⁹ Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 434. Chen Qingxi attained the degree of provincial graduate (*juren* 舉人) in 1868, see *Fujian tongzhi Taiwanfu* 福建通志臺灣府 (*Comprehensive Gazetteer of Taiwan Prefecture of Fujian Province*), dated 1871, TWWXCK 84, 15.

²⁰ Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 239.

²¹ Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 127 and 308.

²² Wang Jianchuan, “Cong Longhuajiao dao Fojiao,” 146f.

rituals to non-members.²³ Ritual events were thus not held on behalf of members and their religious pursuits alone, but also for ordinary locals. The major ritual events I observed²⁴ in 2010 enjoyed some popularity among locals. Especially the *pudu* 普度 (“universal salvation”) festival conducted at the rather new Longhua temple Ciyinsi 慈音寺 in Tanzi township 潭子鄉 northeast of Taizhong, founded in 1988, attracted several hundred people. Furthermore, it was discovered in the late 1950s that particularly in the rural areas of central and southern Taiwan many leaders of *zhaitang* also served in political or administrative positions, and thus represented the local elite.²⁵ The best known example, Huang Yujie 黃玉階 (1850-1918), supreme leader of the Former Heaven Sect in Taiwan, served as head of bustling Dadaocheng district 大稻埕區 in Taipei city (part of today’s Datong district 大同區) from 1909 until his death. This and his many other activities made him one of the most prominent figures in Taipei at that time.²⁶ Furthermore, *zhaitang* supported schools, kindergartens, or similar institutions,²⁷ or donated money to emergency aid programmes.²⁸ The Cide kindergarten 慈德幼稚園, founded and managed by the Cidetang 慈德堂 in Beigang 北港, housed about 500 children and therefore used

²³ *Jibyō chōsasho: Shinchikuchō* 寺廟調查書——新竹廳, 11040, 11070; *Jibyō chōsasho: Tainanchō* 寺廟調查書——臺南廳, dated 1915, 086253b-086254b; *Jibyō chōsasho: Tōenchō* 寺廟調查書——桃園廳, 09032.

²⁴ These are: Buddha’s birthday on 4/8 at the Dehuatang in Tainan, Guanyin’s enlightenment on 6/19 at the Mindatang in Taizhong, *pudu* on 7/4-6 at the Ciyinsi in Tanzi, Taizhong County, another *pudu* at the Dehuatang on 7/28, and the initiation festival *guoguangchang* 過光場 at the Chaotiantang in Zhanghua from 10/10 to 10/16. The dates given are those of the traditional Chinese lunar calendar.

²⁵ ZJDCS: Xinzhexian (1959), 40182; ZJDCS: Yunlinxian (1959), 44095, 44157; ZJDCS: Gaoxiongxian (1959), 48074, 48075, 48168, 48202.

²⁶ Li Shiwei 李世偉, “Shen shi Weimo bu zhuohua – Huang Yujie zhi zongjiao huodong 身是維摩不著花——黃玉階之宗教活動,” in *Taiwan Fojiao xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 台灣佛教學術研討會論文集, ed. Yang Huinan 楊惠南 and Shi Hongyin 釋宏印 (Taipei: Fojiao qingnian wenjiao jijinhui, 1996), 97.

²⁷ ZJDCS: Taizhongshi (1959), 37001; ZJDCS: Taizhongxian (1959), 36009, 36074; ZJDCS: Gaoxiongxian (1959), 48018.

²⁸ *Dehuatang jianjie* 德化堂簡介, introductory pamphlet available at the temple, 4 and 6.

to be the largest kindergarten in Yunlin county 雲林縣 in the 1960s.²⁹

As the sources indicate for the pre-Japanese period, and as is obvious in present-day Taiwan, Zhaijiao was no deviant or nonconformist “sect” that had to hide from the eyes of the public or the state. Quite to the contrary, it appears to have been well integrated into its respective local environments and sometimes even gained official support. The apparent absence of deviance and tension ultimately dissolves the other two assumptions about popular sects: secrecy and exclusivity.³⁰ Members are advised to maintain a certain degree of secrecy,³¹ and certain aspects of the teachings and rituals are not meant to be taught to outsiders. This, however, is certainly insufficient to regard Zhaijiao as a secret society, since not revealing everything to everyone outside the community might be a feature of any social group, especially if it is based on formal membership.

The assumption of confinement of social interaction to sect members is not completely false, but nevertheless has to be reformulated more precisely. Since most members of Zhaijiao live an ordinary life with families and jobs, some of them even in administrative positions, there is little room for any social exclusivity. Nevertheless, it appears that “religious interaction” in the sense of communication of religious symbols and acts³² is in fact often confined to the group itself or to other groups of the same tradition. But this too seems to be the case in most religions where interaction within the group is based on (formal) membership, and is thus not a key feature of secret sects or societies.

²⁹ Wang Junhua 王君華, *Fojiao shilüe yu Yunlin Fojiao* 佛教史略與雲林佛教 (Jiayi: Nanbei chubanshe, 1962), 263.

³⁰ The dissolution of secrecy in the case of Taiwan is discussed in Zhang Kunzhen 張崑振 and Xu Mingfu 徐明福, “Qing zhi shiqi Taiwan zhaitang kongjian mimi shuxing zhi yanjiu 清治時期台灣齋堂空間秘密屬性之研究,” *Jianzhu xuebao* 建築學報, no. 29 (1999), 81-97.

³¹ *Keyi baojuan* 科儀寶卷, dated 1904 but probably from 1906, MJZJ 6, 421a-423b.

³² Hubert Seiwert, “Religiöse Bewegungen im frühmodernen China: Eine prozesstheoretische Skizze,” in *Religionswissenschaft im Kontext der Asienwissenschaften: 99 Jahre religionswissenschaftliche Lehre und Forschung in Bonn*, ed. Manfred Hutter (Berlin: Lit, 2009), 181f.

A general problem of the assumption of deviance and heterodoxy of sects, especially in the case of Zhaijiao, is that usually the social environment was not aware of any differences to “orthodox” Buddhism, for in most cases they did not have any concept of “orthodoxy” at all. In addition, if there was anything to be regarded as “Buddhist orthodoxy” during the 19th century in Taiwan, it was represented by Zhaijiao, as there was no widespread monastic Buddhism at that time.³³ Even Seiwert’s analytical concept of “heterodoxy” as dependent on the governmental approach to religions, in the sense that “heterodox” religions are repressed or criticized by the ruling authorities,³⁴ does not work in the case of Zhaijiao in Taiwan. Neither the literati sources nor the official archives show significant traces of mistrust or hostility.

This all leads to the conclusion that the characterization of Zhaijiao as sects or secret societies in the above outlined sense becomes obsolete.

3. Zhaijiao as Lay Buddhism – Institutionally Independent from Monastic Buddhism

The first of the three central assumptions to be discussed in this chapter considers Zhaijiao institutionally independent from monastic Buddhism and thus different from conventional lay Buddhism. According to Charles Jones, Zhaijiao “[...] exists outside the traditional and orthodox structure of Chinese Buddhism with its relationships of mutual service and support between clergy and laity [...]” It also “[...] does not look to it for teaching, and does not support it with contributions.”³⁵ But as can be seen in the history of Zhaijiao and other Luo traditions in mainland China, it appears that from the very beginning in the late 16th century on, Buddhist

³³ Seiwert, *Volksreligion und nationale Tradition in Taiwan*, 197; Seiwert, “Popular Religious Sects in South-East China,” 34.

