

Humanistic Buddhism From Venerable Tai Xu to Grand Master Hsing Yun¹

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ABSTRACT

The present essay aims at a historical analysis of Humanistic Buddhism that was preached by Master Tai Xu in the 1930s and the great contribution Grand Master Hsing Yun has made to the development of Humanistic Buddhism.

What is Humanistic Buddhism? Why did Tai Xu raise this issue of constructing Humanistic Buddhism as his guiding principle in his reform of Chinese Buddhism? What did he do in his endeavors to realize his goal? Did he succeed in bringing back the humanistic nature of Buddhism? What contributions has Grand Master Hsing Yun made to this cause?

This essay makes attempts to answer these questions. It is divided into four parts. The first deals with the history of Humanistic Buddhism. It was Sakyamuni who first advanced Humanistic Buddhism. He lectured, meditated, propagated his way of life, and finally attained his Nirvana in the world. Hui-neng (638-713 CE) emphasized that Buddhism is in the world and that it is not realized apart from the world.

The second chapter touches upon the historical background of development and decline of Chinese Buddhism. It illustrates in detail how Buddhism declined in the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Corrupt officials vied with one another to confiscate the property of Buddhism in the late Qing and early years of the Republic of China. Even the lay Buddhist scholars made strong commentaries on the illness of Buddhism and Buddhists.

Chapter 3 discusses the life and reform career of Venerable Tai Xu (1889-1947). Being a revolutionary monk, Tai Xu raised the term "Humanistic Buddhism" again and introduced it in his reform.

What is "Humanistic Buddhism"? This word witnessed three stages of development. Tai Xu first advanced this concept by using the Chinese word "rencheng fojiao" in 1916. This word "rencheng" refers to the people of rebirth among men conveyed by observing the five precepts – people of the first vehicle. In other words, "rencheng fojiao" means "ordinary people's Buddhism." He slightly changed the word as "rensheng fojiao" (human life Buddhism) in 1928. The word "rensheng" means "human life." Tai Xu further developed his concept of the Humanistic Buddhism by the word "renjian fojiao." The original Chinese term "renjian" consists of two words "ren" meaning "human," or "person," and the word "jian" referring to "certain space" or "period of time." When the two Chinese words are combined to form one word "renjian," it means "human society," "human society," "human world," "the world," or "man's world."

The Humanistic Buddhism advanced by Tai Xu aimed at bringing back Buddhism into the human world. Tai Xu urged Buddhists to offer service to the society so that Buddhism would be widely accepted and developed. However, his life-long efforts failed in the reform due to the Japanese invasion, civil wars and inner struggles among Buddhists themselves.

It was Grand Master Hsing Yun whose efforts and talent have made Tai Xu's dream come true. Having a strong sense of responsibility for the future of Buddhism, Grand Master Hsing Yun has not only made contributions to the concrete practice of Humanistic Buddhism, but also developed the theoretical aspects of Humanistic Buddhism. Chapter 4 focuses on how the Grand Master has dedicated to the cause of Humanistic Buddhism. From an ordinary young monk, empty-handed, Master Hsing Yun exerted great efforts to disseminate Buddhism, first in remote villages and small towns, then in big cities. He has crowned his cause by building first-rate temples in the United States and almost 200 temples affiliated with Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Movement in various countries in the world. In this aspect, the Grand Master successfully carried on the cause of practical reform initiated by Tai Xu. The Grand Master is considered the Martin Luther in the practical reform of Chinese Buddhism.

Hsing Yun also made theoretical contributions to Humanistic Buddhism. He illustrated the points of modernity in Buddhism: the modernity of language, the use of modern facilities and the practice in life and building monasteries as modern school. He further characterizes Humanistic Buddhism with the following: humanity, life, altruism, delight, time frame and universality. He maintains that Humanistic Buddhism should bring people confidence, joy, hope and convenience. It aims at using the teachings of the Buddha for the improvement for our lives and the purification of our mind. The Grand Master emphasizes the importance of reality.

It is Master Hsing Yun's vision that makes Humanistic Buddhism throw light on the future of Chinese Buddhism. The spirit of universal compassionate and the responsibility for the salvation of all has deeply infiltrated into the mind of the educated scholar class in China. The spirit of Fo Guang Shan has gone beyond its birthplace in Taiwan. If we say that Venerable Tai Xu made the first effort to re-connect us with the essential Buddhist spirit in the first half of the 20th century, then Grand Master Hsing Yun has continued this endeavor and made it realized throughout the world. In this sense, Grand Master Hsing Yun is both a practitioner and theoretician. His integration with the tradition and modernity make him unique in the history of Buddhism, unique in a way that he is truly reviving Chinese Buddhism.

1. Introduction

The present paper discusses a number of issues relating to the decline and revival of Buddhism in the 20th century. In the past, Buddhism flourished and progressed steadily in China, especially during the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties. It, however, declined significantly during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Why and how did Buddhism decline? Has it always been merely a religion for funeral service, as some members of intellectual elite called it scornfully? Was it separated from society and people in those days, too? What reform and stimulation did Buddhism need for its revival in the twentieth century? Who are the key players in the revival and reform movement? To answer these questions, it is necessary to trace the historical background of the rise and fall of Buddhism in China with special reference to the late Qing dynasty (1644-1911) and early Republican period. But such a historical analysis has to be preceded by a scrutiny of the humanistic elements of Chinese Buddhism that seem to have exercised an enormous effect on its popularity.

It was Sakyamuni Buddha who first advanced Humanistic Buddhism. He lectured, meditated, propagated his way of life, and finally attained his Nirvana in the world. He said, "The Buddhas came from this world and they could not become the Buddhas in the heaven."² In this way, they brought the teachings of the dharma to every family. They were active in the human world.

The Vimalakîrti Sûtra says that we should seek the Buddha state or Buddha land among sentient beings. We cannot find Buddha if there are no sentient beings. We cannot find the way if we are separated from the people. Here is a stanza from *The Sutra of Hui-neng* (638-713), the Sixth Patriarch of the Chan (Zen) School of Buddhism.

Buddhism is in the world;

It is not realized apart from the world.

Seeking enlightenment apart from the world

Is like looking for horns on a hare.³...

Good friends, if you want to put this into practice, you can do it at home – it doesn't depend on being in a monastery. Being able to practice at home is like someone of the East whose mind is good.⁴

Lai Yonghai has pointed out that such a style differed from the ways the previous five patriarchs who upheld in their reclusive practice. Venerable Xuanjue (665-713),⁵ who became a convert to Hui-neng's philosophy, said in his excellent poem *Yongjia Zhengdao Ge*, "I have traveled many mountains and rivers, visiting masters in quest of Buddhist truth. Ever since I was familiar with Caoxi,⁶ I have understood that life and death are irrelevant." After Hui-neng, the concepts of life and death, Nirvana and samsara, this world and the world beyond gradually lost their lines of demarcation. Here we have the beginning of "Humanistic Buddhism."⁷

2. Historical Background

In the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties, Buddhism flourished in China. Chinese Buddhists engaged themselves in many welfare activities. Temples were involved in commercial practices such as the establishment and management of their Inexhaustible Treasury. According to *Taiping Guangji* (Miscellaneous Records Collected in the Taiping Reign Period) the Inexhaustible Treasury was divided into three parts. The first part was designated for the building and maintenance of monasteries; the second part was social service projects and for donations to the people suffering from hunger; the third part was for the use of monks and nuns.⁸ The "fotuhu" initiated in the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534 C.E.) consisted of criminals and slaves of governmental offices. They were assigned to the monasteries to do odd work. The monastic economy provided these people with an opportunity to earn a living. It played a positive role in the stability of the society and economy.⁹ The so-called "Beitian" (literary meaning "field of pity," practical meaning "fields for the aged and widowed") was intended for widows and destitute people. Many monasteries also set up "Beitianfang," homes for the aged and widowed.¹⁰ Venerable Baizhang (720-814) established a rule: "Every day that you do not work, you shall not eat." In this way, the monks and nuns were able to lead a life of self-reliance and contribute to the welfare of society.

Time and again Venerable Shenhui (670-762) emphasized, "There is a Buddha if there is a world. If there is no world, then there is no Buddha." (Quotations from Venerable Shenhui). Another Chan Master, Dazhu Huihai,¹¹ strongly emphasized "this worldliness" by saying, "We seek salvation not by leaving the world." Venerable Xiyun¹² of Huangbi (*ôboku* sect in Japanese) thus made no difference between this world and the world beyond. He considered this world and the world beyond and sentient beings and Buddhas to be the same.

The Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties saw the significant decline of Chinese Buddhism. Zhu Yuanzhang (reigned 1368-1398),¹³ the First Emperor of the Ming dynasty, was fully aware of the role that the religion might play in a rebellion, for he himself had joined the peasant rebellion organization called "The Red Kerchief Bandits." The family members of the chief of The Red Kerchief Bandits were members of White Lotus Society.¹⁴ Accordingly, when Zhu Yuanzhang ascended the throne, he placed strict regulations on Buddhism, and ordered monks to live and meditate in temples in high mountains. He also ordered monks to either live in mountains or travel around, but not to cities or villages where ordinary people dwell. "Two monks might keep their hermitage in the same high mountain for meditation, but no more than three or four."¹⁵ "The abbots or wandering monks who make friends with officials are to be severely punished."¹⁶ On the surface, the First Emperor appeared to protect the Buddhist religion, but in fact, he was restricting its development. Thus Chinese Buddhism rapidly declined as a result of the emperor's policy of separating monks from lay Buddhists. This situation worsened in the end of the Qing dynasty. Monks were either meditating in the mountains or depending on the donations of the lay people. Isolated as they were, the only social function was to perform funeral services. Consequently, Buddhism was criticized for its insignificant contribution to the welfare of society.

