

RITUALS FOR ABORTION AND MISCARRIAGE IN TAIWAN:
SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATION OF THE FETUS

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Abstract

In Taiwan, abortion ritual attempts to appease or rescue *Yingling* (fetus spirits), who are the spirits of fetuses that have died from abortions or miscarriages. Within most contemporary religious discourse, abortion is seen as an inappropriate means of ending a life. *Yingling* are believed to wander in the world of the living or the world of the dead (the underworld), and are longing for the care of their parents. This discourse further claims that fetus spirits should be released from their attachments and sent back into the cycle of reincarnation for rebirth, so that their parents' bad karma could be reduced. This thesis analyzes the abortion ritual in Taiwan with the focus of the imagination of the *Yingling* by means of scrutinizing the semantic meaning of ritual process and ritual symbols. Within such a dynamism, the personhood of the *Yingling* is constructed, and a new sense of community as well as a new sense of identity are generated. The styles of rituals surveyed differ from each other sharply in terms of doctrines (vernacular to transnational; sympathetic to disciplinary), forms (simple to elaborate; free-of-charge to very pricy), and level of involvement (distanced to fully engaged). It is noteworthy that these styles of rituals are rarely "brand new" in the religious context in Taiwan. In fact, familiar liturgies, authority of gods/goddesses and ritual objects in Chinese religion are still employed and comprise the fundamental frame of the ritual. Nonetheless, new elements of myth, new meanings of the parent-child relationship and new imagination toward the spirit are introduced. An alternative reality is created through the ritual process and ritual symbols, which compete with the political, social and scientific discourses present in Taiwan. This alternative reality is significant because it is incorporated into the lived experiences surrounding the individuals and society, which transforms their understanding of the self and the other (lost infant, family, and community).

Résumé

À Taïwan, le rituel de l'avortement tente d'apaiser ou de sauver les *Yingling* (esprits du fœtus), qui sont les esprits des fœtus morts suite à un avortement ou à une fausse couche. Dans la plupart des discours religieux contemporains, l'avortement est considéré comme un moyen inapproprié de mettre fin à une vie. On pense que les *Yingling* errent dans le monde des vivants ou dans le monde des morts (les enfers), et aspirent aux soins de leurs parents. Ce discours affirme en outre que les esprits fœtus devraient être libérés de leurs entraves et renvoyés au cycle de la réincarnation afin de renaître et réduire ainsi le karma de leurs parents. Cette thèse analyse le rituel de l'avortement à Taiwan en se concentrant sur le discours sur les *Yingling* en scrutant la signification sémantique du processus rituel et des symboles rituels. Dans une telle dynamique, la personnalité des *Yingling* est construite et un nouveau sens de la communauté ainsi qu'un nouveau sens de l'identité sont générés. Les styles de rituels étudiés diffèrent fortement les uns des autres en termes de doctrines (de vernaculaire à transnational; de sympathique à disciplinaire), de formes (de simple à élaboré; de gratuit à très cher) et de niveau d'implication (d'éloigné à pleinement engagé). Il est à noter que ces styles de rituels sont rarement «tout nouveaux» dans le contexte religieux à Taiwan. En fait, les liturgies familiales, l'autorité des dieux / déesses et les objets rituels de la religion chinoise ont toujours cours, sont encore/toujours d'usage et constituent le cadre fondamental du rituel. Néanmoins, de nouveaux éléments du mythe, de nouvelles significations de la relation parent-enfant et une nouvelle imagination envers l'esprit sont introduits. Une réalité alternative est créée à travers le processus rituel et les symboles rituels, qui rivalisent avec les discours politiques, sociaux et scientifiques présents à Taiwan. Cette réalité alternative est significative car elle est incorporée dans les expériences vécues autour des individus et de la société, ce qui transforme leur compréhension de soi et de l'autre (enfant perdu, famille et communauté).

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Contribution to Original Knowledge

This thesis conducts a review of literature on the abortion ritual within Buddhist and Taoist context and continues into a survey of historical, social and political accounts of abortion in modern Taiwan. Next, the following elements — based on original research work — contribute to original knowledge in ritual studies of Chinese religion:

Chapters	Themes	Contribution: ritual studies	Contribution: ritual participants
Chapters 5-12	These chapters focus on the examination of the ritual process, its participants' feedback, as well as its impact on them. Data was collected during fieldwork.	This thesis examines how the collaboration of ritual components create an alternative reality. The ritual components include the procedure, body language and bodily movements, as well as the use and deployment of space, narratives and objects. The findings help reveal how the emerging abortion ritual, inherits, transforms or invents meanings for its components.	Participants of the abortion ritual were interviewed. Their feedback assisted in explaining how one practices their agency before, during and after the ritual as a rite of passage. Moreover, through the interviews, the complex life experience of the participants as well as their reasons to attend the ritual are discovered.

Contribution of Authors

This thesis is based on my own contributions.

Chapter 1

Introduction

“Senior, I have had an abortion.” A single, elementary school teacher came to the Hall and sought help. She had more than one boyfriend so she was not sure who was the father of the fetus spirit who had been wandering around her. She decided to have the abortion because the pregnancy was pre-marital. As a teacher, she needed to act as a role model to her students and society, so she had no choice but to have the abortion.

We suggested that she should pray to the Bodhisattva and ask Him to be in charge of this matter (zuozhu 做主). During the meditation and spiritual tour of the underworld, the palace maid brought the child to her. It was a 3-4 year-old boy. As soon as she looked at his face, she knew who the father was. Throughout the meditation, she was constantly crying. She also told the boy spirit that she missed him so much and promised that they will be mother and child again in the future.¹

1-1 Topic of Thesis, Theme

In Taiwan, abortion rituals (*Yingling chaodu* 嬰靈超渡 Deliverance rites) or *Yingling*

¹ Interview with the staff of the Ultimate Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity, *Wuji Yuanshan Tang* 無極圓善堂, October 20, 2009.

gongyang 嬰靈供養 Offering rites)² attempt to appease or rescue *Yingling* (fetus spirits 嬰靈)³, who are the spirits of fetuses that have died from abortions or miscarriages. Within most contemporary Buddhist religious discourse, abortion is seen as an inappropriate means of ending a life. *Yingling* are believed to wander in the world of the living or the world of the dead (the underworld) and long for their parents' care. This discourse further claims that fetus spirits should be released from their attachments and sent back into the cycle of reincarnation for rebirth, so that their parents' bad karma could be reduced. Most patrons/participants in abortion ritual are, not surprisingly, women. According to Moskowitz's observation, more than 70% of the participants are women (Moskowitz 2001, 12).