³⁴ Hubert Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 454f.

³⁵ Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, 14. See also Seiwert, *Volksreligion und nationale Tradition in Taiwan*, 162.

monks were found among its members, sometimes even in leading positions.³⁶ Patriarch Luo's *Five Books in Six Volumes* (*Wubu liuce* 五部六冊) were studied by monks and laymen alike, even in the 20th century.³⁷ By the end of the 1940s, the young monk Zhenhua 真華 (*1922) witnessed repentance rituals led by Buddhist monks but organized by local “vegetarian women” (*zhaipo* 齋婆).³⁸ This suggests that on the level of ordinary practitioners and lay adherents there often was no clear distinction made between monastic Buddhism and vegetarian traditions.

In the case of Taiwan, the interdependence of the two seems to be even more obvious. But this cannot be attributed to the “Buddhification” process (*Fojiaohua* 佛教化) alone, which commenced during the Japanese period and led to the participation of many Zhaijiao communities in monastic-controlled organizations.³⁹

³⁶ Sōda Hiroshi 相田洋, “Rakyō no seiritsu to sono tenkai 羅教の成立とその展開,” in *Zoku Chūgoku minshū hanran no sekai* 続中國民衆反亂の世界, (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1983), 55f.; Suzuki Chūsei 鈴木中正, “Rakyō ni tsuite: Shindai Shina shūkyō kessha no ichi rei 羅教について：清代支那宗教結社の一例,” *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 東洋文化研究所紀要, no. 1 (1943): 449; *Chushan caopu* 出山草譜, by Tang Zhaoxi 湯肇熙, dated 1884, in *Siku weishoushu jikan* 四庫未收書輯刊 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2000), Vol. 10:4, j. 3, 662a19-b07.

³⁷ *Zhuchuang sanbi* 竹窗三筆, dated 1615, by Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲祿宏 (1532-1612), in *Dazangjing bubian* 大藏經補編 (Taipei: Huayu chubanshe, 1986), Vol. 23, 264b; *Gunong Foxue dawen* 古農佛學答問, by Fan Gunong 范古農 (1881-1951), in *Xiandai Foxue daxi* 現代佛學大系, ed. Lan Jifu 藍吉富 (Taipei: Taibei mile chubanshe, 1983), Vol. 31, 508-524; Lin Meirong 林美容 and Zu Yunhui 祖運輝, “Zaijia Fojiao: Taiwan Zhanghua Chaotiantang suoquan de Longhua pai zhaijiao xiankuang 在家佛教：台灣彰化朝天堂所傳的龍華派齋教現況,” in *Taiwan Zhaijiao de lishi guanCha yu zhanwang*, ed. Jiang Canteng and Wang Jianchuan (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1994), 230.

³⁸ *Canxue suotan* 參學瑣談, by Zhenhua 真華 (Zhengwen chubanshe: Taipei, 1991), 64f., translated in: Marcus Günzel, *Lehr- und Wanderjahre eines chinesischen Mönchs: Autobiographie (Canxue Suotan)* (Libri Books, 2000), 72f. However, it has to be kept in mind that the term “*zhaipo*” like “*zhaigu*” and “*zhaigong*” (see below) has also been used by other religious groups that may share some traits with Zhaijiao, but are not necessarily connected to each other.

³⁹ Seiwert, *Volksreligion und nationale Tradition in Taiwan*, 180-184; Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, 64-81.

Already some of the *zhaitang* founded during the 19th century are said to have been founded or led by monks, such as the temples Zhengzhentang 證真堂, Xiangxintang 香訖堂, and Yinyuetang 印月堂 in the Xinzhu area.⁴⁰ Printing blocks used by vegetarian sects to print Buddhist texts sometimes originated from Buddhist monasteries. One printing block dated 1856 and preserved in the Dehuetang, for instance, was brought to the temple by a monk. Others dated 1876 and 1889 were originally carved by Yongquan monastery 湧泉寺 in Fujian.⁴¹ The reprint of the *Precious Volume about the Ritual Amplification of the Diamond Sūtra* used by Longhua sects throughout Taiwan was also originally carved by this monastery.⁴²

During an investigation in the early 1930s, it was uncovered that vegetarian adherents were not only living in Buddhist temples, but that Buddhist monks and nuns also lived in vegetarian ones. If the classifications and calculations made in this survey are correct, far more vegetarian adherents (*zhai Gong* 齋公 and *zhai Gu* 齋姑) were living in Buddhist temples than in *zhaitang*.⁴³ In 1907 and 1914, the leaders of the Longhua temples Chaotiantang 朝天堂 in Zhanghua city and Shenzhaitang 慎齋堂 in Lugang 鹿港 travelled to the head temples of their branches in Fujian to receive the rank of *taikong* 太空 from their branch leaders.⁴⁴ *Taikong* is the second

⁴⁰ *Jibyō chōsasho: Shinchikuchō* 寺廟調查書—新竹廳, 11020; ZJDCS: Xinzhu xian (1959), 40040; *Xinzhu wenxianhui tongxun* 新竹文獻會通訊, no. 17, december 1953, in: ZGFZCS-TW 92, 308 (entry on Yinyuetang). On the contested issue of the founding date of the Zhengzhentang, which varies between 1827 and 1899 in different sources, see Kan Zhengzong 闕正宗, “Xinzhu shi de Zhajiao yu zhaitang 新竹市的齋教與齋堂,” *Zhuqian wenxian zazhi* 竹塹文獻雜誌 38 (2007): 22.

⁴¹ Yang Yongzhi 楊永智, “Dehuetang de cangjingge: Cong Tainan Dehuetang zhencang de Qingdai gushuban tanqi 德化堂的藏經閣—從臺南德化堂珍藏的清代古書板談起,” *Guoli lishi bowuguan guankan* 國立歷史博物館館刊 9, no. 10 (1999): 7f., 11.

⁴² *Jin'gang keyi baojuan* 金剛科儀寶卷 (Taizhong: Ruicheng shuju, 1996).

⁴³ *Taiwan quan Tai siyuan zhaitang mingji baojian* 臺灣全臺寺院齋堂名蹟寶鑑, by Xu Shou 徐壽 (Tainan: Guoqing xiezheng guan, 1932), TWZJZL 27. The absolute accuracy of these data is doubtful, since the identity of a large number of residents both in Buddhist temples and *zhaitang* is not specified.