The late Qing witnessed changes in values, public life, and even the collapse of the empire. Corrupt and hopeless in reforming, the Qing Court was repeatedly humiliated by foreign invasions and weakened by the peasant uprisings and exhausting wars with foreigners. Shocked by the powerful weapons that the foreign troops held and frustrated by the defeat of the Qing troops, Chinese scholars and officials alike began to explore ways and means to make China strong by standing on its own feet. Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909), Governor of Hunan Province, suggested that the Chinese could stick to traditional learning for its social content while simultaneously studying those aspects of Western learning that offered practical benefits.¹⁷ In 1898, he called for the establishment of more schools, going so far as to suggest that the Qing Court should issue a decree ordering 70% of the nation's temples to be used for educational purposes. But the trend that was set from 1901 to 1906 was to seize Buddhist lands and property without actually serving the interests of education. Local officials and warlords alike saw in it a golden opportunity to gain more money for themselves to support their military expenses. Things got no better after the downfall of the Qing dynasty. A typical example was Yuan Shikai (1859-1916),¹⁸ who promulgated the Monastery Control Regulations that were directed at confiscating wealth from Buddhist monasteries in order to finance the expansion of his army.¹⁹ This encroachment upon the Buddhist monastic properties ranged from bad to worse, depending upon the location. In opposition, Venerable Jing An,²⁰ president of the Chinese General Buddhist Association, went to Beijing with the objective of having

Yuan Shikai's government ratify a proposal of his for a new charter. Unfortunately, the officer in charge of religious affairs at the Ministry of the Interior, Du Guan, was a firm supporter of policies aimed at confiscating monastic property. He obstinately refused to listen to Venerable Jing An's arguments. He ridiculed and insulted the old man who, as a result of this treatment, became so incensed that he died the next day from anger and humiliation. The martyrdom of Venerable Jing An aroused much anger among Buddhists and temporarily prevented further confiscation of Buddhist monastic property.

The confiscation of temple property taught Chinese Buddhists a painful lesson: if they wanted to survive, they had to change their old ways of staying away from society and people. They had to promote education among themselves. The famous scholar Zhang Taiyan (1868-1936) and Su Mansu (1884-1918) pointed out that:

The cause for the corruption of Chinese Buddhists lay not in outer reasons, but in the Buddhists themselves. ...Although there can be found many rules and regulations for monks to observe in the temples, the monks are actually lax in discipline. ...Many monks are not engaged in meditation in accordance with the regulations, but are enjoying a cozy and banal life. They do not preach scriptures, but devote themselves to ceremonies for the dead. When they are entrusted with the cause of dharma, they are only interested in money. The monks have conflicts among themselves over property. They indulge in the offerings from the believers. What they offer as their service just leads to the decline of Buddhism. In fact, they are generally looked down upon. Some fawn upon rich and powerful persons. They claim that they have to rely on the good emperors in order to protect the dharma. Actually they are bent on their own interests...They deserve to suffer the government policy of confiscating their property for education.²¹

Yang Wenhui (1837-1911)²² made a comment on the same topic:

Since the end of the scripture examination and with the slack implementation of the decree banning ordination, Buddhist monks have become ignorant, incompetent and satisfied with the existing state of affairs as they are.²³

From the sharpness of these words we see a picture of the decline of Chinese Buddhism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

In a few days, the 20th century will come to an end. In this century the Chinese people have witnessed massive and untold suffering in their transformation to a modern state. As Tu Wei-ming puts it, "Without exaggeration or a stretch of the imagination, an examination of the frequency and magnitude of destructiveness in China since the mid-nineteenth century may reveal it to have been one of the most violent countries in human history."²⁴ It is a century that the Chinese have encountered both hope and despair. It is a century full of conflicts between the new and the old, the belligerence between warlords, imperialist aggressions, the Japanese invasion of China, civil wars between the Nationalists and Communists, endless power struggles, and conflicts among the masses themselves, and so forth. The conflicts started in the "Opium War" in 1840s and lasted until recent decades in the 20th century. They have shocked and shaped generations of Chinese intelligentsia even until today.

3. Life and Career of Venerable Tai Xu (1889-1947)

Tai Xu was one of the key reformers at this time when the very existence of Buddhism was at stake. He was born in 1889 in Congde district, Zhejiang Province. Buddhism had sunk deep roots in this place dating from the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220 C.E.) when it was introduced from India during the reign of Emperor Ming-di (reigned 58-75 C.E.). The religion has furthermore remained intact here in spite of the political changes and social revolutions that have occurred over a long two-thousand-year period.

Tai Xu's family name was Lü, and his given name Ganlin. His father died when he was still a baby. His grandmother was a pious Buddhist who often took him to nearby Buddhist temples. In 1904, he left his home with the view in mind to seek something magic pertaining to the immortals and gods he had read about in the novels²⁵ he greatly admired. At this young age he was still unaware of the distinction between Taoism and Buddhism. He eventually found his way to a small temple where he had previously accompanied his grandmother on a visit to pay homage. Subsequently, he decided to join the monastic order. Upon his ordination, he was given the Buddhist name Tai Xu (literary meaning "space" or "void"). In the same year, he was taken by his supervisor to visit Venerable Jing An, the Eight Fingered Monk,²⁶ who ordained him in Tiantong Temple, Ningbo, Zhejiang Province. Two years later, he came to realize that Taoist and Buddhist divinities were not the same. He studied the Tripitaka and practiced meditation under the guidance of Venerable Jing An, the Eight Fingered Monk, who had a profound impact on him.

In 1908, Tai Xu met a radical monk named Hua Shan, who told his young friend about new trends at home and abroad. Hua Shan introduced Tai Xu to a variety of books, such as Kang Yuwei's *Datongshu* (The Grand Unity), Liang Qichao's *Xinmin congbao* (the name of a journal), Yan Fu's translation of T. H. Huxley's *Evolution* and Tan Sitong's *Renxue* (On Humanitarianism). In 1909, he attended a class on Buddhist literature offered by Yang Wenhui. Though he studied only one semester, he was deeply impressed by Yang's lectures. That same year, he made friends with a monk who was not only a reformer, but a revolutionary as well. This monk, named Qiyun, was also a disciple of the Eight Fingered Monk. He had studied in Japan where he joined the Tong-meng Hui, a revolutionary alliance founded by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in 1905. Qiyun also lent Tai Xu revolutionary literature such as the *Mingbao* (People's Tribune) and Zou Rong's *Gemingjun* (Revolutionary Army). In 1910, Tai Xu went to Guangzhou, where he became intimate with revolutionaries. He read widely the socialist, communist and anarchist literature, authors such as Bakunin, Proudhon, Kropotkin and Marx. He was even involved in the secret activities of the Guangzhou Uprising in 1911. He escaped to Shanghai when the uprising was put down. When the Qing government was overthrown in 1911, Tai Xu began his life-long career of Buddhist reform.

What is "Humanistic Buddhism"? Let us first see the definition of this word in Chinese. Tai Xu first advanced the concept of "Humanistic Buddhism" by using the Chinese word "rencheng" in 1916 when he was staying in self-confinement at Putuo Island, Zhejiang Province.²⁷ This word "rencheng" refers to the people of rebirth

among men conveyed by observing the five precepts. Buddhism divides people into five vehicles. "Rencheng" refers to people of the first vehicle – the ordinary people.

Tai Xu continued his exploration in the transformation of Chinese Buddhism. He raised the issue of "rensheng fojiao" which is a combination of two words "rensheng" plus "fojiao" (Buddhism) in an article entitled "Instructions to the Chinese Revolutionary Monks" in April, 1928. The word "rensheng" means "human life." This may be considered the second stage of his thinking in "Humanistic Buddhism." He touched upon the aims of Chinese Buddhist revolution in three aspects. First, they should get rid of the superstitions that the rulers imposed on the people by using Buddhism and Taoism as instruments, and transforming the hereditary property system into a shared property system. Second, the Buddhists should change their living style of hermitage imposed by Confucians so that the Buddhists may be engaged in the service to guide the masses and bring them benefits. In addition, the Buddhists should change their orientation in offering service to the ghosts and the dead, a service requested by emperors and hierarchies down to the common people, and receiving donations from them. They should change their attitudes of being ghost-oriented and serve the people. Third, the Buddhists should work on the establishment of "human-life Buddhism," from human beings to Bodhisattvas and the Buddha. They should transform the old temples with the spirit of "human-life Buddhism" and build up the Sangha system adapted to the modern Chinese environment. They should propagate this "human-life Buddhism" to attract more followers.²⁸

According to Tai Xu, therefore, the starting point of this "human life Buddhism" is to be a good person. Then the good person learns how to practice Bodhisattva and finally becomes a Buddha. Tai Xu considered the human beings in this concept of "human life Buddhism" as the basis. It is a process of evolution, from being a human to Bodhisattva and to become a Buddha.

Why did Tai Xu raise this concept of "human life Buddhism"? Let me quote Tai Xu's words to explain what he had in mind:

What is human life? I use the term "human life" to refute the fallacies in the teachings of Buddhism by some people in the past. The Buddhist teachings may be divided into two: the Buddhism of the death and the Buddhism of the ghosts. Many people thought that the aim of learning the teachings of Buddhism is to encounter death in a painless way and to have good fortune after death. This is not the true meaning of the Buddhist teaching. ...As I talk about human Buddhism, I emphasize the improvement of human life.²⁹

Firstly, Tai Xu used this term "human life" to reject the focus on death in contemporary Buddhism in China. Secondly, the basic teachings of the Buddha urge people to take care of practical issues in human life. Tai Xu held that the Buddha did not teach people to leave human society for the purpose of becoming gods or ghosts or encourage people to become monks by leaving their household. The Buddhists aim at reforming the society, helping human beings make progress and improving the world environment with the teachings of the Buddha.³⁰ Thirdly, Tai Xu further developed his concept of the Humanistic Buddhism by the word "renjian fojiao." The original Chinese term "renjian" consists of two words "ren" and "jian." "Ren" means persons, people, human beings, and "jian" refers to "certain space or "period of time." When

the two Chinese words are combined to form one word “renjian,” it means “human society,” “human world,” “the world,” or “man’s world.” Therefore, the word-for-word translation of the word “renjian fojiao” may be rendered as “Buddhism in human society,” and “Buddhism in the world.”

Thus, Tai Xu summarized his views under three points: (a) the existence and development of humankind; (b) relief of the masses with the great compassionate love and wisdom of Mahâyâna Buddhism; and (c) attachment of great importance to the scientific methods in tests, the order and evidence. Tai Xu was attempting to bring the Buddhist teachings into the modern world. His general view on Humanistic Buddhism is expressed as follows:

The modern human life may propel the survival of humankind while the survival of humankind may propel the existence of all things in the world. Modern life is the starting point of Buddhism. This is in conformity with the worldly trend. Buddhism helps to develop human life to perfect universal enlightenment and to perfect being. This is the only way leading to the essence of Mahâyâna Buddhism. Buddhism aims at the development of human life instead of eliminating it. Therefore, it tends to be actively involved in human life.³¹

In February 1933, he delivered a speech entitled “Start your Learning of Buddhism from Being a True Person.”