Some scholars suggest that this religious phenomenon coincided with a rapid increase in the abortion rate and the launch of family planning policies (Moskowitz 2001, 16-24, 34). Due to a need for population control, the Family Plan campaign was launched by the KMT government in 1964 and contraceptive devices for women were introduced (Wu 2009, 94; Zhuang 1998, 551). The effort concluded with the KMT's adoption of the Eugenic and Health Protection Law at the start of 1982 (*Yousheng baojianfa* 優生保健法 2009). According to the estimates of several governmental officers and legislators, there were 300,000 to 500,000 abortions performed in

² The name of the ritual in Taiwan varies according to the type of service. For example, at the Dragon Lake Temple, where a tablet of the fetus spirit is placed for three years before the spirit is believed to be sent back to reincarnation, the ritual is called Fetus-Spirit Offering/Appeasement (*Yingling gongyang* 嬰靈供養). Apparently "*gongyang* 供養" is a term inspired by Japan's *kuyō* due to a similar style of service. However, in temples where the fetus spirit is not expected to stay and believed to be sent to the next life after the ritual, a Buddhist term, salvation or liberation (*chaodu* 超渡/超度), is widely employed. In her review of literature and her fieldwork, Hsuan-Yu Chen lists other names used, such as the Fetus-Spirit Offering Ritual (*Yingling jisi* 嬰靈祭祀), the Fetus-Spirit Worship (*Yingling chongbai* 嬰靈崇拜), and the Fetus-Spirit Salvation (*Yindu yingling* 引渡嬰靈). In her research article published in Japanese, Chen uses a Japanese term, "*Irei* 慰靈", which indicates the consoling and pacifying ritualistic behaviour toward the souls (Chen 2014, 63). In his research on abortion ritual in Taiwan, Moskowitz uses terms such as "to provide for", "to appease", and "to send on to next life" (Moskowitz 2001, 178). He explains that *yang* is often used for the rite of fetus demons. *Yang* and *gongyang* (to "raise" one's child or to "provide" support for one's parents) are commonly used to deal with fetus ghosts, while some religious practitioners claim that *chaodu* is more appropriate. Indeed, while being interviewed by the author of this dissertation during fieldwork, quite a few religious practitioners expressed their disagreement with the former type of service. In his book review on Moskowitz's research, Charles B. Jones asserts that the significant ritualistic differences between the two types of practices should be highlighted, since they reveal if "the client intends simply to appease the spirit in order to put an end to household disturbances, or actually seeks to save the spirit from its plight" (Jones 2002).

³ In this dissertation, *Yingling* is literally translated into "fetus spirit". During an email communication between Moskowitz and the author of this dissertation, on August 13, 2007, Moskowitz suggests that "fetus ghost" should be used instead (Moskowitz 2007). *Yingling* is translated into 'fetus ghosts' in Moskowitz's own work (Moskowitz 2001, 13). In his book review on Moskowitz's research, Charles B. Jones comments that "spirit" (*ling*) and "demon" (*gui*) should be clearly differentiated since "some idea of the semantic range of the emic categories is essential for grasping the subject" (Jones 2002).

Taiwan every year in the 2000s (*Lifayuan Gongbao* 2006, 73). Besides population control, a girl or a woman can choose abortion when an unwanted pregnancy occurs. Shrinking family size, individualistic tendencies of both parents and children, shifting perception of marriage and traditional patriarchal pressure on women are phenomena that indicate structural changes to families and society in recent Taiwan (Moskowitz 2001, 14–16, 22–25). According to my interviews with some ritual participants, factors such as economic hardship and in-laws' attitudes are only some of the reasons why they have had abortions and, while these pressures could have resulted in the decision to abort, they also reveal what struggles a woman must deal with.

Along with these social changes, abortion rituals have been gaining popularity during the last three decades in Taiwan. At just one temple, the Dragon Lake Temple located in Miaoli County, more than 200,000 abortion spirits are worshipped (Peng 2008). Abortion rituals in Taiwan nowadays are conducted by both Taoist and Buddhist institutions, and there are variations in ritual form from region to region, temple to temple, and shrine to shrine. According to an estimate by Chun-Jung Yeh, a researcher at the Institute of Ethnology at Academia Sinica, approximately 80–90% of the temples in Taiwan perform abortion rituals, which means some 40,000 temples (Chun-Jung Yeh, Interview, June 30, 2009). Indeed, during my field research, most of the temples I visited provided the service, albeit with various deities in charge, while only one temple, the Altar of Heaven (*Tiantan* 天壇) in Tainan, did not, since this temple only worships the Jade Emperor, who does not interact with the world of the dead. Most rituals I observed in Taiwan charged a price ranging from \$50 CAD to \$2,000 CAD. Yeh argues: “it’s all about business” (Chun-Jung Yeh, Interview, June 30, 2009). Yet, rituals free of charge do exist as well, such as two Buddhist rituals described in Chapters 11 and 12 in this thesis.

Through the lens of abortion ritual in Taiwan, this dissertation examines the driving forces of ritual change in contemporary Chinese religion. It attempts to explore the meaning and autonomy of the abortion ritual within modernity by means of analyzing its discourses and ritual processes and, in addition, the conflicting forces behind abortion ritual, including different religious institutions, feminist activist organizations, the government, and the medical profession, especially OB/GYN doctors. Also, this thesis analyses the ritual participants' experiences and feelings. More specifically, it first observes how multiple kinds of abortion ritual have developed within varying religions and regions by comparing the array of ritual forms in popular religion.