⁴⁴ *Jibyō daichō: Shōkashi* 寺廟台帳—彰化市, 01065; *Jibyō daichō: Shōkagun* 寺廟台帳—彰化郡, 02072.

highest rank in the hierarchy of the Dragon Flower Sect.⁴⁵ It is of particular interest that the Fuxintang 復信堂 head temple in Fuzhou was apparently led by a monk by the name of Cuixian 催咸 who held the highest rank of *kongkong* 空空. In the case of the Shenzhaitang, two monks by the name of Yuanying 圓英法師 and Fu'an 福安大師 from Tiantong temple 天童寺 in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, were involved in the conferment ceremony. Yuanying appears to be the famous monk Yuanying 圓瑛 (1878-1953) who served as abbot of several monasteries and gave lectures in Hongkong, Japan, and Korea.⁴⁶

The intertwining of Zhaijiao and monastic Buddhism is particularly apparent after the inflow of numerous Buddhist monks to Taiwan in the course of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. During that time many, if not most, of the *zhaitang* joined the monastically dominated "Buddhist Association of the Republic of China" (BAROC), which was the sole organization authorized to represent the *saṅgha* in Taiwan from 1952 to 1989.⁴⁷ In some cases, the leaders of *zhaitang* served as leading members in local BAROC organizations.⁴⁸ In 1959, Huang Youde 黃有德 alias Pucheng 普成 (1899-?), both leader of the Ciyi fotang 慈意佛堂 in Taizhong county and paramount leader (*zongchi* 總勅) of the Longhuapai in Taiwan, was also a member of the planning committee of BAROC

⁴⁵ An overview of the slightly different hierarchical systems in different primary sources of the Qing period is given in Shao Yong, *Zhongguo huidaomen*, 109; an English description is also given in de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China*, 200ff.

⁴⁶ Zhenhua fashi 震華法師, *Zhongguo Fojiao renming dacidian* 中國佛教人名大辭典 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 1999), 871. See also Wang Jianchuan 王見川, "Taiwan Fojiao renwu conglun 臺灣佛教人物叢論," *Yuanguang foxue xuebao* 圓光佛學學報 3 (1999): 308.

⁴⁷ For an overview of BAROC during the period of martial law, see André Laliberté, *The Politics of Buddhist Organizations in Taiwan, 1989-2003: Safeguarding the Faith, Building a Pure Land, Helping the Poor* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 36-42.

⁴⁸ ZJDCS: Xinzhuixian (1959), 40165; ZJDCS: Yunlinxian (1959), 44095; ZJDCS: Nantouxian (1959), 42072, 42151; Wang Jianchuan 王見川, *Tainan Dehuatang de lishi: Taiwan xiancun zui gulao de Longhuapai zhaitang* 台南德化堂的歷史：台灣現存最古老的龍華派齋堂 (Tainan: Tainan Dehuatang, 1995), 54.

(*Zhongguo Fojiahui sheji weiyuan* 中國佛教會設計委員).⁴⁹ Yanshi Defu 顏施德福 (*1923) alias Pukong 普空, leader of the Mindetang 民德堂 in Taizhong and current senior *taikong* in Taiwan, presently serves as permanent supervisor in Taizhong's Buddhist Association.⁵⁰ His father and then temple leader Yanshi Han 顏施漢 alias Puyuan 普元 already served as supervisor and standing council member (*changwu lishi* 常務理事) in the Taizhong branch of BAROC.⁵¹ Other leaders participated in Buddhist lecture classes, held lectures themselves in Buddhist temples, or jointly conducted rituals and festivals together with Buddhist institutions.⁵²

In some cases, Zhaijiao members hired Buddhist monks to recite scriptures for deceased fellow vegetarians or to assist in other rituals.⁵³ In 1920, a huge *pudu* festival lasting seven days was organized and performed by the two monks Wanquan 僧萬全師 and Tongben 通本師 in collaboration with several vegetarian communities in Yilan 宜蘭.⁵⁴ In 1936, leading members of Japanese Buddhist schools were invited to participate in a similar ritual held in the Jueyuan zhaitang 覺元齋堂 in Taizhong county.⁵⁵ Even the religiously motivated self-immolation of eight monks and seven vegetarian adherents in 1913 in Tainan highlights the intertwined nature of monastic Buddhism and Zhaijiao in Taiwan.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ ZJDCS: Taizhongxian (1959), 36095. *Zongchi* is equivalent to *kongkong* described above.

⁵⁰ Field trip on July 6th, 2010.

⁵¹ Zhang Wenjin 張文進, ed. *Taiwan Fojiao daguan* 臺灣佛教大觀 (Fengyuan: Zhengjue chubanshe, 1957), 328; ZJDCS: Taizhongshi (1959), 37003.

⁵² ZJDCS: Taizhongxian (1959), 36076; ZJDCS: Taizhongxian (1959), 36096; ZJDCS: Nantouxian (1959), 42122; ZJDCS: Yunlinxian (1959), 44132; Wang Jianchuan, *Tainan Dehutatang de lishi*, 54.

⁵³ *Taiwan* 臺灣, edited by Yuan Kewu 袁克吾, dated 1926, in *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan xubian* 近代中國史料叢刊續編, ed. Shen Yunlong 沈雲龍 (Taipei: Jiaohai chubanshe, 1978), 153; *Taiwan nichinichi shinpō* 臺灣日日新報 (Taipei: Taiwan nichinichi shinpōsha, 1898-1944), December 15, 1910, 3; January 23, 1936, 8.

⁵⁴ *Taiwan nichinichi shinpō*, October 7, 1920, 6.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, August 25, 1926, 4 (evening edition); September 20, 1926, 8.

⁵⁶ Kataoka Iwao 片岡巖, "Saikyō to Shokusaijin no funji 齋教と食菜人の焚死," *Taihō geppō*

The *pudu* festival I observed at Ciyinsi was partly led by Dong Huowang 董火旺, who is the teacher of Ciyinsi's temple manager. He is both a Longhua *taikong* and a Buddhist monk. He carries the two religious names Puxing 普興 (Longhua name) and dharma master Weideng 惟燈法師 (monastic name), and is therefore also known as „*shalong* 沙龍“, an abbreviation of *shamen* 沙門 (monk) and Longhua 龍華. He was ordained as a monk in 1991 on Putuoshan 普陀山 in Zhejiang Province in China under the supervision of the famous monk Miaoshan 妙善大和尚 (d. 2000), who also visited Ciyinsi once.⁵⁷ The rituals conducted at the festival were led by Longhua members, but they were also supported by Buddhist monks and nuns who were paid to recite scriptures along with other Longhua members. Another *pudu* I attended at the Dehuatang in September 2010 was jointly organized with the lay Buddhist “Pure School” organization (Jingzong 淨宗), which is chaired by Venerable Jingkong 淨空 (*1927). Moreover, seven monks and nuns were invited to lead and perform major parts of the ritual, whereas the contribution of Dehuatang's members was limited to mere assistance. Nevertheless, the ritual was celebrated as a great success for the temple.⁵⁸

Although it appears that Zhaijiao did not become completely subordinated to monastic Buddhism in the sense that their members accept monastic dominance, their connection was and is much closer than commonly appreciated. The time prior to the Japanese rule is an exception, but probably only because there was no widespread monastic Buddhism in Taiwan at that time.

4. *Zhaijiao as a Lay or Non-professional Religion*

The second assumption about Zhaijiao shared by most observers is that their members and leaders are not religious specialists but lay believers.⁵⁹ This view

臺法月報 7, no. 5 (1913); and Kataoka, *Taiwan fūzoku-shi* 臺灣風俗誌 (Taipei: Nantian shuju, 1994), 1068f.

⁵⁷ Conversations during a field trip to Ciyinsi on August 13-14, 2010.

⁵⁸ Field trip to the Dehuatang, September 6th, 2010.