From the cradle to the grave, we need food, clothing, shelter, and means of transportation. Where do they come from? ...The endowment of these sources relies on the strength of the masses – the ability of human beings to cooperate. Your life is sustained by the shared strength of forest laborers, farmers, workers and merchants in the world. In other words, your life is totally dependent on the masses in society. Therefore, you need to serve society.³²

The following paragraph reflects Tai Xu’s orientation:

...Without the state, we cannot resist the intruders. There would be no security for the people and life. We cannot repay the grace to our parents or our society. Therefore, we must take patriotism as our presupposition when repaying the grace of the country. At this moment, enemies are invading China. We, fellow citizens, heroic soldiers and heroes, should endeavor to build our country into a powerful nation.³³

Tai Xu was labeled a “political monk” because he kept close ties with the Nationalist Party. In fact, he was a member of that party.³⁴ He often employed his close ties with Chiang Kai-shek³⁵ to protect rights and benefits of Buddhists. He was abbot of Xuedou Temple in Fenghua, Chiang’s hometown. In 1944, Tai Xu wrote a letter to Chiang Kai-shek begging him to check the case of the confiscation of Buddhist temples and property.³⁶

On July 15, 1944, Tai Xu expressed his views on the issue of how Buddhists should deal with politics. He advocated the position whereby Buddhists may show concern for politics but not interfere with them. He spoke in a grave tone:

I hesitate to make a point on this issue.

If we transcend politics, we will be easily destroyed when the government and society decide to persecute Buddhism. If we are involved in politics, we will meet our doom when the government is overthrown. In present China, we do not have enough lay Buddhists to form a group in the government or society to protect Buddhism. It is so difficult for Buddhists to take this issue into consideration. Many people are discussing the question. I have to take it into serious consideration. Based

on the explanation of the words of political power and power of management expressed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, I finally found a solution to the problem. What we should do is to show concern about politics but not interfere with them.³⁷

Tai Xu goes on to quote Dr. Sun Yat-sen's idea:

Dr. Sun said that politics is the affairs of the masses. It also refers to the management of the people. Political power implies that people have the right to make laws. The power of management means that the government has the power to govern the country and the people. The Sanghas are part of the people. Therefore, they have to concern themselves with their own affairs. ... Being members of the National Congress, they discuss the issues of how to eliminate the sufferings that the people experience and obtain happiness for the people in the Assembly only, and not get involved in the central and local governmental offices. In other words, they only participate in local elections and run for the post of congressmen, but not pursue the office of governor, nor civil or military posts.³⁸

Tai Xu's words aroused great controversy even among his supporters. Zhu Jingzhou, son-in-law of famous scholar Zhang Taiyan,³⁹ wrote six letters to Tai Xu opposing any involvement in politics.⁴⁰ He reminded Tai Xu that Ouyang Jingwu⁴¹ raised four objections to any such involvement. Ouyang claimed that any involvement in politics is a violation of both the monastic regulations and secular law.

As for the problem of how to implement the spirit of altruism in society, Tai Xu explained that Humanistic Buddhism meant to save the country at the critical moment. The soldiers of the army fulfill their duties. The farmers, workers, merchants, students and teachers, the civil officers and lawyers do their respective jobs well.

When Tai Xu was alive, he did not lack people who opposed his ideas of reform. Liang Shuming (1892-1987)⁴² criticized Tai Xu's endeavor for Buddhist reform in the following:

Confucianism and Buddhism are just opposite in one aspect. The former focuses on the practical life and does not deal with things beyond this life. The latter focuses on things beyond this world and does not touch upon the present life. Thus, Buddhism has no room to play its role in modern world. Those who want to bring Buddhism back to society have made plans to transform Buddhism. I remember that Venerable Tai Xu wrote an article entitled "Rentiancheng" (The Two Vehicles of Human beings and Gods) in *Haichaoyin*. He wants to expand Buddhism in the practical life. I seem to remember that Mr. Liu Renhang⁴³ and some gentlemen discussed the same idea. Due to his failure to see the essence of Buddhism, Mr. Liang Rengong (also named Liang Qichao)⁴⁴ also said that Chan Buddhism could be called Buddhism in use in the world. (see his *Reflections on a European Journey*). He has often thought of using Buddhism in the world. He visited me, raising the issue of how to transform the aristocratic Buddhism into civilized Buddhism so that all people could make use of it. In my opinion, this reform is simply impossible. Even if it is possible, it is no longer true Buddhism. When I met Mr. Zhang Taiyan⁴⁵ this year in Shanghai this year, I asked what he thought about it. He said, "It would be difficult. You may extensively disseminate Ch'an Buddhism among the illiterates. However, I hesitate to say whether this universal dissemination of Chan Buddhism remains true Buddhism or not." ...In a word, Buddhism cannot be used in the practical world. If anybody wants to use Buddhism by changing its original nature, why bother to ruin

Buddhism in such a way? I oppose any such proposition of using Buddhism and oppose any such transformation!⁴⁶

Welch was also pessimistic about his reform when he wrote the following in 1960s:

It is not easy to arrive at a balanced judgment of his virtues and shortcomings. He was certainly intelligent. He had personal charm and endless enthusiasm. On the other hand, he had a flair for manipulation and promotion – particularly for self-promotion. A more serious failing was that he does not seem to have pondered deeply enough on whether, if Chinese Buddhism was reformed in the manner he proposed, it would still be Buddhist or even Chinese.⁴⁷

Tai Xu started his interfaith dialogues with Christianity during the period of 1920s to 1940s.⁴⁸ He probably was unaware of the term “interfaith dialogues” at the time, but he met with Chinese Christians at least seven times. (1) in the winter of 1926 in Shanghai where he gave lectures to both Christians and Buddhists.⁴⁹ (2) in May of 1931, he delivered a speech at a meeting of the Association for Young Christians in Nanjing.⁵⁰ (3) the summer of the same year, he visited Union Medical School in Beijing. (4) on November 17, 1931, he visited West China Union University in Chengdu. (5) on April 6, 1935, he met an education delegation of East-China Christians in Shanghai. (6) on June 21, 1938 he delivered a speech calling for the propagation of Christianity in China at West China Union University. (7) on January 14, 1943 Yu Bing (representing Catholics), Feng Yuxiang (representing Christians), Bai Congxi (representing Muslims)⁵¹ and Tai Xu sponsored the Union for Chinese Religions in Chongqing.

Tai Xu and representatives of Christians held a discussion on the issues of Christianity and Buddhism in his fourth meeting with the Christians. On the question of the relations between Buddhism and Christianity, he replied:

Regarding the relations between commerce, industry, and agriculture, Buddhism and Christianity have shared relations. Each religion has, as its essence, a belief in the supremacy of man’s thinking and behavior. Through their beliefs, people repent for their sins and thereby enhance their virtue. Buddhism and Christianity share this point. As far as details of their doctrines are concerned, however, they differ in certain regards. But they also may be complementary in some respects. The altruism of the Bodhisattva of Mahâyâna Buddhism can save and enlighten all beings at his own expense, just as Jesus Christ sacrificed himself to save others. Nowadays, many wise Christians are reading Buddhist scriptures in order to understand the Chinese mentality. They do this in order to make a comprehensive study of Buddhist doctrines.⁵²

Tai Xu admired the educational and health care services which Christians provided. Christians attached importance to education. The missionaries opened schools wherever they began missionary activities in China. They achieved great success by doing this.

In 1903, a monk named Liyun first started his school in Kaifu Monastery in Hunan Province in emulation of Christians. The lay Buddhist scholar, Yang Wenhui, opened his school in Nanjing where Tai Xu attended courses for one semester. Tai Xu himself set up his Wuchang Seminary in 1922. The aim of the seminary was to encourage students to revive Buddhism and preach the “law of salvation” in such a way that they could meet the needs of new China. On the one hand, the students were also urged to study Christianity, which was thought to have some very good and

helpful ideas, especially with regard to true compassion and self-denial. On the other hand, it was always pointed out that, in regard to the solution of the great metaphysical questions, Christianity was very much inferior to Buddhism.⁵³ Tai Xu became the Proctor of Minnan Seminary in the summer of 1927. He imitated the courses offered by Christian missionary schools. A variety of courses were offered, including Western philosophies, ethics, psychology, and an introduction to various religions of the world.⁵⁴

Christians were far more successful in their educational endeavors, although the Chinese felt that education had been one of their strongest traditions. But modern education in China started only during the period that spanned the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Owing to the shortage of funds, Chinese Buddhists could not expand their secular education. Their schools, even Buddhist seminaries, failed to develop and were even forced to close down because of money constraints. What was more obvious was that many of them did not have a sense of what education meant for their survival. Had they recognized this earlier and taken measures to remedy the situation, they would not have suffered repeatedly from the confiscation of their property.

Christians set up around their churches hospitals to offer humane care for those people in need of medical attention. In the past, Chinese Buddhists had stayed away from society. They claimed to live in another realm far beyond the confines of this mundane world. That is why they were criticized and looked down upon by modern intellectuals. Seeing what Christians had done, Tai Xu pointed out:

Buddhists should not only fulfill their obligations as persons, but they also should do something to benefit the public. The Christians devote themselves to advancing the general social welfare. They propagate their teachings by practicing altruism. This is something of significance and we may adopt it.⁵⁵

Tai Xu was one of the pioneering Chinese Buddhists who traveled widely in the world. Having obtained financial support from President Chiang Kai-shek, Tai Xu left Shanghai on August 11, 1928 and spent nearly nine months touring France, England, Germany, Belgium, the United States and Japan. During this journey he had aimed to propagate Buddhism abroad, especially in Europe and America. If this could be done, he thought that his reputation would greatly increase and that he could reduce the resistance from conservative Buddhists. He also wanted to see how Westerners studied Buddhism. From his previous tutor, Yang Wenhui, he knew that Westerners, mainly scholars, had made great progress in Indian and Chinese Buddhist studies. In Yang's opinion, Chinese Buddhist studies had fallen far behind those of Western and Japanese scholars. This was a painful fact which the Chinese felt reluctant to admit. Tai Xu himself, to save face, denied this fact even after his return from Europe and America.⁵⁶

During the War against Japan, the Nationalist Government sent a Buddhist delegation to South Asian countries with the aim of winning sympathy for the Chinese resistance movement. They took a bus to Burma in December 1939. They spent about half a year in Burma (now Myanmar), India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).⁵⁷ After this trip, Tai Xu gained a better understanding of Theravāda Buddhism. He delivered a long speech in June 1940 at the Institute of Chinese-Tibetan Buddhism in Chongqing.