Second, it demonstrates how the symbolic content of the abortion ritual constructs an alternative reality for its sponsors and participants and guides them through the stages of abortion and post-abortion. Third, it examines how religious perceptions of gender differences, sex and pregnancy have cooperated or conflicted with the subject's position within her networks of social relations, leading, in some cases, to the formation of a ritualized routine within modern life. This process of transformation has led to shifts in the identity of the women who have had abortions and taken part in abortion rituals, as well as their relationships with their partners, families and lineages. Finally, this thesis demonstrates how ritual change impacts people, and how people react to and work with it. This study examines how these women have worked through these changes over time, and furthermore, how the ritual has become a key field for the negotiation of the forces of modernity - including the liberation of the body, economy and society - as Taiwan has formed its own vernacular modernity within globalization.

1-2 Hypothesis, Research Questions, Importance of the Issue

This dissertation explores the following questions by means of examining the actual ritual process:

1. What are the factors, including Japanese cultural impact, diverse discourses and forms of local ritual tradition, family planning and the progress of reproductive technology, which stimulate the abortion ritual in Taiwan? Why did this range of abortion rituals emerge on the island at this specific moment?
2. What are the components, including the procedures, body languages and bodily movements, as well as the use and deployment of space, narratives and objects, involved in this rite of passage? What are the effects created by these components of the ritual process?
3. How should a ritual be defined? Is it merely a set of static philosophical understandings transcendent to actual social relations? Or, does it have its own autonomy? If so, how does it realize its autonomy?
4. Is the participant merely a subject to be indoctrinated or does she have her own agency? If it is the latter, how does she practice her agency before, during and after the ritual?

This thesis's hypothesis is that the ritual is a dynamic praxis involved in creating the conditions of social life. The abortion ritual is embedded in complex social realities generated at a specific time and place. These ritual actions prompt significant changes in the overall culture. Abortion rituals trigger new needs, create new understandings of the supernatural world and generate new parent-child and communal group relationships. Furthermore, the ritual process enables the participant to reconstruct their reality and figure out their strategies for dealing with that reality. Whether it is an act of confession or a challenge, choosing to attend an abortion ritual is an exercise of agency.

1-3 Review of Past Research on Abortion Ritual

Abortion ritual in Japan, called *mizuko kuyō* (水子供養, the “water child memorial rites”, devoted to the *Jizo* Kshitigarbha bodhisattva), developed in Japan in the post-WWII era along with a booming abortion rate (Wilson 2009, 6-7). Nowadays, the ritual is also performed in various Zen centres around North America with the assistance of Japanese Buddhist masters. Most worshippers there are North Americans and the ritual process and dynamics differ greatly from the ones found in Japan.⁴ Some scholars suggest that the abortion ritual in Taiwan was also imported from Japan (Moskowitz 2001, 34-36; Wan 2001, 2; Kan 2008, 380; Wu 2009, 175 & 219; and Hsun Chang)⁵ Similar conditions in Japan and Taiwan such as patriarchal social structure, traditions of ancestor worship, rapid economic growth and the emergence of New Religious Movements may have triggered abortion rituals in both regions (Wan 2001, 2). Some of these scholars further claim that the close political and economic relationship between these two countries led to this importation (Wu 2009, 219). In support of this view, Hsuan-Yu Chen's interviews at the Dragon Lake Temple in 2016 and 2017 found that the ritual specialists of that temple admitted that its abortion ritual originated from its founder's importation of Japanese *mizuko kuyō* (H-Y. Chen 2017, 74).

Indeed, Moskowitz states that, “almost everyone” he talked to in Taiwan agreed that abortion ritual was a “modern import” from Japan in the 1970s to 1980s (Moskowitz 2001, 34).

⁴ For example, in the U.S., the worshippers' privacy is highly protected by means of name concealment in the ritual space. Also, the meditation practice is highly emphasized, which can be seen as part of the trend of the Zen appropriation in North America (Wilson, 2009).

⁵ Based on Hsun Chang's comments on Grace Cheng-Ying Lin's talk “*Taiwan Yingling Chaodu Yishi de Tianye Ziliao Souji* 台灣嬰靈超度儀式的田野資料蒐集 (Fieldwork Report on the Abortion Ritual in Taiwan)” at the Institute of Ethnology of Academia Sinica on Oct. 7, 2009.

Moskowitz lists the reasons why Japan “exported” abortion ritual to Taiwan. First, governmental control over religion in Taiwan was loosened during the 1970s–1980s (Moskowitz 2001, 35). Second, “many Taiwanese look to Japan as a model” (Moskowitz 2001, 36), due to the long colonial legacy and to Japan’s status as a hyper-modern state. In addition to political, economic and social influence, Japanese fashion and entertainment industries have been extremely popular in Taiwan. Third, the desire for profit drove Taiwanese temples to follow the Japanese example and commercialize the abortion ritual (Moskowitz 2001, 36). Fourth, at the same time, there was a strong demand for appeasement of fetus ghosts in Taiwan after the legalization of abortion (Moskowitz 2001, 36). One can also suggest that the importation of the ritual from Japan to Taiwan was successful because there were some scattered traces of similar rites in earlier Taiwanese and Chinese traditions. Hence, Chin-Chuan Wan claims that the abortion ritual in Taiwan is a “subspecies” of *Mizuko Kuyō* (Wan 2001, 2). The ongoing practice of appeasing the dead serves as the basic underlying structure, allowing the abortion ritual to grow and flourish. Hsuan-Yu Chen calls this hypothesis the “theory of Japanese importation (*Nihon yunyū setsu* 日本輸入説)” (H-Y. Chen 2014, 85).