⁵⁹ Seiwert, *Volksreligion und nationale Tradition in Taiwan*, 196f.; Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, 14; ter Haar, “The Dragon Flower Teachings and the Practice of Ritual,” 120; Wang Jianchuan,

seems to be influenced mainly by their self description as lay Buddhists (*zaijia Fojiao* 在家佛教), which can be observed both in historical sources and in field research in contemporary Taiwan.⁶⁰

My objection to this view is first and foremost a methodological one, since it mistakes categories and concepts of the “object level” (the identity of the groups themselves) for those of the “meta level” (the scholarly discussion about it).⁶¹ It wrongly accepts the Buddhist perspective, according to which the Buddhist following can be clearly separated into religious specialists (monks and nuns) and lay adherents (skt. *upāsaka* and *upāsikā*, chin. *youposai* 優婆塞 and *youpoyi* 優婆夷) as the main criterion for the scholarly categorization of Zhaijiao: According to this interpretation, members of Zhaijiao have to be regarded as lay believers since they do not live the life of monks and nuns. But as I will show below, even in its formative age Zhaijiao had been no mere lay religion from a “meta language,” and thus scholarly, perspective.

From the very beginning, the Longhua tradition has had its own religious specialists who carry out functions not available to everyone in the group. As far back as the 16th century, Ying Ji’nan 應繼南 (1527/1540-1582), who is regarded as the second patriarch by the Longhuapai, is said to have appointed 28 “conversion masters” (*huashi* 化師) and 72 “introducers” (*yinjin* 引進), who were assigned to attract and convert new members.⁶² The same source also refers to other presumably religious offices called *hufa* 護法 (“protector of the *dharma*”), *zongchi* 總敕 (“general leader”), and *qingxu* 清虛 (“pure emptiness”) during the tenure of

Taiwan de Zhaijiao yu lantang, preface, 58.

⁶⁰ Even some of the earliest sources from the late 19th and early 20th century mirror this view, see Seiwert, *Volksreligion und nationale Tradition in Taiwan*, 186f.; Tainaka Chizuru, “Nihon tōchiki Taiwan no Saikyō ni kan suru ichi shiten,” 53-58.

⁶¹ On the concept of “object language” and “meta language” in the study of religion, see: Hubert Seiwert, “‘Religiöse Bedeutung’ als wissenschaftliche Kategorie,” *Annual Review of the Social Sciences of Religion* 5 (1981): 76f.

⁶² *Taishang zushi sanshi yinyou zonglu* 太上祖師三世因由總錄, reprint dated 1875, preface dated 1682, MJZJ 6, j. 2, 275b04-276a07.

the third patriarch Yao Wenyu 姚文宇 (1578-1646).⁶³ Although their meaning and function may have been different in that early age, the names of the last two are still found as the seventh and ninth rank in the Taiwanese Longhuapai. The term *hufa* may have been similar to *hujiao* 護教 (“protector of the teachings”), which presently refers to the prime ritual leader’s assistant during the initiation festival *guoguangchang* 過光場.⁶⁴ But the most prominent embodiment of a religious hierarchy is the system of nine ranks itself. Everyone who occupied one of these ranks underwent initiation or ordination procedures, was trained in certain religious services and practices, and carried out functions assigned to this grade that were not available to everyone. This, of course, makes these people religious specialists who constitute what is commonly considered the clergy of a religion. And since the term “laity” generally refers to members of a religious community who “[...] do not have the responsibilities of fulfilling the priestly functions appropriate to the offices of the clergy [...],”⁶⁵ Zhaijiao can no longer be regarded as a mere lay religion.

Moreover, the Longhuapai has developed a kind of following which can be classified as “laity.” People who are not willing to pursue a lifelong vegetarian diet for whatever reason can become members on an inferior level. This kind of membership is called “flower vegetarianism” (*huazhai* 花齋), which means that they only eat vegetarian food on certain days of the month or when they stay in the temple. Although they are allowed to participate in rituals, they are forbidden to clean or touch altars or statues, or to perform rituals themselves. Moreover, like any ordinary outsider, they are not allowed to attend the ritual of the “lotus throne” (*liantai* 蓮臺) held in the evening of the first and fifth day of the initiation ceremony.⁶⁶ In the course of this ritual, initiands willing to become full members

⁶³ *Taishang zushi sanshi yinyou zonglu*, MJZJ 6, j. 3, 291b11, 292a04, 292a16 and 286b10.

⁶⁴ Zhang Kunzhen, “Taiwan chuantong zhaitang shensheng kongjian zhi yanjiu,” 59.

⁶⁵ F. S. Lusby, “Laity,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion: Second Edition*, vol. 8, ed. Lindsay Jones, (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2005), 5286.

⁶⁶ The ritual is briefly summarized in Zhang Kunzhen 張崑振 and Xu Mingfu 徐明福, “Taiwan Longhuapai zhaitang yishi kongjian zhi yanjiu: Zhaitang shensheng kongjian moxing de jian’gou 臺灣龍華派齋堂儀式空間之研究：齋堂神聖空間模型的建構,” *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan minzuxue yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院民族學研究所集刊, no. 85 (1998): 84f.

are taught esoteric or secret teachings only available to insiders. The flower vegetarians' status as only partial members is further symbolically enhanced by the fact that they do not receive religious names with the initial character “*pu* 普” appropriate to full members, but instead receive different religious names. In the case of the Chaotiantang, flower vegetarians' names contain the character “*miao* 妙,” while the Ciyinsi in Tanzi awards names with the initial character *xing* 興. Thus, flower vegetarians are distinguished from full members in many respects, but their main difference is especially visible in terms of exclusion from ritual and priestly functions. This, however, is commonly understood as a characteristic feature of “the laity,” and therefore flower vegetarians by definition have to be considered “the laity” of the Longhuapai. Besides its presumably lay Buddhist character, Zhaijiao does not merely reiterate the symbols and theologies it has drawn from Buddhism, but rather interprets these within its own institutional and theological framework, which has added significantly to the Buddhist setting in terms of symbols, beliefs, institutions, and so on. Zhaijiao thus is not merely a form of lay Buddhism or “Buddhism” minus “monasticism,” approximately like Protestantism is not merely a form of lay Catholicism or “Catholicism” minus “monasticism.”

Another objection is to be raised against the assumption of Zhaijiao as a religion without “religious professionals,”⁶⁷ in the sense that the performance of rituals is not the *profession* of its members. Although many sources from the Japanese colonial period suggest that funeral rituals, for example, were only performed for fellow members,⁶⁸ the late 19th century *Miscellaneous Records of Anping County* argues the reverse.⁶⁹ Moreover, the Huashantang 化善堂 in Anping, which was most likely described in this source since it was the only *zhaitang* in this area, was

⁶⁷ Particularly emphasized for the early Longhua movement by ter Haar, “The Dragon Flower Teachings and the Practice of Ritual,” 120.

⁶⁸ See, respectively *Nanbu Taiwan shi* 南部臺灣誌, dated 1902, in: ZGFZCS-TW 302:3, 34; Suzuki Seiichirō 鈴木清一郎, *Taiwan kyūkan kankonsōsai to nenjū gyōji* 臺灣舊慣冠婚葬祭と年中行事 (Taipei: Taiwan nichinichi shinpōsha, 1934), 36.