He praised the role that Theravâda Buddhism played in society, education, and lives of ordinary people with deep emotion. Tai Xu remarked:

People generally consider Buddhism of China, Tibet and Japan as Mahâyâna Buddhism whereas Buddhism in Burma, Thailand and Ceylon are considered to be Theravâda Buddhism. However, I obtained a different idea after my trip to these countries....

The Chinese fail to make a good practice of Mahâyâna theories. Chinese Buddhists, including both monks and lay people, tend to focus on self-cultivation. The Mahâyâna theory, though widely advocated and propagated by many Buddhists, is none other than the approaches of self-cultivation. Mahâyâna Buddhism in words and Theravâda Buddhism in deeds are universal in China. ... The Buddhism propagated in Ceylon, Burma and Thailand is based on Theravâda theory. However, the Buddhists there have been able to universalize Buddhism in their countries. The peoples in these countries are converted to Buddhism and follow the teachings of the Buddha. Thus Buddhism there has become the people's religion. ...

The four classes of disciples in Ceylon include bhiksu (monks), Śrâmaṇera, upâsaka (male observers of the five precepts) and upâsikâ (female observers of the five precepts). They do not have bhiksunîs (female observers of all the precepts), Śiksanmâṇas (novice, or observer of the six precepts), Śrâmanerikâs (female observers of the minor precepts). They have made great efforts to study the doctrines and observe the precepts. That is why many Buddhists, not only Buddhists from Burma and Thailand, but also scholars doing research on the Theravâda Buddhism in the Pali language all over the world have come to study the Buddhism in Ceylon. Buddhists in Ceylon are widely engaged in many causes, such as social welfare, culture, education, and so forth, thus giving benefits to the state, society and even the broad masses in the world. This marks a great spirit of compassionate love in Buddhism. Though Buddhism in Ceylon is generally considered to be Theravâda Buddhism, it is indeed the practice of Mahâyâna Buddhism....

There are many reasons for the decline of Chinese Buddhism, however, the root cause for the decline of Chinese Buddhism, I think, lies in our empty talk of Mahâyâna theories and the neglect of practice. There is a missing link between theory and practice. Therefore, our task of reform in Chinese Buddhism is to get rid of the bad habit of empty talk so that we may popularize Buddhism with the integration of both theory and practice. From now on, we Chinese Buddhists should experience the cultivation of Mahâyâna theory, aiming at the nation, state, and the world. The practice of the theory of Mahâyâna Buddhism is what we call the practice of Bodhisattva.⁵⁸

Concerning the problem of how to infuse an altruistic spirit in society, Tai Xu explained that Humanistic Buddhism means to save the country at that critical moment. The soldiers of the army fulfill their duties. The farmers, workers, merchants, students and teachers, the civil officers and lawyers to their respective jobs well.

Tai Xu emphasized that Buddhism should not be separated from the masses. Otherwise, it cannot grow just as a tree will die if it loses its soil. Buddhists should devote to the cause of saving the world and benefiting the masses.⁵⁹

In Tai Xu's words, the concept of Humanistic Buddhism does not encourage people to leave this world, or do something miraculous and magical. Humanistic

Buddhism is in conformity with the needs of the people. It is a broad and bright path that everyone may take in the course of changes in the world. It guides human beings make improvement of their personalities.⁶⁰ He warned his followers that the country was at a critical moment and advised all citizens to fulfill his duty to save the country and the people. Someone asked him, "You are leading the new Buddhist movement. Why do some of your students do jobs and not live in temples?" Tai Xu answered, "It is better for them to do other jobs than to live in temples as long as they make a contribution to the benefits of the country and people."⁶¹

The Bodhisattvas, in Tai Xu's view, are supermen who have left the secular world behind, but not men who are remote from the secular world, knowing nothing of worldly affairs. They are social reformers and promoters of social ethics. They are essentially altruists dedicated to the cause of saving the majority from the sufferings. Thus, the Humanistic Buddhism reinterprets the "four infinite Buddha-states of mind," i.e., boundless kindness, boundless pity, boundless joy, and boundless equanimity, leading to "love, pity and assistance." In a word, altruism is considered the essence of all Buddhist teachings.⁶²

Tai Xu's views on Humanistic Buddhism were popular in the 1940s. In 1934, *Haichaoyin*, a journal initiated by Tai Xu, published a special issue on Humanistic Buddhism with 18 articles in it.⁶³ His propositions have had great impact on Chinese Buddhism and become the essential characteristics of Chinese Buddhism. It is more flexible when dealing with the subtle issue of "this world" and other world. It favors a kind of secular life in which followers may keep up their religious service and practice for self-cultivation. Laying emphasis on this worldliness and blessings and joys of living beings, Humanistic Buddhism takes altruism and assistance to the suffering people as the essence in learning Buddhism.

Tai Xu is said to be the "Martin Luther" of China's Buddhist reform. He played a key role in the renaissance of Chinese Buddhism. In spite of all his efforts, he failed in his life-long endeavors. In his later years, Tai Xu wrote a short essay lamenting his thirty-year effort in the Buddhist reform.⁶⁴ He made a self-criticism concerning his weaknesses. He held that he fell out with the conservatives in the mainstream. He was passionate in the reform in Buddhism in the first period, he created a unique atmosphere of school and teaching in the second period and in the third period he organized and led the Chinese Buddhist Society. He said that he did things in these three periods by chance and he was not so considerate at all though he made great efforts. Fully aware of his weakness, he said that he was good at theory and teaching, but poor in practice and in leading the Buddhists in their endeavors in the movement.

Tai Xu did not gain much support from either his Buddhist colleagues or from the Nationalist Government in a period which was full of civil wars, imperialist invasions and quarrels among the Chinese Buddhists themselves. The authorities were unable to take the issues of religious reform into consideration. Although Tai Xu had made his best efforts to appeal to the government and to the oppositions for reform, the authorities and his opponents simply turned a deaf ear to him due to the unstable situation of the times.

After Tai Xu's death in 1947, his influence spread far and wide. His Humanistic Buddhism has become the fundamental principle for the Mainland Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA). The leaders of CBA also promote Tai Xu's teachings. They reinterpret the current tasks for Chinese Buddhists as "hallowing the motherland and blessing and giving joy to sentient beings." In the Second Session of the Fourth Council of Chinese Buddhist Association, Chairman Zhao Puchu made a report in which he highlighted Humanistic Buddhism. He said:

Chinese Buddhism has a long history of almost two thousand years. In the present era, which direction should Chinese Buddhism take? How can we develop the good traditions of Chinese Buddhism? These are the two vital problems that we should carefully consider and try to solve. I think that we should promote the thinking of Humanistic Buddhism in our doctrines. The essential contents of Humanistic Buddhism consist of the Five Precepts,⁶⁵ the Ten Kindness,⁶⁶ the Four all-embracing virtues⁶⁷ and the Six things that ferry one beyond the sea of mortality to nirvana.⁶⁸ The Agama Sutra says that the Buddha and other buddhas were born in this world. The Sutra of Hui-neng Grand Master of Zen says: "Buddhism is in the world. It is not realized apart from the world. Seeking enlightenment apart from the world is like looking for horns on a hare." ... We should promote Humanistic Buddhism which will help us to complete the tasks in the new historical period.⁶⁹

One of Tai Xu's disciples, Venerable Yinshun, went on to become the most respected and influential Chinese Buddhist scholar among contemporary Buddhist intellectuals in Taiwan. (A collection of Yinshun's writings is currently being prepared for publication in English by Wisdom Press.) Another of Venerable Tai Xu's student, Hsing Yun, also went to Taiwan and established the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist movement, which is the most successful movement for the propagation of Chinese Buddhism worldwide with centers in Southeast Asia, America, Australia, and Europe. Hsing Yun has also established a Buddhist high school and several colleges in Taiwan and a Buddhist university in Los Angeles: namely, Hsi Lai University. His temple in Los Angeles, also is called Hsi Lai Temple. It is the largest Buddhist temple in America and was the host of the 1989 Cobb-Abe Theological Encounter With Buddhism Conference involving the leading Christian theologians in the West.

4. Hsing Yun's Continuation of the Cause of Humanistic Buddhism

Pursuing his studies at the Buddhist Institute at Jiaoshan, Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province, Hsing Yun was influenced by many teachers who were greatly inspired by Tai Xu. Hsing Yun also read Tai Xu's essays and books, thus indirectly hearing what he said. He and other young monks were greatly struck by Tai Xu's words: "Everyone is responsible for his country's destiny and every monk is responsible for the survival of Buddhism."

In the March 1999 issue of *Universal Gate*, a popular Buddhist magazine edited by Fo Guang Shan, Master Hsing Yun recalls his encounter with Venerable Tai Xu in Jiaoshan, Zhenjiang.⁷⁰

In July 1946, Venerable Tai Xu presided over a routine lecture of the Chinese Buddhist Association. I was fortunate to have a chance to attend it. Venerable Tai Xu excitedly called on us, saying, "We must establish the characteristics of Humanistic Buddhism!"

...I was enlightened by Master Tai Xu's words. Now I see the meaning of the following:

The Buddha was born in the human world.
He practiced the cultivation in the human world
And he became enlightened in the world.
He lectured in the world.
His whole life embodied the characteristics of Humanistic Buddhism.
For forty-nine years, he offered more than 300 lectures.
He did not speak to gods or devils, or to hells, or to those who are born as animals. He taught dharmas to people.

...The teachings of dharma are characterized with Humanistic Buddhism. The concept of Humanistic Buddhism is not the patent of Venerable Tai Xu but the essential concern of the Buddha himself. It was introduced not as something to attract attention by novelty, but to rediscover the original teachings of the Buddha. As followers of the Buddha, we should establish Humanistic Buddhism in society with the aim to propagating and glorifying it.⁷¹

In Taiwan, Grand Master Hsing Yun encountered a comparatively more stable situation than that Tai Xu found during his lifetime in China. Grand Master Hsing Yun was able to proceed with his ambitious reforms in a more relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. Certainly, the first few years were very difficult for Master Hsing Yun to start his new career in Taiwan. The difficulties included cultural and language differences, prejudice, exclusionism, false accusations from people who were hostile to Buddhism, and so forth. He was even arrested for some time. Upon his release, he could hardly find a place to stay. Though empty-handed, Grand Master Hsing Yun exerted tremendous efforts to disseminate Buddhism, first in remote villages and small towns, then in big cities. He finally built several first-rate temples in the United States and almost 200 temples affiliated with Fo Guang Shan in various countries in the world. In this respect, Grand Master Hsing Yun successfully carried on the cause of practical reform initiated by Tai Xu, thus, he may be considered the Martin Luther in the practical reform of Chinese Buddhism.