1-3-1 Abortion Ritual in Japan

While analyzing abortion ritual in Japan, Helen Hardacre employs a genealogical research method to examine its transformations (Hardacre 1997). She presents a rich trove of information about the changing definition of abortion in the discursive regime of religious institutions and practitioners. Abortion was perceived differently in Edo Japan and used to be tolerated, as it was widely practiced due to economic hardship (Hardacre 1997, 19-54). Hardacre challenges the discourses and practices surrounding the modern abortion ritual in Japan. She argues that people’s perception of abortion in modern society – especially feelings of guilt and shame - are not an eternal and universal feature of these rites. Instead, they are an effect of the manipulation of feto-centric discourse by institutional powers, including the patriarchal government (Hardacre 1997, 19-54). While pursuing the modernization of their nation by means of limiting population size and improving the quality of the health of its citizens, governmental officials - mainly men - neglected women’s mental and physical pain occasioned by having to comply with national policy. Hardacre critiques how religious institutions have been transformed into a marketing mechanism in a capitalist society and how religious facilities have profited by provoking women’s guilt. The

commercialization of temples and their manipulation of women, in addition to the moral pressure placed on women's bodies by tabloids, resulted in tremendous pressure on women who had abortions. These dual institutional forms of power - political and economic – form a discursive knowledge-power system that imposes strict discipline over women's bodies and their reproductive systems. Hardacre predicted that these rituals would decline gradually, along with the aging of the generation that was deeply influenced by the Eugenics Protection Law and the encouragement of abortion by governmental bodies (Hardacre 1997, 197-250).

In contrast, William R. Lafleur refused to examine Japanese abortion ritual from a Western feminist perspective. He claims that the traditional Buddhist understanding of life differs radically from those in Western religions (Lafleur 1992, 9). According to Buddhist doctrines, the ending of a fetus' life is not essentially a termination; rather, the journey of the soul keeps going on and returns to one of the six realms of reincarnation (Lafleur 1992, 14-29). Therefore, Japanese people worship aborted fetuses based on their grief and sense of appreciation. Abortion ritual provides people with the opportunity to display their gratitude to the fetus spirit for its sacrifice (Lafleur 1992, 144), which according to him is the emotional root of the ritual in Japan (Lafleur 1992, 146). People choose abortion due to all kinds of life difficulties and the "liquid style" of the fetus' life means that it is still able to flow on and exist in another time and space. Lafleur affirms that abortion ritual provides a middle point for Japanese society to negotiate the tension between the life and death of the fetus spirit. In addition, Lafleur asserts that a woman's freedom to express or acknowledge her feelings does not "bar her from deciding to have an abortion" (Lafleur 1992, 213). Indeed, he asserts: "If the Buddhists of Japan have somehow come into possession of ways to handle abortion that seem less disruptive to society than our own, this is because over time they have put together a practiced 'response' to this problem" (Lafleur 1992, 213). Therefore, to Lafleur, the abortion ritual allows Japanese society to go beyond the conflicts between the two poles of the typical Western debates, which focus on pro-life and pro-choice "rights" (Lafleur 1992, 214-217).

According to Elizabeth Harrison (1995), the Japanese abortion ritual could empower a woman, assisting in mapping out her strategies for dealing with the past and the future and creating a new sense of identity and community. Harrison's research on abortion rituals in Japan shows how a ritual participant's empathy enabled her to organize meetings with women who shared similar feelings and, thus, to become involved in religious activities (Harrison 1995). These

activities allowed these women to go beyond the family and convey their thoughts to the public, and “[justify] their need to do so in personal terms (dreams and feelings) that could easily be humoured and dismissed by those in power” (Harrison 1995, 91). If abortion is a means for a woman to negotiate her context, so is the abortion ritual. Further social changes can then be mobilized by empowered women.

1-3-2 Emerging Abortion Ritual in Taiwan: an Importation?

Buddhist institutions in Taiwan did not routinize a ritual specializing on the rite for the fetus spirits until the 1980s. During that period, Taiwanese society and politics were both experiencing dramatic changes. Zhengzong Kan suggests that it was at this time that abortion ritual in Japan entered the stage in which its discourses matured and thus could be borrowed and serve as a model for Taiwan (Kan 2008, 379-380). In contrast to earlier Chinese Buddhist practices found in the Ming and Qing periods, these new Japanese discourses suggest that the fetus spirits linger in the mundane world, in need of ritual offerings or care (*gongyang* 供養). The emergence of these new Buddhist abortion rituals soon triggered numerous debates among Buddhist practitioners, but the rites were eventually adopted by numerous Taiwanese Buddhist institutions.

In 1987, the Buddhist institution Lecture Hall of Compassion (*Cibei Jingshe* 慈悲精舍) in Taipei, one of the earliest institutions to raise the idea of such abortion rituals in Taiwan, published the following advertisement entitled “Do the souls of the aborted fetuses really exist? (*zhenyou taier de linghun ma* 真有胎兒的靈魂嗎?)” in newspapers including the *China Times*, the *People’s Daily*, and the *Taiwan Times* (Kan 2008, 380; Shih & Shih 2009, 74). The longer text of the advertisement indicated how *Yingling* can haunt the family and cause harm:

Yingling refers to the souls of those fetuses who died of abortion or miscarriage or died prematurely without being treated with a prudent burial. A fetus is often the soul of our ancestors. They come to be newborns through reincarnation. So to have an abortion is to kill our ancestors... The deceased people in a family are able to enjoy the merit of a solemn funeral. However, an aborted fetus does not enjoy the happiness of life nor the karmic merit of a funeral. As a result, they become ‘spirits without destined connections (*wuyuanling* 無緣靈).’ They take revenge on their families with their resentment, and this results in ... [various misfortunes within the

family]. Not only does the family suffer, the fetus spirit haunting also creates a lot of social chaos and problems. ... The fetus spirits haunt because they want to remind people of the necessity of performing a ritual for them, which allows them to go back and enter reincarnation. Furthermore, [by performing a ritual], they become grateful and will protect the family from misfortunes, keep the family warm and happy with good children, erase karmic sins and illnesses and extend life and longevity.” (Quoted by Kan 2008, 380-381)