⁶⁹ *Anping xian zaji* 安平縣雜記, TWWXCK 52, 23.

actually paid for holding funeral rituals for nonmembers.⁷⁰ Japanese author Kataoka Iwao discovered in the early 20th century that funeral rituals could indeed be held for nonmembers, but unlike monks, vegetarian ritual leaders are not paid cash for their services, instead receiving presents and gifts.⁷¹ Presently, major ritual events like Buddha's birthday on 4/8, the commemoration of Guanyin's enlightenment on 6/19, or *pudu* festivals seem to attract many locals, who then usually buy paper money and incense to pray for their needs. Especially *pudu* festivals to save the deceased ancestors and to pacify the souls of those who are not cared for or who have died a violent death are commonly held in many *zhaitang* during the seventh lunar month, as they are also held likewise in countless other temples. During my research, I visited six *zhaitang* in central Taiwan alone that annually perform *pudu* festivals. Historical sources suggest that similar rituals were already held in the early 20th century.⁷² These elaborate and complex ritual events lasting one to three days are particularly dedicated to the needs of the ordinary people who want their ancestors to be saved. Therefore, in providing religious services for the general public there is no difference between a *zhaitang* and, say, a Daoist temple.

In the case of the Longhua initiation festival *guoguangchang*, almost five entire days out of overall seven days are dedicated to the ordinary people.⁷³ Whereas they pay Longhua members to perform rituals in the morning hours for the attainment of their respective mundane needs such as health, long life, and prosperity, the afternoons are dedicated to the salvation of the ancestors. This twofold ritual

⁷⁰ Wang Jianchuan 王見川, "Longhuapai zhaitang de ge'an yanjiu – Anping Huashantang: 龍華派齋堂的個案研究：安平化善堂," in *Taiwan de Zhaijiao yu luntang*, 123.

⁷¹ Kataoka Iwao, "Saikyō to Shokusaijin no funji," 26.

⁷² *Jibyō chōsasho: Shinchikuchō* 寺廟調查書——新竹廳, 11040:7a, and *Jibyō chōsasho: Tainanchō* 寺廟調查書——臺南廳, dated 1915, 086031, 086072 only refer to unspecified rituals performed during the seventh lunar month or on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, which is a common date of *Zhongyuan pudu* 中元普度.

⁷³ An overview of the whole event and a brief description of all major single rituals deployed in the festival can be gained in Zhang Kunzhen, "Taiwan chuantong zhaitang shensheng kongjian zhi yanjiu", 58-71 and 76-81; and formally published in Zhang Kunzhen and Xu Mingfu, "Taiwan Longhuapai zhaitang yishi kongjian zhi yanjiu."

service for nonmembers is attested at least back to the early 1930s.⁷⁴ As I was told, these services are provided to make a religious festival as elaborate and expensive as possible. Parts of the expenses are spent on the Longhua members themselves, who often make a living as ritual specialists. Many of the ritual leaders of the initiation festival I attended at the Chaotiantang in November 2010 once pursued a nonreligious profession, but had now been Longhua ritual specialists for years. Since religious events this big require a large number of ritual specialists, they have to be invited from other vegetarian temples. In this case, altogether 26 Longhua members were employed to perform rituals, but only eight of them were members of the Chaotiantang. In return, some of these eight are employed by other participants' *zhaitang* to perform rituals as well. Thus, a network of mutual employment has been created by different temples to ensure a stable income for many of their members.

Furthermore, Longhua specialists are also employed to perform rituals in non-Zhaijiao temples. During the seventh lunar month, commonly known as the “ghost month,” Chaotiantang’s manager as well as several of his students were paid to perform a *pudu* ritual at a private temple in Huatan township 花壇鄉, south of Zhanghua.⁷⁵ In another instance, members of Ciyinsi in Tanzi were employed to perform parts of the “inner ritual” (*neitan* 內壇) of the three-day festival *Sanchao qingjiao* 三朝清醮 at the local temple Tanshuiting 潭水亭, dedicated to Guanyin and numerous other deities. This *jiao*-Ritual was held from the 25th to the 27th day of the eighth lunar month in 2008 in order to celebrate the temple’s renovation.⁷⁶

Although sources of actual religious practice prior to the Japanese colonial period remain scarce, at least later sources attest that Zhaijiao is not a religion

⁷⁴ *Taiwan nichinichi shinpō*, October 27, 1933, 8.

⁷⁵ Field trip on August 15th, 2010. Lin Meirong and Zu Yunhui are describing a similar event where members of the Chaotiantang were invited to recite scriptures at another private temple in 1991, see Lin Meirong and Zu Yunhui, “Zaijia Fojiao: Taiwan Zhanghua Chaotiantang suo chuan de Longhua pai zhaijiao xiankuang,” 213-217.

⁷⁶ Informal conversation on a field trip on November 25th, 2010; photographs were shown to me too.

without professionals or religious specialists, but in fact provides religious services beyond its own community in a variety of ways.

5. *Zhaijiao as (Protestant) Buddhist Fundamentalism*

Although he never uses the term himself, Barend ter Haar's interpretation of the early Longhua movement suggests understanding it as what might be called "lay Buddhist fundamentalism."⁷⁷ According to him, it refused any kind of merely formal and superficial religious practice, such as the burning of paper money, the use of incense, the veneration of Buddha images, or the recitation of scriptures, but instead advocated the internalization of a certain mind-set or attitude, which is regarded as crucial for enlightenment. These teachings, however, can also be found in Chan Buddhist scriptures. Therefore the pivotal difference to monastic Buddhism is not so much based in the teaching itself, but rather in the strict obedience of a much more radical "conduct of life" (*Lebensführung*),⁷⁸ which has been stringently deduced from these teachings, while monastic Buddhism kept to focusing on the needs of its ordinary adherents. In this sense and in the one-sided preference of some aspects of Buddhism (vegetarianism, the uselessness of mere formal practices) over other ones (celibacy), the Longhua teachings can be regarded as fundamentalist.

In addition, ter Haar emphasizes resemblances between the iconoclastic, anti-ritual, and anti-monastic features of the early Dragon Flower tradition and those of the Reformation movements in early modern Europe. For him, both the historical White Lotus movement of the Song and Yuan periods as well as the Dragon Flower Sect of the sixteenth and seventeenth century "[...] represent one single religious phenomenon that is typologically quite close to [...] Protestant movements in

⁷⁷ ter Haar, "The Teachings of the Dragon Flower as Continuation of Song-Yuan Lay-Buddhism;" ter Haar, "The Dragon Flower Teachings and the Practice of Ritual."