Yes, many people view Grand Master Hsing Yun as a practitioner of Humanistic Buddhism. In the larger sense, he has not only made great contributions to the modernization and practice in Buddhist reform, but has also developed the theoretical aspects of Humanistic Buddhism. He interprets Humanistic Buddhism in the following words:

Buddhism takes human beings as its essence. The Buddha always emphasizes in his teachings that he is one of sentient beings. He clearly indicates that he is not a god....If we would like to become a Buddha, an enlightened one, we must practice in the human world. There is no other way to become a Buddha except as a human beings.⁷²

He encouraged his followers to be engaged in concrete practice of ethics within the Buddhist teachings by "helping people with confidence, happiness and hope and offering them convenience." On the question of how to develop modern Buddhism, the Grand Master maintains:

It is necessary to learn the ways that the Buddha and Bodhisattvas practiced and to build up Buddhism with great endeavors in the human world. When teaching the doctrines of the Buddha, we should speak to people with optimistic delightfulness. We should aid all sentient beings in sharing the benefits of the dharmas and understanding the wisdom of the Buddha. What we do is to aid them in benefiting their causes and meeting their demands. We should introduce compassion, wisdom, vows and performance into human society. Thus, we may make it perfect.⁷³

The Grand Master went on to illustrate four points of modernity in Buddhism:

- (1) The modernity of languages. He encouraged his followers to learn more foreign languages in preparing for the propagation of Buddhism in the world. He emphasized the importance of working languages in Buddhist research, such as Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, English and Japanese.
- (2) The use of modern facilities for the propagation of Buddhism. These, according to the Master, include computers, videos, TV, and all other modern technological equipment.
- (3) The modernity of practice in life. The Master urged his disciples to follow the examples of great ancient masters who offered service to the community in various ways. He pointed out that the Buddhist followers may serve the society in their respective professions, such as teaching, medical treatment, art, literature and so forth.
- (4) Establishing monasteries as modern schools. Grand Master Hsing Yun called for the updating of various functions of monasteries, including offering medical treatment, accommodations for the poor, and education.⁷⁴

Grand Master Hsing Yun went to interpret Humanistic Buddhism with the following six terms:

- (1) Humanity. The Buddha is not god without any trace. He is not a god that people could imagine. He was fully human. Like us all, he had parents and family life. He demonstrated his compassion, discipline, and superb wisdom in human life. Therefore, he is the Buddha in the world.
- (2) Human life. Buddhism initiated by the Buddha attaches great importance to ordinary life, including food, clothes, house and means of transportation. He has offered a variety of instructions on almost all things, such as family relationships, social and state activities, and so forth.
- (3) Altruism. The aim of Buddha's coming to the world is to teach sentient beings and offer them benefits.
- (4) Delight. Buddhism is a religion which offers people happiness. The doctrine of compassion articulated by the Buddha aims at releasing sentient beings from suffering and bringing them delight.
- (5) Time Frame. The Buddha came into this world under certain conditions. His arrival forms a connection for our future salvation in this world. Although the Buddha was born 2500 years ago and entered Nirvana, he gave us, sentient beings from generation to generation, this chance and condition for salvation. We continue to take his thinking and teaching as our model.
- (6) Universality. The Buddha's life was full of universality. ...Tai Xu said that the Buddhist doctrines imply the past, present and future, but the most important thing is the universality of the present. Although the Buddha's teachings involve this world, the other world and numerous worlds, Buddhism highly values the universality of this world. When talking about sentient beings, the Buddha laid emphasis on the universality of humankind.⁷⁵

The master emphasized that all Buddhist sects -- no matter how people categorize them into Therevada, Mahayana, exoteric, or esoteric sects, are full of human nature. This may follow the trend of our period.

Grand Master Hsing Yun further explained the following six points:

- (1) Buddhism divides people into five kinds: people, devas (gods), hearers, prayekas⁷⁶ and Bodhisattvas. The Buddhism of people and devas lays emphasis on the world. The Buddhism of hearers and pratyekas is inclined to the worlds beyond. The way to Bodhisattva-hood is a combination of this-worldly spirit of people and devas and the other-worldliness of hearers and pratyekas. We follow the objective of Bodhisattvas: the spirit of self-profit and profiting others, the spirit of self-salvation and the spirit of salvation for others, and the spirit of self-consciousness and the spirit of enlightenment of others. We consider the relationship between human beings and ourselves as indivisible. Self-profit means to strengthen oneself for the salvation of all sentient beings, thus one may benefit from this oneself. The combination of these five kinds of people is the characteristic of Humanistic Buddhism.
- (2) The Five Precepts and the Ten Good Virtues are the core of Humanistic Buddhism. The master says that the Five Precepts lead to the proper management of the state and bring peace to the world.
- (3) Humanistic Buddhism resides in the Four Immeasurables: that is --: the boundless kindness, the boundless pity to save all from suffering, the boundless joy on seeing others rescued from suffering and giving up all things to others. The master points out that increased money and material possessions have brought more troubles to human beings. Folk religions are based on desire. The aims of the followers of folk religions are just to gain the Bodhisattvas or gods' protection and assistance in becoming rich. They seek security, good family life, longevity, and good fortune. Therefore their starting point is desire. We should establish our beliefs and actions on the basis of giving all things to others. Religious belief implies devotion, sacrifice, and altruism. The altruistic nature of Humanistic Buddhism is characterized by the spirit of boundless kindness, boundless pity, boundless joy, and unlimited giving all things to others. These four immeasurables constitute the main theme of Humanistic Buddhism.
- (4) The Grand Master holds that the six things that ferry one beyond the sea of mortality to Nirvâna, i.e. the six pârâmitâs and the four all-embracing (Bodhisattva) virtues are the essentials for Humanistic Buddhism. The six pârâmitâs are charity, keeping the precepts, patience under insult, zeal and progress, and meditation and wisdom. The four all-embracing virtues consist of giving what others like in order to lead them to love and truth, affectionate speech with the same purpose, proper conduct profitable to others, and co-operation and adaptation of oneself to others.
- (5) Cause and retribution for good or evil deeds are considered to be the basis for Humanistic Buddhism.
- (6) The Middle-way of joint practice of Chan and the Pure Land schools is the practice leading to Humanistic Buddhism. The Middle-way refers to the wisdom of accommodation of non-existence (Śūnyatâ, emptiness) and existence. Grand Master Hsing Yun holds that Humanistic Buddhists lead both a material and a spiritual life. Both matters and spirit are equally important in life. On the one hand, people pursue an outward life, on the other hand, they have their inner world. That is to say, life implies the world ahead and the world behind. It does not encourage people to go forward blindly. The sea of bitterness has no bounds. If we repent, the shore is at hand. Therefore, Humanistic Buddhism implies both

existence and non-existence, both living in groups and in seclusion. It is a accommodation of all things in the world, thus making the human world perfect.

Grand Master Hsing Yun says that Humanistic Buddhism gives people confidence, joy, hope and convenience. This has become the guiding principle for the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order. Again, he further stresses the need of Humanistic Buddhism in today's world.

(Fo Guang Shan) Buddhist Order advocates Humanistic Buddhism. Frankly, we want to bring Buddhism down to the human world, in our life, in the mind of everyone. Where is the Buddha? He is in my mind. Where is the Pure Land? It is in my Mind. When I close my eyes, the universe, the three thousand worlds, are in my mind. ...Everyone is pressed by the heavy burden of family, career, and so forth. If we now have Humanistic Buddhism, we have the whole universe. We may enjoy happiness everywhere, just as Venerable Women says, "We may enjoy the hundreds of flowers in the spring and a full moon in autumn. We enjoy the little breeze in summer and snow in winter. If we have no anxieties in the mind, that is the best season in the world." "When we have something in mind, the world seems small. When we have nothing to worry about, the world looks much bigger." No matter how big the outer world is, it is not so big as the richness of the inner world. The only way to establish the boundless world in our minds is the constant practice in our cultivation. This is the true spirit of Humanistic Buddhism.⁷⁷

The Grand Master reiterates that Buddha was born in Lumbini in Kapilavastu, India (in what is near Nepal) more than 2,500 years ago. He was a Buddha in the world.... He was born in the world, practiced his meditation in the world, and became enlightened in the world. Thus he is the Buddha in the world and savior in the world.⁷⁸

The Grand Master interprets the concept of Humanistic Buddhism with the following words:

True Humanistic Buddhism attaches more importance to reality than to abstruse knowledge. It shows more concern to the masses than to the individual self. It lays strong stress on society rather than on the mountain monasteries. ... Humanistic Buddhism as I understand, it aims at using the teachings of the Buddha for the improvement for our lives and the purification of our mind. We take the dharma teachings of the Buddha as the basis for our life, thus making our life more significant and meaningful.⁷⁹

Grand Master Hsing Yun advocates the modernization of Buddhism. He does not consider this modernization as creation, but the restoration of the ancient Buddhist teachings, making these teachings known to modern people and accepted by them.⁸⁰

The Master's illustration of Humanistic Buddhism throws light on the future development of Chinese Buddhism. The spirit of universal compassion and the responsibility for the salvation of all has deeply penetrated into the mind of the educated scholar class in China. The famous maxim that "one who is first in worrying about the world's troubles and last in enjoying its pleasures"⁸¹ has encouraged generations of Chinese to make endeavors for the salvation of their own nation and the release of the suffering of the people. Arthur Wright said, "It would seem that so long as there are Chinese speaking the Chinese language and dealing with their problems in ways that are distinctively the product of their common heritage, an awareness of the legacy of Buddhism will help us to understand their thought and behavior."⁸²

It is in this spirit that Grand Master Hsing Yun bravely started his ambitious plan to restore the humanistic tradition of Buddhism. He has dedicated himself to this cause of Humanistic Buddhism by bringing the original teachings of the Buddha back into the modern world. In fact, the master inherited the elements of Chinese tradition in a melting pot of universal Buddhism. Today, Fo Guang Shan has nearly 200 affiliated monasteries and institutions all over the world. Monks, nuns, and lay Buddhist devotees work diligently for the propagation of compassionate love, kindness, joyfulness and equality of humankind. The impact of Fo Guang Shan has gone beyond its birthplace in Taiwan. If we can say that Venerable Tai Xu made the first effort to re-connect us with the essential Buddhist spirit in the first half of the 20th century, then Grand Master Hsing Yun continued this endeavor and made it realized throughout the world. In this sense, he is considered a great reformer or the Martin Luther of Chinese Buddhism. Being both a practitioner and theoretician, he has made an immeasurable contribution to Buddhism.