According to Zhengzong Kan (Kan 2008, 380), this is the first time the term *Yingling* appeared in Buddhist discourses in Taiwan. According to Hsuan-Yu Chen’s investigation, Mr. Cai, the owner of the Lecture Hall of Compassion, had studied and lived in Japan. He appropriated the Japanese beliefs associated with *Mizuko kuyō*, such as worship of *Jizo* and *Sai no Kawara* (賽の河原), and introduced it to Taiwan “for economic reasons (H-Y. Chen 2018, 206)”. The Lecture Hall of Compassion’s advertisement gave rise to strong reactions from other Buddhist institutions due to its threatening language as well as its aim of making money (Kan 2008, 381). A lay Buddhist disciple, the Kulapati of Compassion (*Cibei Jushi* 慈悲居士), whose autonym was Huang Renhe, published articles denouncing the *Yingling* discourses, arguing that the Hall aimed to “profit from a dead child (*dazhuan sijianzai qian* 大賺死罔仔錢)” (Kan 2008, 389). After several harsh debates in mass media, Huang was sued for libel by the Lecture Hall of Compassion and he lost the lawsuit in 1990 (Kan 2008, 392). As a result, an organization named “Anti-*Yingling* Gongyang Advocating Association (*Fan Yingling Gongyang Xuandaohui* 反嬰靈供養宣導會)” was launched in April of the same year (Kan 2008, 389). In addition, Master Chaohwei, the leader of the Protecting Buddhism Corps of the BAROC (Buddhist Association of the Republic of China), as well as various Buddhist temples and lay Buddhists, organized protests across Taiwan, including a protest held at the entrance of the Hall (Interview with Master Chaohwei, July 31, 2008). She published an article arguing that while the Lecture Hall of Compassion had the right to advertise, this did not mean that the majority of Buddhist organizations in Taiwan had to accept the propaganda. They claimed there was an obvious attempt on the part of the Hall to profit from the abortion ritual through a false interpretation of Buddhist doctrines (Kan 2008, 386-388).

However, in spite of the above strong reactions, the BAROC did not harshly denounce the

Hall and the newly invented ritual. They considered that these disputes were “internal disputes” occurring within Buddhist institutions and that they did not have the power to intervene (Kan 2008, 390). Indeed, the BAROC did not seem to own “real supervisory authority” over Buddhist temples (Jones 1999, 151). In addition, since the incident was not an external threat to Buddhism (from other religions or sectors), there was no need for the BAROC to strike back in order to protect the religion (*weijiao* 衛教) (Kan 2008, 390). Moreover, Zhengzong Kan observes that the BAROC was hesitant to take action simply because it wanted to avoid offending the increasing number of its members who were seeking out a Buddhist abortion ritual (Kan 2008, 385, 391). Since then, more and more Buddhist temples started performing abortion rituals, including some who had denounced the Hall during these early debates (Kan 2008, 376).

As for Taoism, according to Tianlin Wang’s investigation, there were no clear records of death rituals for *Yingling* in the liturgies (Wang 1999, 4). However, he observed a Taoist ritual that took place in the Songshan Tsihuei Temple, in Taipei in November 1997, which was named “*Yingling* Relief of Sins Purification and Salvation Ritual (*Yingling Shizui Liandu Fahui* 嬰靈釋罪煉度法會)” (Wang 1999, 5). Since the Taoist priests of the Zhengyi Orthodox Unity School in Northern Taiwan generally did not perform death rituals, the temple had invited Taoist priests from Sichuan, China, to perform the elaborate ritual for the *Yingling* (Wang 1999, 5). Nonetheless, during the interview with the priests, Wang realized that in fact the ritual had attempted to relieve “*Yinlings* (陰靈, souls of the dead in general)” instead of “*Yingling*” (fetus spirits) (Wang 1999, 18). An older ritual was adapted to meet a modern need. Hence, Wang comments that the Taoist ritual shows its inclusiveness by means of evolving along with social changes (Wang 1999, 18). Wang’s observation also indicates that in the 1990s some religious institutions were still accommodating their rituals to these new type of souls.

1-3-3 Abortion Ritual in Taiwan: Moskowitz’s Investigation

Moskowitz’s research, published in 2001, was the first systematic research on the abortion ritual in Taiwan published in English. This research provides readers with background knowledge of the social, political and economic context surrounding the abortion ritual. In addition, through ethnographic research, Moskowitz analyzes the religious and social meanings of gender relations and sexuality. He also examines the fetus ghosts’ image in mass media.

Images of the Getus Ghost

Contemporary Taiwanese abortion ritual presents several new images of the fetus spirit that are in sharp contrast to those in earlier times. Hsuan-Yu Chen's 2014 review of research on traditional images of such spirits by Arthur P. Wolf (1966), Lianfa Huang (1943) and Toshio Ikeda (1955) show that in earlier practices, according to the parent-child hierarchy, a child was not supposed to be worshipped by its parents. Such a child might eventually become a senior member of the family as the family line continues, so its family members after two or three generations are able to respond to this individual's requests if they appear in their dreams (H-Y. Chen 2014, 65). In addition, a deceased infant was in Taiwan traditionally regarded as a kind of 'karmic creditor' coming to the family to demand a repayment. Families should not mourn its death, and the mother's tears should not drop onto its clothes or its body in order to prevent her from having a second creditor child. The body of the dead fetus or infant was thrown into the river in order to let the inauspiciousness flow away (H-Y. Chen 2014, 66). Chin-Chuan Wan claims that this type of understanding of the figure of the child reveals patriarchal society's underlying intention, which is to position the male adult at the centre and the child at the margins (Wan 2001, 1-2).