⁷⁸ The term "religious conduct of life" (*religiöse Lebensführung*) was introduced by Max Weber, see Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie*, 5th ed. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1985), 321-348.

the sixteenth century in Western Europe.”⁷⁹ These religious movements, ter Haar claims, “[...] signified a new phenomenon of institutionalized lay belief and practice that did not exist in this form before, akin to the rise of early Protestant movements in Western Europe as well.”⁸⁰ Furthermore, he detects fundamental similarities between the early Longhua movement’s ritual critiques of monastic Buddhism and the Protestant critique of the Roman Catholic Church during the Reformation.⁸¹ Although a number of indeed striking resemblances between the two cannot be denied and comparative research is of great benefit to broaden our understanding of the White Lotus and Dragon Flower movements, one has to stay cautious of the distorting effect a “Protestant view” may have upon the perception of religious developments in late imperial China. This, for example, happened to Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, which to this day both in Japan and in Western countries is often regarded as a “protestantized” form of Buddhism that highlights personal religious experience, ritual simplicity, anti-celibacy, and a “down to earth” attitude. In the very same breath, the time of its formation during the Kamakura period 鎌倉時代 (1185-1333) came to be idealized as an era of “Reformation” leading to a “New Buddhism,” in contrast with an allegedly overly ritualistic, syncretistic, superficial, and clerically dominated “Old Buddhism.”⁸²

This “Protestant view,” however insightful it might be, thus entails the risk of a teleological reinterpretation of Japanese religious history according to a narrative derived from the Protestant experience in early modern Europe. By using this narrative framework, the history of Buddhism in Japan becomes that of decline

⁷⁹ ter Haar, “The Teachings of the Dragon Flower as Continuation of Song-Yuan Lay-Buddhism,” 33.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 47f.

⁸¹ ter Haar, “The Dragon Flower Teachings and the Practice of Ritual,” 155.

⁸² Christoph Kleine, “Der ‘protestantische Blick’ auf Amida: Japanische Religionsgeschichte zwischen Orientalismus und Auto-Orientalismus,” in *Religion im Spiegelkabinett: Asiatische Religionsgeschichte im Spannungsfeld zwischen Orientalismus und Okzidentalismus*, ed. Peter Schalk (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2003), esp. 150-171; Galen D. Amstutz, *Interpreting Amida: History and Orientalism in the Study of Pure Land Buddhism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997).

and decadence, which necessarily leads to a process of reformation and the rise of a new Buddhism. In doing so, empirical evidence that does not fit into this teleological narrative is usually ignored, whereby the perception becomes “de-empiricized” and ideologized.⁸³ The same might be true for the perception of Chinese Buddhism. Although the all too common view of a decline of Buddhism since the Song Dynasty after its zenith during the Tang fortunately has already been contested and is also rejected by ter Haar,⁸⁴ the “Protestantization” of the White Lotus and Dragon Flower movements might do a disservice to this achievement. I am not rejecting the analytical advantages of the comparison; rather, I am cautious of the ideological implications a superficial equation might have (although I think ter Haar would also agree with this). By applying the “Protestant view” to the Chinese case, the emergence of the White Lotus and Dragon Flower movements might come to be realized as the natural and necessary outcome of the decline of traditional Buddhism. Only under the conditions of decline and thus the need for renewal can this allegedly fundamentally new development become possible, which tries to take Buddhism “back to its roots” and away from mundane and clerical distortions. Although this view might mirror the self-perception of the religious traditions in question, there are several objections to be made.

First of all, it is not a new phenomenon that came into existence only in the Song Dynasty. As early as 715, religious communities of so-called “people with white dresses and long hair” (*baiyi changfa* 白衣長髮) were found to practise their version of the Buddhist teaching outside the realm of traditional monastic Buddhism.⁸⁵ White clothes and long hair commonly symbolize Buddhist lay believers and in this case seem to refer to the exact type of religious adherent ter Haar regards as a fundamentally new phenomenon of the eleventh and twelfth centuries: These people held gatherings and practised rituals by themselves and without the participation of properly ordained Buddhist monks; they created their

⁸³ Kleine, “Der ‘protestantische Blick’ auf Amida,” esp. 155 and 163-168.

⁸⁴ Peter N. Gregory, “The Vitality of Buddhism in the Sung,” in *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1999), 1-20.

⁸⁵ Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History*, 151f.

own scriptures using Buddhist symbols and beliefs; disciples were educated by their own masters who according to the official sources only called themselves “monks” (*heshang* 和尚), which obviously refers to their status as religious specialists within their own institutional framework but outside of monastic and official structures. Being labelled “people with white dresses and long hair” further emphasizes their opposition to celibacy, monkhood, and world-rejection, while at the same time acting as religious persons in their own right. As can be seen here, the institutionalized lay Buddhist movements of the Song and Yuan periods were no new development at all. Furthermore, their emergence did not result from an alleged decline of Buddhism, since the Tang era is commonly considered, in many regards, the golden age of Chinese Buddhism. Apparently, the later movements only proved to be more prosperous in the long run.

The second problem I want to point out is the different origin of both movements. Whereas the Protestant Reformation in 16th century Europe was a movement from within the Roman Catholic Church—Luther was a monk and professor of theology and Zwingli a pastor and preacher—their White Lotus and Dragon Flower counterparts emerged outside monastic structures, even though Buddhist monks and nuns always played an important role in their history. Third: As far as we know, the White Lotus movement did not preach an anti-ritual and iconoclastic version of the Buddhist teaching, only the early Dragon Flower movement did. Therefore, these two already differ in core aspects of their teachings and thus cannot represent “one single religious phenomenon,” as ter Haar claims.⁸⁶ Moreover, the Protestant analogy is making claims about both institutional (anti-clerical, anti-celibacy) *and* content-related (anti-ritual, iconoclastic, fundamentalist) issues, which are not evident in the case of the White Lotus movement. Thus, its allegedly groundbreaking uniqueness becomes questionable, especially as people who argue against the dominance of the clergy and try to build their own networks of “religious interaction” outside official or elite recognition can be found in virtually every religious tradition at all times; there are always people monopolizing religious and discursive power and other

⁸⁶ ter Haar, “The Teachings of the Dragon Flower as Continuation of Song-Yuan Lay-Buddhism,” 33.

people trying to break this power to assert their own ideas.⁸⁷

Because of the objections stated above, as well as the strong implications about religious schism, rationalism, secularity, modernity, capitalism, etc. it contains, I do not think it is helpful to apply the label “Protestant” to the religious movements discussed here, even though this has already been done, such as in the case of the Buddhist reform movement of 19th century Sri Lanka.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, especially against this background it is a remarkable observation made by some Japanese authors in early 20th century Taiwan to describe vegetarian adherents as pious, modest, and ambitious not only in their religious conduct, but also in their secular profession.⁸⁹ According to these authors, “vegetarian friends” (*zhaiyou* 齋友) oppose widespread practices like gambling, “sexual excesses” (Jap. *ja'in* 邪淫), or the “waste” of money on fireworks and paper money, as well as the consumption of harmful substances such as opium, tobacco, alcohol, and betel nuts. Therefore, the authors claim, they are not distracted by worldly desires, instead focusing on their profession in a far more rigorous way. This linkage of “inner-worldly asceticism” to a more rational work ethic in comparison to “ordinary people” to some extent resembles the Protestant habitus that, according to Weber, was crucial in creating the so called “spirit of capitalism.”⁹⁰ Furthermore, some authors highlight believers’ deeply rooted belief in a higher end for which they will never abandon their faith and which leaves them in fierce opposition to “superstition” and the pursuit of mundane ends.⁹¹ This kind of “value rationality” (*Wertrationalität*), in the Weberian sense of an absolute end to be pursued regardless of the costs and chances of

⁸⁷ Theoretically embedded in Rodney Stark and William S. Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion* (Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

⁸⁸ The term “Protestant Buddhism” was coined by Gananath Obeyesekere and prominently portrayed by him and Gombrich in their *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), esp. 215f.