5. Conclusion

On the whole, the definitions of Humanistic Buddhism by Tai Xu and Hsing Yun are similar. Tai Xu emphasized the causes in education, culture and social welfare. He placed his hope in the propagation of Buddhism in Europe and America. Hsing Yun also has made tremendous endeavors to implement his principles, namely: to propagate Buddhism by education and promotion of culture, to serve society with compassion, love and kindness, and to purify people's minds by pilgrimage. He has inherited the tradition and makes good use of modern facilities in the dissemination of Buddhism.

Tai Xu, however, did not succeed in his life-long efforts in the reform of Chinese Buddhism. Unfortunately, he went against the veteran monks who were conservative when he was young. The side-effect of the Jinshan Incident⁸³ in which Tai Xu was deeply involved in 1912 lasted almost until his last years when the old conservative monks were finally gone. The old monks bore a long-standing grudge against Tai Xu for his imprudent actions in this attempt to take over the property of the one of the biggest monasteries in East China, were always suspicious of Tai Xu's suggestions and boycotted his propositions for reform. Isolated, he barely got the control of Chinese Buddhist Association in his later years, due to the support of Chiang Kai-shek. He lamented at his failure with the following words:

By chance, I approached the thinking of revolutionaries and sparked my revolutionary zeal for Buddhism. Influenced by the zeal and vigor of the 1911 Revolution,⁸⁴ I advanced the issue of Three Revolutions in Buddhism: namely: the revolution in doctrines, in Sangha systems and monastic property. The Three Revolutions were criticized by the Buddhist journal then. I refuted their points. I set up a Buddhist Society with a group of young monks who had received the new education. I played a role in theory development. A group of young monks in Jinshan Monastery, Zhenjiang, were practitioners. We were both rash and imprudent in our actions. The opposition soon started their counter-attack. We failed. My reputation as a revolutionary soon spread far and wide. Some people showed their respect and were sympathetic with me, some feared, or disliked me....

My failure in reform may be mainly ascribed to the strong opposition. But I know my weakness: I am good at theory but weak in practice. ..I am still confident of my strong points in theory and teaching. If I can get help from persons who are good at practice and guidance, I am sure we can establish Buddhist doctrines and systems appropriate to the modern Chinese situation....

I am still dedicated to my cause, but as I am getting on in age, I might continue the cause in good conditions. People after me should know my weakness and keep on guard against these shortcomings. Please do not criticize me when you place your hope in me. I still believe my theories and teachings for Buddhist reform. Please make my failure as the mother of success.⁸⁵

During Tai Xu's time he witnessed the upheavals in Chinese society, the imperialist aggressions, civil wars, the radical movement of "New Culture," and so forth. At the turn of the 20th century, the Chinese imperial state was threatened by foreign invaders and challenged by the resentment against its rule from people at home. When the last emperor was dethroned, the country fell into chaos. The radical intellectuals called for reform aiming at making China stronger by challenging the traditional culture. They openly challenged the values of Confucianism, mainstream of Chinese ethics Buddhism and Taoism, and all religions. Time and again, they raised the issue of confiscation of monastic property for "education," thus striking heavy blows to Buddhism and other religions. In addition, Buddhism declined significantly due to the lack of unity among the monastic community, the low education of monks and nuns, and the conservative nature of monastic leaders, and so forth. It is too natural to see that monks were united when the issue of confiscation of monastic property was raised and when the issue was solved temporarily, they started their inner fight again. We can imagine how difficult it was for Tai Xu to fight alone with his followers.

As true as Tai Xu acknowledged his failures in this melancholy way, he had his success: he planted the seeds for the revival of Buddhism. After his death, his influence spread widely. Grand Master Hing Yun has been able to revive Buddhism worldwide. The dreams of Tai Xu have only come true due to Hsing Yun's tremendous efforts and talent.

Comparing the two masters' background, we find that Tai Xu's period was full of tempest cultural storms which made his characters more radical and imprudent. Hsing Yun has been more moderately orientated in his practice in reform. Humanistic Buddhism has matured with time. Unlike Tai Xu, whose reform was teemed with utopia thinking, the Grand Master Hsing Yun spread the seeds of Humanistic Buddhism step by step. His amicable character, his friendly smiling face, his confidence, his courage, his full awareness of the social conditions and the needs of lay devotees have made him unique in taking the lead in the Buddhist reform movement. He has taken into consideration the basic spiritual needs of the Chinese people as well as the concrete situations they live in. Thus his followers have been able to disseminate Buddhism in ways appropriate to different situations.

Today the achievements of Fo Guang Shan are well known: In education we see different schools from kindergartens to a university in the United States. In social service, we see hospitals and homes for the aged. In culture, we see the dance ensemble and orchestra, the publication houses, the translation center, mass media and

publication. Tai Xu dreamed that one day Buddhists might spread the teachings of *dharma* and build temples in the west. These have all become true with the joint efforts of the Fo Guang Shan movement guided by Venerable Hsing Yun.

Chinese historians often remark that history makes a man and great man makes history. In tracing Tai Xu's source for "Humanistic Buddhism," Lai Yonghai stressed the point that Tai Xu had profound understanding of the Chinese philosophical traditions, especially Confucianism. As Confucianism has long represented the mainstream thinking, it is necessary to practice Humanistic Buddhism in Chinese contexts.⁸⁶ If monks stay out of social life and content themselves to be the lodgers of heaven and meditate in high mountain monasteries, separated from the people as the Chinese rulers wished, there would be no future for the development of Buddhism.

Full of humanistic compassion, love, joy, and kindness, Hsing Yun boldly carries out the good tradition of Buddhism in society. With his deep wisdom, together with his broad knowledge of the Chinese tradition and the world, he is leading the Humanistic Buddhist movement towards the next century. In fact, Hsing Yun is such a man who shoulders the great historical responsibility of Buddhist reform in China. His success lies in the fact that he follows the tradition in a way that brings back the good tradition of Buddhism to our time while bringing Buddhism all facilities appropriate to the modern conditions. His integration with the tradition and modernity make him unique in the history of Buddhism, unique in a way that he is truly reviving Chinese Buddhism.

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NOTES

¹ I would like to express my hearty thanks to President Naichen Chen, Professor Ananda W. P. Guruge, and Dr. Richard Kimball for their suggestions and criticisms for the improvement of the paper and to Venerable Tantra for his careful and patient proofreading. Hsi Lai University Library has provided me with rich sources on both Venerable Tai Xu and Grand Master Hsing Yun. Hereby I express my thanks to all who have helped me in writing this paper.

² *Ekottara-âgama*.

³ *The Sutra of Hui-neng: Grand Master of Zen with Hui-neng's Commentary on the Diamond Sutra*, translated by Thomas Cleary (Boston: Shambhala, 1998), p. 23

⁴ *The Sutra of Hui-neng: Grand Master of Zen with Hui-neng's Commentary on the Diamond Sutra*, translated by Thomas Cleary (Boston: Shambhala, 1998), pp.28-29.

⁵ Xuanjue (665-713) first studied the doctrines of the Tiantai (T'ien-t'ai) School. When he heard of the teachings of Hui-neng, he converted to the Chan School represented by Hui-neng. He wrote this *Yongjia Zhengdao Ge* (Song to the Enlightenment), which contains 247 verses. It is one of the best poems describing the enlightenment.

⁶ Caoxi is a name of place situated in Shaozhou, in present Qujiang County, Guangdong Province, China. It is famous because the Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng preached there. The word "Caoxi" implies that one has inherited the correct teachings of the Sixth Patriarch.

⁷ Lai Yonghai, *Foxue Yu Ruxue* (Buddhist Studies and Confucian Studies) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1992), p.219.

⁸ *Taiping Guangji* (Miscellaneous Records Collected in the Taiping Reign Period, edited by Li Fang, in 981 C.E.), volume 493. See *Hong Xiuping, Zhonguo Fojiao Wenhua Licheng* (History of Chinese Buddhist Culture) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1995), p.285.

⁹ We are still unaware of the effects of monastic economy. More research work is needed. See *Hong Xiuping, Zhonguo Fojiao Wenhua Licheng* (History of Chinese Buddhist Culture) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1995), pp.155-156.

¹⁰ Michihata Ryoshu, *Chungkuo Fochiao Yu Shehui Fuli Shihyeh* (Chinese Buddhism and Its Social Welfare Service), translated by Kuan Shihch'ien, (Kaohsiung, Taiwan: Foguang Ch'upanshe, 1986), pp.76-78, pp.117-119. Such facilities were first established in the Southern dynasty (420-589) and the Northern dynasty (386-581). The Tang dynasty (618-906) started such a social service in the years of 701-703 C.E. during the reign of Empress Wu Zetian (r. 684-705). In 845, Emperor Wuzong (reigned 841-846) decided to ban Buddhism. Almost all the temples were destroyed and monks and nuns were forced to return to lay people. We found a proposition made by Prime Minister Li Deyu (787-849) to the emperor. He suggested that the name of Beitianfang (field and home for the sick) be changed to Yangbingfang (home for the sick people) and local old persons who were of noble character and high prestige manage such social welfare services. See *Quantangwen* (Completed Prose Literature of the Tang Dynasty 589-906), juan (volume) 704.

¹¹ Dazhu Huihai was a Fujianese. His birth and death are still unknown. He was living probably in the mid of 8th century. He visited Mazu Daoyi (709-788) and spent six years with him. He became enlightened with the help of Mazu Daoyi who was largely responsible for the development of a New Chan sect in Jiangxi.

¹² Xi Yun (? – 850), a native of Minxian County, Fujian Province, became a monk at Huangbi Mountain, Hongzhou. It was said that when he visited the capital, he met an old woman whose instruction enlightened him. He then returned to Hongzhou and visited Venerable Bai Zhang

and became his successor. See *Song Gaosengzhuan* (Biography of Eminent Monks), *TT*. 50, p.842.

¹³ See Wang Zhiping, *DiwangYu Fojiao* (Emperors and Buddhism) (Beijing: Huawen Chubanshe, 1998), pp.210-222. Also Zhou Qi, "On Zhu Yuanzhang's Policy in Buddhism," in *Studies in World's Religions*, edited by the Institute of World Religions, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, No. 3, 1998, pp.20-29. Zhang Xuezhi, "The Harmonious Communication of Buddhism with Confucianism and Taoism in the Ming Dynasty Seen from Monk Zibai Zhenke," in *Studies of World's Religions*, No. 1, 1999, pp.73-80. See Chun-fang Yu, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), Chapter Seven, "Internal Causes of Monastic Decline in the Ming Dynasty (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. 171-191. Sung-peng Hsu, *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Han-Shan Te-Ch'ing* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979), pp.11-58.