A child who dies young - before adulthood - is considered a stranger. He/she is believed to be an "evil spirit" or "someone from a previous life coming back to dun you for a debt" (Wolf 1978, 147). Gang Chen's research in Chongqing, China, shows that children who die young are called "*gui erzi* (son of demons)" or "*gui nuer* (daughter of demons)" and are believed to be "doomed to die" (G. Chen 2017). These children should be punished for his/her death (Wolf 1978, 148). Therefore, his/her body is buried in a very simple manner, or simply abandoned. An elaborate funeral provided for a deceased child by a family will cause harsh misfortunes (G. Chen 2017). According to Arthur P. Wolf, the inferior status of the deceased child is shaped by the Chinese hierarchical relationship between parents and children. Parents (seniors) should not worship children (juniors) (Wolf 1978, 148). Based on the above, Yingling should be regarded as ghosts/demons. First, they are children. Second, they are "killed" during abortions, which is a "bad death".

Nonetheless, social changes resulted in a shift of the cult of the dead. For example, in 2017, a funeral service in Taichung abandoned a miscarried 18-week old fetus in a river after having receiving money from the parents and having promised to handle the body appropriately. The mother revealed the story on Facebook and denounced the ritual specialists with the following words: "How many babies fail to return to reincarnation due to these kinds of unscrupulous

business practices?” (Su 2017). This incident caused public discussion on how to deal with the bodies of miscarried or aborted fetuses. Taking this Taichung City incident as an example, the government began to demand that the family present a death certificate issued by a prosecutor or a physician, followed by a cremation of the fetus. However, since hospitals do not issue death certificates for fetuses younger than 20 weeks old, cremation was not possible. Subsequently, the Civil Affairs Bureau of the municipal government issued a resolution that cremation for fetuses should be accessible as long as the parents can present a Diagnostic Proof concerning the Mother’s Body (*Muti zhengduan zhengmingshu* 母體診斷證明書) issued by a hospital (Huang 2018).

The hierarchical power relations between parents and children in traditional practices described above are reversed in an abortion ritual, where the parents summon, pray and confess to the fetus spirit. These changes of ritual behaviour occur alongside socio-economic changes. Moskowitz analyzes the impact of family planning as well as socio-economic changes on the growing rate of abortions in Taiwan. He suggests that these changes enabled the ritual imported from Japan to flourish in Taiwan. Similarly, Hsiaowei Kuan suggests that the popularization of abortion ritual may relate to the shrinking of family size after the adoption of the family planning campaign and the impact of modernization in contemporary Taiwan (Kuan 2008, 90). Abortion ritual is an “extension of love for the aborted fetus” (Kuan 2008, 90). In contrast, in previous generations, people took advantage of abortion and infanticide to get rid of daughters or to maintain an affordable family size. In other words, “[w]omen [did] not share the same intimate connection with each pregnancy” (Kuan 2008, 90).

Moskowitz also points out that the haunting fetus spirit is not a brand new category in Chinese folk belief. In his investigation of a particular kind of fetus demon called *xiaogui*, he examines how theses demons were nurtured for purposes of sorcery (Moskowitz 2001, 151-165). He observes,

The basic emotions and motivations associated with fetus-demon sorcery have not changed so much from those of traditional black magic. But they draw on the imagery of abortion, which is meaningful precisely because of rising abortion rates connected to a modern urban environment that discourages families from having too many children. (Moskowitz 2001, 165)

Fetus spirits with the qualities above are developed through the practice of abortion rituals. This is potentially disruptive and harmful to the family (Moskowitz 2001, 42–43, 150–165). Moskowitz

suggests that the fetus spirit occupies the “middle ground between the ghosts of ancestors/family and strangers” (Moskowitz 2001, 50). Unlike an ancestor’s spirit, one would not want a fetus spirit to remain. Yet since they are somehow familial ghosts there is a concern for their welfare, which is quite distinct from how one might treat other malevolent spirits (Moskowitz 2001, 50).

Focusing on the abortion ritual in Taiwan, Moskowitz’s book presents six portrayals of fetus ghosts: beneficent fetus ghosts, location-associated fetus ghosts, malevolent fetus ghosts, fetus ghosts that harm without intent, pitiful fetus ghosts, and anxiety-related fetus ghosts (Moskowitz 2001, 58-63). The six portrayals of the *Yingling* are often in contrast with each other, which is due to the “newness” of the belief in Taiwan, since neither religious institutions nor worshippers have been able to finalize a fixed identity for the fetus spirit. However, “for the most part they (the fetus ghosts) are considered to be young spirits in need of assistance from their living parents” (Moskowitz 2001, 166). In other words, a parent-child hierarchy, to some extent, is still embedded in such a practice.

A Ritual Repressing Women?

Like Helen Hardacre, Yan-Chiou Wu and Chin-Chuan Wan assert that the popularity of abortion ritual is mostly caused by economic factors: a prosperous market for abortion services since the 1970s and rapid economic development (Wu 2009, 175). Wan argues that it is the injustice of patriarchal power which allows a woman’s pain to be relieved only through teachings surrounding a karmic sin or a haunting fetus spirit. Nonetheless, Wu asserts that an abortion does not necessarily need to lead to pain or sorrow. Her historical investigation shows that, in pre-modern Taiwan, the fetus was regarded as “insensible clot (*wuzhi de xiekuai* 無知的血塊)” (Wu 2001, 33), and that a woman was not convicted of any crime on account of her abortion. In post-war Taiwan, a lot of women chose abortion in order to handle the multifaceted realities in which they were located (Wu 2001, 212-213). Wu argues that imbuing abortion with guilt was totally unnecessary (Wu 2001, 214). To Wu, these abortion rituals are an example of patriarchal ideological manipulation, stressing women’s sense of guilt, which is in sharp contrast with local and traditional understandings of abortion in Taiwan (Wu 2009, 220). Moreover, these abortion rituals have become part of a process of stigmatizing women who have had abortions (Wu 2001, 214). Wu argues that, in contemporary Taiwan, in addition to the legal system, the abortion ritual reinforces the stigmatization of sexuality as well as the negative image of women (Wu 2001, 220). After reviewing similar histories in other regions of Eastern Asia, Wu claims: “the history of

abortion in pre-modern Eastern Asia tells the history of a regression of women's bodily autonomy" (Wu 2001, 8). Similarly, Hsiaowei Kuan argues that belief in the fetus ghost began to be utilized by religious groups to morally condemn abortions. This kind of worship becomes a piece of evidence to show that women who have abortions are consciously aware that what they did is morally wrong (Kuan 2008, 92). Hsiao-Lan Yu also questions whether a woman would in fact want to rebuild a mother-child relationship during the ritual. Is this not a kind of submission to the social expectation of gender roles (to be a mother) (Yu 2001, 5)? Yu argues that, very often women, instead of men, have to deal with the pressure of abortion, which reveals the hidden gender politics within the image of the haunting fetus spirit (Yu 2001, 5).