⁸⁹ *Nanbu Taiwan shi*, 31 and 44; *Taiwan fūzoku-shi*, 1065.

⁹⁰ Max Weber, “Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus,” in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie I* (Göttingen: UTB [Mohr Siebeck], 1988).

⁹¹ Nishioka Hideo 西岡英夫, *Taiwanjin no Kannon shinkō to saishokujin seikatsu* 臺灣人の觀音信仰と菜食人生活 N.p. (1936): 24-27, part 2: 22f.

success, further emphasizes the similarities to the “Protestant ethic” outlined by Weber. But as I want to show in the following pages, this characterization falls prey to the same fallacy as appears to apply to Weber, since in both cases the extent to which the prescribed “fundamentalist” conduct of life has actually been practised has never really been questioned.

First of all, many of the early texts describing the anti-ritual and iconoclastic programme of the Longhua tradition are of a prescriptive nature. Even though the *Taishang zushi sanshi yinyou zonglu* quoted above and the *Qizhi yinguo* 七枝因果 (MJZJ 6), which were both used by ter Haar in his earlier publications, depict historical events, they are not descriptive sources in the proper sense since hagiographical literature of this kind usually serves other purposes than merely describing “reality.” Its purpose is rather to present models to imitate and to demonstrate the outstanding nature of the teaching.⁹² Although ter Haar was successful in finding completely untouched sources on the movement’s early history in the 17th century that actually attest fundamentalist tendencies,⁹³ sources from the 18th century already show the ordinary character of religious practice of communities related to the Longhua tradition, as they venerated Buddha images, recited scriptures, and burnt incense.⁹⁴ A few sources, however, still indicate iconoclastic attitudes of religious groups possibly connected to the Dragon Flower tradition in the late 17th or early 18th century.⁹⁵ Even Protestant missionary Joseph

⁹² Christoph Kleine, “Portraits of Pious Women in East Asian Buddhist Hagiography: A Study of Accounts of Women who Attained Birth in Amida’s Pure Land,” *Bulletin de l’Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient* 85 (1998), esp. 326f.

⁹³ His remarkable and impressive findings are presented in his contribution to this volume.

⁹⁴ *Shiliao xunkan*, vol. 11, 373b07-09; *Ibid.*, Vol. 27, 365b07-09; *Gaozong chun huangdi shilu* 高宗純皇帝實錄, j. 978, dated Qianlong 40/3/yimao 乙卯, in: *Qing shilu* 清實錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), vol. 21, 61a14-b09.

⁹⁵ *Miaoguantang yutan* 妙貫堂餘譚, by Qiu Junhong 裘君弘 (1670-1740), dated 1703 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), vol. 1136, j. 6, 641a.02-04. The religious group described here is called “Non-Action Sect” (Wuweijiao 無為教), but there are no definitive indications of its actual connection to the Longhua movement.

Edkins mentions similar attitudes in the late 19th century.⁹⁶ Thus it appears that some groups stuck to the iconoclastic and anti-ritual programme outlined by the early Patriarchs, while others turned to more ordinary forms of religious practice. In its further history, it seems that this last tendency eventually became prevalent, which in turn led to a reform movement within the Longhua tradition itself that heavily criticized the loss of its anti-ritual and iconoclastic attitude.⁹⁷

Although in the case of Taiwan most of the general sources from the Japanese period state the absence of the use of paper money and fireworks,⁹⁸ some of the surveys about religions conducted in the late 1910s already argue the opposite.⁹⁹ During the major ritual events I have observed, paper money and fireworks were sold to visitors at most of the *zhaitang*. Like the ordinary people, Zhaijiao members prayed for peace in the family, for a good marriage, recited scriptures to cure diseases, and performed rituals for the “removal of misfortune and summon of fortune” (*chuzai zhaofu* 除災招福), which is mentioned in the sources as early as 1907.¹⁰⁰ The use of divination blocks (*jiaobei* 筊杯) to know the answer of the

⁹⁶ Joseph Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism: A Volume of Sketches, Historical, Descriptive, & Critical* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1893), 372f. The “Wuweijiao” (Wu-Wei-Kiau) he describes doubtlessly belongs to the Longhua tradition since he mentions the three patriarchs Luo, Yin, and Yao. See also Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiao shi*, 273f., for archive material dated 1814 that indicates iconoclasm.

⁹⁷ For the case of this reformist group by the name of “True School of Realizing the Ultimate Nature” (*Juexing zhengzong* 覺性正宗) that emerged in the 19th century, see Takeuchi Fusaji 武内房司, “Taiwan Zhaijiao Longhua pai de yuanliu wenti,” 16-22.

⁹⁸ *Nanbu Taiwan shi*, 34; *Taiwan shūkyō chōsa hōkokusho* 臺灣宗教調查報告書, by Marui Keijirō 丸井圭治郎 (Taipei: Taiwan Sōtokufu, 1919), 81; *Taiwan kyūkan kankonsōsai to nenjū gyōji*, 36; *Taiwan no shūkyō* 臺灣の宗教, by Masuda Fukutarō 増田福太郎 (Tokyo: Yōkenō, 1939), 100.

⁹⁹ *Jibyō chōsasho: Shinchikuchō* 寺廟調查書—新竹廳, 11019, 11076:3; *Shaji byō'u ni kan suru chōsa: Taihokuchō* 社寺廟宇ニ関スル調査・臺北廳, probably between 1915 and 1920, no pagination, article on Ciyuntang 慈雲堂.

¹⁰⁰ *Chūgai nippō* 中外日報 (Kyōto: Chūgai nippōsha, 1897-1945), no. 2320, Meiji 40/7/12 (July 12, 1907), 2, column 4; *Jibyō daichō: Inringun* 寺廟台帳—員林郡, 41000; *Jibyō daichō: Shōkagun* 寺廟台帳—彰化郡, 02041.

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to one's request in *zhaitang* is also attested during the Japanese period and is still common today.¹⁰¹ Moreover, the musical accompaniment in Longhua rituals appears to be similar to that in popular religious festivals, since it makes heavy use of Erhu 二胡 and Suona 嗩吶 instruments. The everyday conduct of life in present day Taiwanese Zhaijiao shows a great deal of variety. While some of my informants still insisted on strict abstinence from betel nuts and alcohol, I observed frequent consumption of betel nuts and tobacco on other occasions. Furthermore, one informant told me that drinking a small amount of alcohol is not at all problematic, as it is only important not to get drunk or dizzy. Furthermore, some members no longer follow a lifelong vegetarian diet, eating vegetarian food only in the temple. Presently, most of Dehuatang's members do not regularly observe a vegetarian diet.¹⁰² In addition, the "New Covenant Dragon Flower Sect" (*Xinyue Longhuapai* 新約龍華派), founded in Taipei in 1913 and still existing today, even rejects complete vegetarianism since it is regarded as a merely formal aspect of religious practice and is therefore not needed to attain enlightenment.¹⁰³

Although the vast majority of *zhaitang* are dedicated to Guanyin or Shakyamuni Buddha as their principal objects of worship, in most cases they also venerate deities commonly associated with the Daoist or popular religious traditions such as Xuantian shangdi 玄天上帝, Sanguan dadi 三官大帝, the Jade Emperor, Mazu, Guandi 關帝, Fuyou dijun 孚佑帝君 (Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓) and others. A small number of temples in central Taiwan also venerate Koxinga, represented as the "Holy Lord Founder of Taiwan" (Kaitai Shengzhu 開台聖主).¹⁰⁴ In many cases, *zhaitang* possess statues of Earth and City Gods, which are usually located on the

¹⁰¹ *Jibyō daichō: Inringun*, 04100.