¹⁴The White Lotus Society was started during the early years of the Southern Song dynasty by Mao Ziyuan, a native of Jiangsu, who had been a disciple of Jing-fan (d. 1128), a Tiantai (T'ien-t'ai) master also interested in the Pure Land doctrine. Mao organized a White Lotus Society consisting of monks and laymen devoted to the restraint of the passions and the encouragement of good karma. The activities of the society aroused the opposition from Confucianists and the orthodox Buddhists. The Mongols banned the society by the decrees in 1281 and 1308. In the end of Yuan dynasty (1206-1368), the White Lotus Society became involved in a number of rebellions. Zhu Yuanzhang was one of the members of Red Kerchief Bandits. The chief of the bandits was Han Shantong, whose forbears had been members of the White Lotus Society. As soon as Zhu ascended the throne, he immediately banned the society. See Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp.419-431.

¹⁵ Ke Yenliang, *Chinling Fanch'achih* (Records of Buddhist Temples in Chinling) (Taipei:Kuangwen Shuchu, 1976), chuan 2, Part I, pp.165-166.

¹⁶ Ke Yenliang, *Chinling Fanch'achih* (Records of Buddhist Temples in Chinling) (Taipei: Kuangwen Shuchu, 1976), chuan 2, Part I, p.177.

¹⁷ Zhang Zhidong was a great advocate of railroads and heavy industry in China. He made the most explicit philosophical statement of "ti-yong" dichotomy. "Ti" means "substance" or "essence" in English and "yong" means "function" or "utility." Here "ti" represents the mainstream of Chinese culture and "yong" refers to western learning. He implies that elements of western culture would be introduced only for use. Professor Joseph Levenson has made a detailed analysis of Zhang's "ti-yong" concept. See Joseph Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: A Trilogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), pp. 60-69.

¹⁸ Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) was a native of Xiangcheng, Henan Province. He began his military career in a conflict in Korea in 1882. Started his "New Army" training project in Tianjin in 1895, he became a powerful army leader. At the critical moment, he betrayed young Emperor Guangxu and helped the Dowager to abort the reform. When the 1911 Revolution broke out, he became President of Republic of China. Dissatisfied with the presidency, he desired to accede to the imperial throne. As soon as he claimed to be the emperor in the end of 1915, the army led by Cai E rose against his rule and governors of other provinces followed Cai's suit. On June 6, 1916, besieged and angered, Yuan Shikai died disgracefully with his dream to become the emperor.

¹⁹ Yang Hui-nan, *Tangtai Fochiao Szuhsiang Chanwang* (On Contemporary Buddhist Thoughts) (Taipei: Tongta Tushu Kungszu, 1991), pp.130-131.

²⁰ Jing An (1852-1912), also named Eight Fingers (Ba Zhi Tou Tuo), styled Ji Chan, was Tai Xu's mentor. He was the leader of Chinese General Buddhist Association. He enjoyed high prestige that came from having served as abbot of three famous monasteries, including Tiantong Si in Ningpo, Zhejiang Province. He was good at poems and a collection of his poems was published entitled *Ba Zhi Tou Tuo Shiwen Ji* by Hunan Yuelu Publishing House in 1985. For English, see Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp.35-37.

²¹ Su Mansu and Zhang Taiyan, "A Notice to All Buddhist Followers." See Deng Zimei, *Chuantong Fojiao Yu Zhongguo Jindaihua* (Traditional Buddhism and China's Modernity) (Shanghai: Huazhong Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1994), p.146. Su Mansu (1884-1918) was born in Japan. His father was a merchant of Guangdong Province, doing business in Japan. His mother was a Japanese. He was actively involved in revolution but later became a monk in Huizhou, Guangdong Province. Not interested in Buddhist service, he wrote sentimental novels, the tragic stories and worked out translations of European novelists. Zhang Taiyan (1868-1936) was a well-known scholar and revolutionary. He showed strong criticisms against the Qing Government and was arrested in 1903. He made a careful study on Buddhism, especially the studies of Consciousness-Only and Buddhist logic. He even called for the wide spread of Buddhism in order to save the nation. See Shimada Kenji, *Pioneer of the Chinese Revolution: Zhang Binglin and Confucianism*. Trans. Joshua A. Fogel (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990), and Hao Chang, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning, 1890-1911* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

²² Yang Wenhui (1837-1911) is widely regarded as the father of Buddhist revival at the turn of the 20th century. His contribution to the revival lies in his publishing house where millions of copies of Buddhist books were published and his influence spread far and wide. More importantly, his disciples included some of the leading Buddhist monks and laymen of the next generation. See Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp.2-10.

²³ Yang Wenhui: "Speech Delivered at Prajñā Pāramitā Society." See Deng Zimei, *Chuantong Fojiao Yu Zhongguo Jindaihua* (Traditional Buddhism and China's Modernity) (Shanghai: Huazhong Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 1994), p.146.

²⁴ Tu Wei-ming, "Destructive Will and Ideological Holocaust," in *Dædalus*, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Winter 1996, p.149.

²⁵ Tai Xu must have read *Fengshen Zhuan* (Annals of the Investiture of Deities), *Xiyuji* (Record of a Trip to the West). The former is a story of the imaginary battles between the forces of the Shang and Zhou peoples, in which even the gods participated, bringing with them the most ingenious weapons. *Xiyuji* is an account of the travel and adventures of great traveler, translator and Buddhist scholar Xuan Zang (Hsuan Tsang, 602-664) in his search for the law and the extraordinary exploits of his companions, the monkey and the pig, who helped him overcome all obstacles and dangers encountered during the journey. See Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p.478.

²⁶ A detailed description of Venerable Jing An can be found in Professor Holmes Welch's book. See *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp.35-38.

²⁷ *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 5, pp.128-152.

²⁸ *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 34, pp.597-598.

²⁹ *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 5, pp.218-222.

³⁰ *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 47, p.431.

³¹ *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 5, p.215.

³² *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 5, pp.173-174.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.174.

³⁴ Guo Peng, *Tai Xu Sixiang Yanjiu* (Studies on Tai Xu's Thinking) (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexu Chubanshe, 1997), pp.3-4.

³⁵ Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) was born in Fenghua, Zhejiang Province. His mother, who gave Chiang great influence, was a devout Buddhist. Chiang converted to Christianity after his marriage with Meilin Soong.

³⁶ *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 34, pp.668-670. Also Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p.157.

³⁷ Yinshun, *Tai Xu Dashi Nianpu* (Chronicle Record of Venerable Tai Xu) (Beijing : Zongjiao Wenhua Chubanshe, 1995), pp.289-290.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p290.

³⁹ See Note 6.

⁴⁰ Yu Lingbo, *Zhongguo Jinxiandai Fojiao Renwuzhi* (Biographies of Modern Chinese Buddhists) (Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua Chubanshe, 1995), pp.576-577.

⁴¹ Ouyang Jingwu (1871-1943) was leader of lay Buddhist movement in the first half of the 20th century. He was president of the Institute of Inner Learning that he organized in Nanjing in 1922. Holmes Welch's book mentions Ouyang Jingwu and his viewpoints. See Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968).

⁴² Liang Shuming (1893-1987) was a native of Guangxi Province in Southeast China. He was born in Beijing. By self-teaching, he became professor of Peking University during 1918-1924. He was known for his stand in defending Confucian values during the New Culture Movement which started in May 1919. He embraced Buddhism in his early twenties to thirties. But he was shocked at his father's suicide and returned to Confucianism. He lonely yet firmly rejected the trend to blame all China's backwardness to Confucianism as the radical intellectuals did at the time. He deemed it his obligation to defend Confucianism as true essence of Chinese culture. Although sympathetic with Buddhism, he rejected Tai Xu's reform. See Guy Alitto, *The Last Confucian: Liang Shu-ming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp.52-56. The author was surprised to find that Liang still claimed himself to be a Buddhist when he interviewed him in 1980 and 1984, Cf. pp.337-338. Liang Shuming has been highly admired and respected by overseas Chinese and Chinese intelligentsia for his courage in a public debate with Chairman Mao Zedong in September 1953. Please refer to the same book on pages 1-3, 324-327 and the index on p.393. Mao wrote a severe criticism against Liang. Please check the Bibliography of the same book, p.373.

⁴³ Liu Renhang was a gentry merchant in Shanghai in 1920s.

⁴⁴ Liang Qichao (1873-1929), also named Ren-gong, a native of Guangdong Province, was a famous reformer in the end of Qing dynasty as well as a well-known scholar. In his later years, he attended lectures by Ouyang Jingwu (1871-1943, see Note 64.) in Nanjing. He wrote 18 important articles on Buddhism.

⁴⁵ See Note 6.

⁴⁶ Liang Shuming, *Liang Shuming QuANJI* (The Complete Works of Liang Shuming) (Ji'nan: Shandong Renmin Chubanshe, 1989), volume 1, pp.536-537. The original book is entitled

Dongxi Wenhua Jiqi Zhexue (East and West Culture and Their Philosophies) (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1922), p.202.

⁴⁷ Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p.51.

⁴⁸ I have written an essay on “The Interfaith Dialogues between Tai Xu and Christians in the 1930s.” This was the project that I did at the Center for the Study of World Religions and Harvard-Yenching Institute, Harvard University, in the year 1996-1997. This paper is going to be published in *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 2000.

⁴⁹ *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 41, part 13, p.331.

⁵⁰ *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 43, pp. 988-1002.

⁵¹ Feng Yuxiang and Bai Congxi were both high-ranking generals in the Nationalist Government.

⁵² *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 52, part 17, pp. 485-486.

⁵³ Karl Ludvig Reichelt, *Truth and Tradition in Chinese Buddhism* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1927), pp.301-302.

⁵⁴ *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 34, part 9, II, pp.555, 559, 563.

⁵⁵ ‘Tai Xu Fashi Jiang Foxue Ji,’ in *Haichaoyin Wenku Shehui Xue*, p.85, see Zhou Xuenong, “Chushi,” “Rushi” *Yu Qili Qiji – Tai Xu Fashi De “Renjian Fojiao” Sixiang Yanjiu* (A Study on “Buddhism in this World” by Venerable Tai Xu) (Beijing: Beijing University, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1996), p.22.

⁵⁶ After his return, Tai Xu delivered a speech about his tour, saying that Western scholars mainly relied on texts in Pāli language and incomplete Sanskrit texts. The former belonged to the Theravāda School, and latter belonged to the Mahāyāna School. See *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 55, part 18, II, pp.242-243, pp.256-258.

⁵⁷ Tai Xu delivered eight speeches in Ceylon. The last one was entitled “The Respectful Ceylon Buddhism.” See *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 56, p.585-597.

⁵⁸ *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 35, pp.26-30.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, volume 35, p.31.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, volume 47, p.449.

⁶¹ See Lai Yonghai, *Foxue Yu Ruxue* (Buddhist Studies and Confucian Studies) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1992), pp.224-225.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.224.

⁶³ Gao Zhennong, *Fojiao Wenhua Yu Jindai Zhongguo* (Buddhist Culture and Modern China) (Shanghai: Shanghai Shehui Kexueyuan Chubanshe, 1992), p.61.

⁶⁴ *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 57, pp.61-63.

⁶⁵ Five Precepts refer to the first five of the ten precepts which admonish killing, stealing, adultery, lying, and intoxicating liquors.

⁶⁶ The ten good characteristics, or virtues, defined as the non-committal of the ten evils, including no killing, no stealing, no adultery, no lying, no double-tongue, no coarse language, no filthy language, no covetousness, no anger, no perverted views.

⁶⁷ The four all-embracing (Bodhisattva) virtues refer to (1) *dāna*, giving what others like, in order to lead them to love and receive the truth; (2) *priyavacana*, affectionate speech, with the same purpose; (3) *arthakṛtya*, conduct profitable to others, with the same purpose, (4) *samānāṛthatā*, co-operation with and adaptation of oneself to others, to lead them into the truth.

⁶⁸ These refer to the six things that ferry one beyond the sea of mortality to Nirvana, such as charity, keeping the precepts; patience under insult, zeal and progress, meditation, and wisdom. Notes 63-66 are taken from *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* compiled by William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous.

⁶⁹ *Fayin* (*Voice of the Dharma*, organ of Chinese Buddhist Association, Beijing), No.6, 1983. Also see Gao Zhennong, *Fojiao Wenhua Yu Jindai Zhongguo* (Buddhist Culture and Modern China) (Shanghai: Shanghai Shehui Kexueyuan Chubanshe, 1992), pp.61-62.

⁷⁰ Grand Master Hsing Yun was a young student at the Buddhist Institute of Jiaoshan then.

⁷¹ Venerable Hsing Yun, "The Establishment of Humanistic Buddhism," in *P'umen* (Universal Gate Monthly), No.3, 1999, pp.4 -11.

⁷² Hsing Yun, "Humanistic Buddhism," in *1990 Fo Guang Shan Fochiao Hsuehshu Huiyi Shihlu* (Records of the Buddhist Academic Conference held at Fo Guang Shan in 1990) (Kaohsiung, Taiwan: Foguang Ch'upanshe, 1991), p.22.

⁷³ Speech delivered at the International Buddhist Academic Conference in 1990. See *Hsing Yun Tashih Chiangyenchi* (A Collection of Speeches of Grand Master Hsing Yun) (Kaohsiung, Taiwan: Foguang Ch'upanshe, 1991), volume 4, 32.

⁷⁴ See Hsing Yun, "How to Modernize Buddhism," in *Hsing Yun Tashih Yenchiangchi* (A Collection of Speeches of Grand Master Hsing Yun) (Kaohsiung, Taiwan: Fo Guang Shan Ch'upanshe, 1991), volume 4, pp.33-43.

⁷⁵ Hsing Yun, "On Humanistic Buddhism," in *1990 Fo Guang Shan Fochiao Hsuehshu Huiyi Shihlu* (Records of Buddhist Academic Conference Held at Fo Guang Shan in 1990) (Kaohsiung: Foguang Ch'upanshe, 1991), p.20.

⁷⁶ Pratyeka-buddha refers to one who is enlightened by the twelve nidānas; it is considered as an advance on the Theravāda, cf. Śrāvaka (hearer), but not yet the standard of the altruistic Bodhisattva-vehicle, the Mahāyāna. See William Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (Taipei: Hsinwenfeng Ch'upan Kungszu, 1992), p.441.

⁷⁷ Hsing Yun, "On Humanistic Buddhism," in *1990 Fo Guang Shan Fochiao Hsuehshu Huiyi Shihlu* (Records of Buddhist Academic Conference Held at Fo Guang Shan in 1990) (Kaohsiung: Foguang Ch'upanshe, 1991), pp. 19-30.

⁷⁸ *Hsing Yun Tashih Chiangyenchi* (A Collection of Speeches of Grand Master Hsing Yun) (Kaohsiung, Taiwan: Foguang Ch'upanshe, 1991), volume 1, p.237.

⁷⁹ *Hsing Yun Tashih Chiangyenchi* (A Collection of Speeches of Grand Master Hsing Yun) (Kaohsiung, Taiwan: Foguang Ch'upanshe, 1991), volume 1, p.238.

⁸⁰ *Hsing Yun Tashih Chiangyenchi* (A Collection of Speeches of Grand Master Hsing Yun) (Kaohsiung, Taiwan: Foguang Ch'upanshe, 1991), volume 2, p.720.

⁸¹ This is advanced by Fan Zhongyan (989-1052), a famous scholar official in the Song dynasty (960-1127). He was a great reformer and was dismissed from his post due to the attacks from his opponents in the court. He wrote this maxim in his “Yueyanglou ji.” (Note on Yueyang Tower). This maxim is generally considered as Confucian scholar’s saying, but its deep structure originates from Buddhism. Many Chinese have been familiar with this maxim but do not know the source. Had modern Chinese seen the influence of Buddhism in Chinese tradition, they would not have attacked it time and again in this century. See Arthur Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 93.

⁸² Ibid., p.123.

⁸³ Most of the history books on modern Chinese Buddhism would mention this incident. Holmes Welch wrote a more detailed chapter about the quarrel and fight between Tai Xu’s faction and other conservative hosts. See Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp.28-33.

⁸⁴ This 1911 Revolution, led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, overthrew the Manchus’ rule in China and ended the thousand years of imperial rule.

⁸⁵ *Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu* (The Complete Works of Venerable Tai Xu), volume 57, pp.61-63.

⁸⁶ Lai Yonghai, *Foxue Yu Ruxue* (Buddhist Studies and Confucian Studies) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 1992), pp.226-227.

人間佛教 從太虛法師到星雲大師

- 龍達瑞 (Darui Long)教授著 -

摘 要

本文從歷史的角度分析太虛法師在 1930 年代提倡的人間佛教和星雲大師對人間佛教的重要貢獻。

什麼是人間佛教？為什麼太虛法師提出以建設人間佛教為中國佛教改革運動的指導方針？太虛曾撰有“我的佛教革命失敗史”一文沈痛地回顧了他失敗的原因。為什麼太虛畢生努力的佛教改革運動——建設人間佛教的努力歸於失敗？星雲大師對人間佛教的事業有什麼重要貢獻？

本文第一章回顧了人間佛教的歷史，釋迦牟尼本人最早提倡了“人間佛教”他在 40 多年里在世間說法、禪定，並且在世間達到涅槃。中國佛教禪宗的六祖慧能說：“佛法在世間，不離世間覺”。

第二章討論了中國佛教興衰歷史。尤其是明、清以降佛教逐漸式微，清末民初，貪官競相以“廟產興教”為幌子，攫奪寺產。佛教本身的弊病也受到佛教徒、居士和學者的尖銳批評。

第三章敘述了太虛法師的生平事端和改革佛教運動。太虛重新提出了人間佛教，並以“人間佛教”為契機推動佛教改革。

“人間佛教”經屬了三個發展階段：1916年太虛法師首次提出“人乘佛教”；1928年他略作修改為“人生佛教”；1934年正式提出建設“人間佛教”的理念。

太虛提出的“人間佛教”號召廣大佛教徒服務於社會，實現了把佛教終極關懷從彼岸搬回到此岸的屬史要求。這樣的佛教才會為社會廣泛接受。然而，太虛法師畢生致力的佛教改革運動，終於因日本侵華，內戰和佛教內部的紛爭而告失敗。

正是星雲大師畢生努力和才智使太虛法師夢想變成了現實。大師懷有對佛教前途的高度責任感，他對“人間佛教”的具体實踐和發展，人間佛教”的理論作出了重要貢獻。第四章論及了星雲大師數十年來致力於“人間佛教”的發展。他赤手空拳，靠虔信和艱苦卓絕的努力，一步步地宏揚佛法，先是窮鄉僻壤，然後是中小城市。如今，他創立的國際佛光會遍及全球。在美國洛杉磯建力了第一流的中國寺廟。星雲大師繼承了太虛法師未盡的佛教改革事業，他被譽為當代中國佛教的馬丁·路德。

星雲大師在“人間佛教”的理論上有獨特的貢獻。他對佛教的現代化作了精辟的概括。他認為佛教需要實現佛法“現代語文化，傳教現代科技化，修行現代生活化，寺院現代學校化。”他把“人間佛教”高度概括為：“人間性、生活性、利他性、喜樂性、時代性、普濟性”。 “人間佛教”應該給人們帶來信心，歡喜，希望和方便。 “人間佛教”的目的在於用佛陀的教導改善人們的生活，淨化人們的心靈。

星雲大師深邃的智慧照亮了中國佛教發展的道路，佛光山的精神早已超越了它的誕生地台灣。太虛法師在20世紀上半葉開創了“人間佛教”理念，正是星雲大師繼承這一事業，使“人間佛教”開花於世界各地。從這一點來看，星雲大師既是實踐家又是理論家，他使佛教的傳統和現代化成功地並且合理地結合起來。這一點使他在中國佛教發展史上有著獨特的地位——他領導的佛光運動真正地宏揚了中國佛教。

The Bodhisattva's Way of Life

I should undertake whatever deed I have intended to do
And think of doing nothing other than it.
With my mind applied to that task,
I should set about for the time being to accomplish it.

Whenever there is attachment in my mind
And whenever there is the desire to be angry,
I should not do anything nor say anything,
But remain like a piece of wood.

Whenever I desire material gain, honour or fame;
Whenever I seek attendants or a circle of friends,
And when in my mind I wish to be served;
At (all) these I should remain like a piece of wood.

— Śāntideva: Bodhisattvacaryavatara
(Tr. Stephen Batchelor from Tibetan)