¹⁰² Interview with temple manager Liangu 蓮姑, conducted September 6th, 2010, at the temple.

¹⁰³ Interview with abbot Xinmingxing 新明星, manager of the head temple Bao'antang 保安堂 in Taipei, conducted July 28th, 2010, at the temple. On the early history of this tradition, see Jones, *Buddhism in Taiwan*, 89ff., who is mostly relying on: Zheng Zhiming 鄭志明, *Taiwan minjian zongjiao jieshe* 台灣民間宗教結社 (Dalin: Nanhai guanli xueyuan, 1998), 125-139.

¹⁰⁴ ZJDCS: Taizhongxian (1959), 36096; ZJDCS: Nantouxian (1959), 42123, 42124.

left (Earth God) and right (City God) sides of the main hall. These minor deities are often venerated on certain days of a year, for example their birthdays.¹⁰⁵ In a very few cases, non-Buddhist deities were even venerated as principal ones. In a survey published in 1931, 11 out of overall 114 Longhua temples venerated deities other than Guanyin and Shakyamuni as their principal objects of worship, including, for example, Guandi or the Jade Emperor.¹⁰⁶

Recitation of scriptures and burning of incense are important parts of all Longhua rituals I have observed.¹⁰⁷ In the case of the initiation ceremony, for instance, most of the time is occupied by the recitation of Buddhist repentance texts serving the general public and their needs. In addition, many *zhaitang* also possess and ritually use scriptures commonly associated with other religious traditions, for example the *Scripture on the Great Dipper* (*Beidoujing* 北斗經) and the *Scripture on the Sun* (*Taiyangjing* 太陽經). The *Beidoujing* was recited during the *pudu* ritual that was performed by Chaotiantang's manager and his students at a private temple mentioned above; the *Taiyangjing* is included in some versions of the *Longhua keyi*¹⁰⁸ and was also venerated during the early 1940s in mainland China by vegetarian groups possibly connected to the Longhua tradition.¹⁰⁹ In some cases, *zhaitang* interacted with spirit-writing cults, as can be seen in the collection *Edition of the Precious Raft which Ferries over the Ford of Delusion*, which contains poems attributed to Bodhisattva Guanyin that were received in Longhua and

¹⁰⁵Since examples can easily be found in any of the surveys mentioned above, there is no further citation required.

¹⁰⁶Li Tianchun 李添春, "Saikyō gaisetsu 齋教概説," *Nan'e Bukkyō* 南瀛佛教 9, no. 1 (1931): 69.

¹⁰⁷Since the examples are too numerous to be given, here the reader should refer to Zhang Kunzhen, *Taiwan chuantong zhaitang shensheng kongjian zhi yanjiu*, 58-87.

¹⁰⁸*Jibyō daichō: Inringun*, 04052. It is included in the *Xinyue Longhua keyi* 新約龍華科儀 (Taipei: Bao'antang, 1986), 42ff. published by the aforementioned "New Covenant Dragon Flower Sect" and recited during several of its rituals.

¹⁰⁹*Chūshi ni okeru minkan shinkō no jitsujō* 中支に於ける民間信仰の實情, published by the Kōa'in Kachū renrakubu 興亞院華中聯絡部, dated 1942, in *Ajia-Taiheiyō chiiki minzoku-shi senshū* アジア・太平洋地域民族誌選集 (Tokyo: Kuresu, 2002), Vol. 35, 103 and 123.

Xiantian temples.¹¹⁰

6. Concluding Remarks

As I have tried to prove in this paper, all common characterizations and definitions of Zhaijiao show many weaknesses, both methodologically and empirically. Although they are not entirely wrong, all of them are misleading to a certain degree:

Zhaijiao in Taiwan was and is no secret or deviant religion hiding from the eyes of the public and the state. On the contrary, it is well integrated into its local environment.

Although Zhaijiao is institutionally and religiously autonomous, it nevertheless experienced much interaction with monastic Buddhism—even before the colonial period. Especially since the late 19th century, however, Zhaijiao's autonomy has been challenged and seems to diminish.

Members of Zhaijiao are religious specialists since they fulfil religious functions not available to everyone. Especially leading members tend to be religious professionals to the extent that religion and ritual performances are their profession. *Zhaitang* are also places of worship for ordinary people and thus do not differ from other temples in this respect.

Although early prescriptive sources lay out a “fundamentalist conduct of life,” it appears that already in the 18th century, some Zhaijiao groups were far more conventional in their religious practice. This is especially true in the case of Taiwan.

But how did all this confusion about the characterization of Zhaijiao come into being? In my opinion, this can be traced back to the problematic nature of the different sources that have been used by different scholars. Each of these has

¹¹⁰ *Bianji mijin baofa* 編輯迷津寶筏, published by Daitō Michinaga 大東通永 (Taichūshū Inringun 臺中州員林郡, 1941), 7-15, 190-195. The collection originated in the Zantiangong 贊天宮, which is located in Tianzhong township 田中鎮, Zhanghua County, and is dedicated to Guandi.

its respective problems and biases that in most cases have not been reflected on sufficiently. On the one hand, we have archive material that is usually a product of persecutions and investigations conducted by hostile officials, and which therefore not only criminalizes the religious groups in question, but also overemphasizes their allegedly secret or deviant aspects. On the other hand, we have general works from the Japanese colonial period onwards that try to highlight the typical aspects of Zhaijiao which set it apart from other religious traditions. By naming characteristic traits and reiterating typical features, its authors created an ideal type which in most cases only mirrors the normative and prescriptive view of the vegetarian members who have been their informants. Their descriptions draw a picture of Zhaijiao “as it should be,” but not necessarily “as it really is.” Due to the lack of additional sources, later scholars took this ideal picture as a manifestation of reality and henceforth idealized Zhaijiao in many ways.

Abbreviations

- MJZJ *Ming Qing minjian zongjiao jingjuan wenxian* 明清民間宗教經卷文獻，
edited by Wang Jianchuan 王見川 and Lin Wanchuan 林萬傳，12 vols. (Taipei:
Xinwenfeng, 1999).
- TWWXCK *Taiwan wenxian congkan* 臺灣文獻叢刊. (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang
jingji yanjiu shi, 1957-1972).
- ZGFZCS-TW *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu. Taiwan diqu* 中國方志叢書，臺灣地
區 (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1982).
- ZJDCS *Taiwan sheng zongjiao diaochashu* 臺灣省宗教調查書，1959 and 1983,
followed by administrative unit and year.

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(Tokyo: Kuresu, 2002), vol. 35.
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- Keyi baojuan* 科儀寶卷, dated 1904 but probably 1906, MJZJ 6.
- Miaoguantang yutan* 妙貫堂餘譚, by Qiu Junhong 裘君弘 (1670-1740), dated 1703, in: *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), vol. 1136.
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