The above observations echo Helen Hardacre's critique (1997) of the abortion ritual in Japan. Hardacre's critiques were acknowledged by Moskowitz while he was observing these rituals in Taiwan. Such rites became common in Japan and Taiwan in the twentieth century and they can be seen as one of the unintended results of the Eugenics Protection Law (called the Eugenics and Health Protection Law in Taiwan) (Hardacre 1997, 56-57; Moskowitz 2001, 21). Aiming for the modernization of the nation-state, this type of law allows or even encourages women to have abortions due to economic pressures, by urging them to pursue only healthy offspring and maintain a reasonably sized family as part of the national population. In addition, Moskowitz's findings also show that various temples and institutions perform these rituals to make a profit through imposing propaganda which "frighten women" or "exploit their guilt" (Moskowitz 2001, 13). His observation of the impact of these "religious economics" will be reviewed below. During his fieldwork, he found that women of different ages attributed disputes or troubles in their personal and family lives to the actions of an unhappy aborted fetus (Moskowitz 2001, 50). At the same time, for ritual specialists, it was easy to talk about an unborn ghost with a "standard speech or the kind of accusations that one might expect from an angry child" (Moskowitz 2001, 52). He pointed out that tricks were used by religious priests to answer women who were seeking help. The priests easily attributed these women's misfortunes to a haunting fetus ghost aborted by her, her mother, her sister or her aunt. Such suggestions could easily be true, due to the high rate of abortion in Taiwan (Moskowitz 2001, 52).

However, Moskowitz affirms that abortion ritual is more complex than just a marketing mechanism. As he asserts: "[this kind of proposition] misleadingly suggests that there is no emotional investment in the process" (Moskowitz 2001, 10). To him, abortion ritual in Taiwan is

situated within complex emotional and social dilemmas, and thus cannot be simplified into religious manipulation or traditional belief in ghosts.

A New Ritual Embedded in an Old Chinese Ideology

Moskowitz points out that the appeal of the abortion ritual as a new practice is in fact because it is embedded in older, traditional Chinese ideology (Moskowitz 2001, 42). Due to understandings of Confucian obligations, killing a fetus is an unfilial act, which fails to fulfill “one’s duty to procreate, and (instead) to mutilate familial flesh” (Moskowitz 2001, 26). Furthermore, according to Buddhist doctrine, an abortion, as a sin of killing, calls for corresponding karmic transgression and punishment (Moskowitz 2001, 26). Furthermore, people’s belief in the fetus spirit shows that fear of excessive sexuality, rooted in Chinese religious tradition, is still a concern (Moskowitz 2001, 131–149). Ideal sexuality focuses on an individual’s sexual fulfillment and health. On the contrary, improper sexuality causes anxiety due to physical self-indulgence and leads to illness. Within such a framework, an unwanted pregnancy is a symbol of undisciplined sexuality. Thus, we see a shift from a combination of pleasure, fear, and regulation in attitudes concerning sexuality, to one of regulation, reduction, and prohibition. In both cases, however, regulation and avoidance of excess are the underlying themes (Moskowitz 2001, 148).

People’s belief in the fetus spirit shows that their caution towards behaviours that result in “breakdown of familial hierarchy and moral orders”, rooted in Chinese religious tradition, is still prominent (Moskowitz 2001, 149). Moskowitz claims that the abortion ritual reveals the desire to discipline the social order and to reinforce social responsibility while individualism is becoming more and more prominent (Moskowitz 2001, 149). Hence, Moskowitz argues that, despite the law that allows women to have abortions, women’s bodies are subject to various pressures and disciplines: national campaigns of family planning, the betrayal of the fundamental Confucian duty to reproduce an heir for the patrilineage, guilt over terminating the fetus’ life and antipathy toward uncontrolled sex. The ensuing tension and anxiety have stirred up a psychological demand for the abortion ritual in Taiwan.

A Therapeutic Ritual

The abortion ritual acts as a means of healing or therapy for women. Yan-Chiou Wu recognizes that abortion ritual in Taiwan has been gradually integrated into the local Taiwanese

belief system and has become a means of folk healing (Wu 2009, 74). Similarly, Moskowitz and Hsiaowei Kuan observe, in the context of folk belief in Taiwan, that people attribute unexplained misfortunes of an individual or a family to a ghost, possibly a fetus spirit, of someone in the family (Moskowitz 2001, 50; Kuan 2008, 91). “The remedy is to go to a temple or some Taoist priest for sorcery” (Kuan 2008, 91). Kuan admits the therapeutic function of the abortion ritual for women who have had abortions (Kuan 2008, 91). According to her, the abortion ritual heals (Kuan 2008, 85) and eases women’s burden of guilt (Kuan 2008, 91). Indeed, Moskowitz’s research shows how physical illness, such as weight loss and fatigue, is also treated through abortion ritual (Moskowitz 2001, 117). Moreover, behavioural problems can be attributed to an unhappy haunting fetus ghost and be cured through the ritual (Moskowitz 2001, 118-122). Furthermore, Moskowitz asserts that the abortion ritual enables the participant to release herself from grief, anger, and resentment. He further states that, compared with the cost of psychological therapy in the United States, this type of therapy is a “relatively inexpensive and quickly achieved process” (Moskowitz 2001, 123). He continues by saying:

[Fetus-ghost appeasement] gives psychological comfort to women who have had abortions. It also creates an outlet that can be used to vent unspoken resentment toward one’s family members, allowing for the expression of grievances ranging from the abortion itself, to intergenerational conflicts and marital tensions. (Moskowitz 2001, 13)

Moskowitz affirms that abortion ritual is a gendered religious practice (Moskowitz 2001, 10-12). The ritual focuses on women’s bodily experiences such as pregnancy, abortion and childbirth, as well as emotional attachments. In spite of various scandals found within some abortion rituals, such as financial exploitation, the abortion ritual:

provides important psychological comfort to those who involved in the choices that leads to abortions as well as a much needed means to project personal and familial feelings of transgression onto a safely displaced object, thereby bringing underlying tensions to the surface and providing a means of working out those problems. (Moskowitz 2001, 6)

In other words, for Moskowitz, the abortion ritual is designed to reproduce the preexisting cultural power nexus. To Moskowitz, the abortion ritual is a stabilizing and mending process in reaction to

rapid socioeconomic changes. Through the ritual, any change engendered by an abortion is contained, and any anxiety toward personal and familial disorders is smoothed away.

Religious Institutions and Personnel

Similar to Helen Hardacre's observations on the debates within Buddhist institutions in Japan, Moskowitz describes how some Buddhist organizations in Taiwan have been critical of fetus-ghost appeasement, arguing that it is not a true Buddhist practice (Moskowitz 2001, 54-55). Moskowitz observed several temples in Taiwan which perform the abortion ritual. There was a range in the size of the temples, from "apartment temples (*shentan*)" in Kaohsiung (Moskowitz 2001, 97), to a middle-sized temple in Yunlin that performed spectacular abortion rituals for participants in need (Moskowitz 2001, 97), to the Dragon Lake Temple in Miaoli, one of the biggest temples which specializes in the ritual (Moskowitz 2001, 102-111). These temples perform abortion rituals either during the Ghost Festival or occasionally throughout the year. Based on the eerie nature of fetus ghosts and the urge to keep them away from the home, the statues (if applicable) of the fetus ghost, and any plaques or offerings are not taken home by the ritual participants (Moskowitz 2001, 112). Moskowitz presents a more detailed description of the Dragon Lake Temple, including its history, fame, space, financial management, as well as its close relationship with the local community, ritual process and offerings. More updated information about this temple and a closer observation of its ritual as well as the ritual participants will be provided in Chapter 7.

The ritual "specialists" were either professional practitioners, such as the head monk of a Buddhist temple in Kaohsiung (Moskowitz 2001, 95) or amateur entrepreneurs such as a part-time noodle vendor in Taipei, who decided to launch a divine career after hearing stories from his customers (Moskowitz 2001, 96). Most of the religious practitioners, including the masters, fortune-tellers and spirit mediums, were men, while most ritual participants were women (Moskowitz 2001, 112). Priests or mediums often enthusiastically propagated their supernatural abilities. Most of these practitioners – some who are self-claimed psychics – affirmed the need for abortion rituals. They produced a wide variety of images of the fetus ghosts, ranging from a harmless spirit (Moskowitz 2001, 96), wandering spirits seeking help (Moskowitz 2001, 98) to a harassing spirit (Moskowitz 2001, 110). Their discourses surrounding abortion were sometimes logical but sometimes not, since, very often, the ritual or the discourses were designed to fit the temple or the master (Moskowitz 2001, 114). In addition, the priests were often skillful in the use

of written media, such as the Dragon Lake's morality tracts, which function in attracting clients.

Moskowitz details the fees of the rituals. With the exception of two Buddhist temples, most of the temples charge for their services, ranging from 300 NT (US \$8-12) (Moskowitz 2001, 96) to 20,000 NT (US \$800) (Moskowitz 2001, 97), depending on the scale and the duration of the ritual. "It seems likely that the sliding scale is in fact manipulated by the masters rather than being an entirely voluntary process" (Moskowitz 2001, 111). According to Moskowitz, an abortion ritual is generally pricey. Despite of the fact that most temples only charge a small fee per visit, Moskowitz (2001) states that "repeated appeasement would result in costs accruing" (112).

As for the participants' backgrounds, Moskowitz claimed that the operating strategies of the temples revealed "Taiwan's growing urbanization and religious specialization" (Moskowitz 2001, 113). The rapid urbanization resulted in a fluid population and diversification of the patrons' backgrounds (Moskowitz 2001, 114). Jiexia Zhai observed that, since Chinese traditional religious organizations are often "un-institutionalized" and "diffused", religious organizations do not influence people's decision-making process about having abortions, despite the fact that they come to the temple to participate in ritual activities (Zhai 2007, 101-102).

Ritual Differences

In her research, Hsuan-Yu Chen compares rituals in three temples in northern Taiwan: the Dizang Nunnery in Xinzhuang, Great Prophet Yang's *Yingling* Palace and the Xinwu Temple of the Wealth God. The Dizang Nunnery in Xinzhuang performs the abortion ritual throughout the year (called *chaodu*, *deliverance rites*), but during the Ghost Festival in the seventh lunar month, a general salvation service is provided for all ghosts, including fetus spirits (called *pudu*) (H-Y. Chen 2014, 71). During this ritual, an official request letter is sent to the Boddhisatva of the Underworld Dizang and several kinds of paper money are burned (H-Y. Chen 2014, 73). Chen also observed the rituals performed in the Great Prophet Yang's *Yingling* Palace and the Xinwu Temple of the Wealth God. The ritual processes in these temples will be examined in later chapters and Chen's analysis will be evaluated. Chen observed that the deity or Buddhist figure (such as Dizang) acts differently according to the ritual process. He can be an administrator (such as in the Dizang Nunnery in Xinzhuang) or a protector (such as in the Great Prophet Yang's *Yingling* Palace where the fetus spirit stays for three years). Similarly, the fetus spirits' images vary according to the ritual process. They are sometimes family ghosts (*jiagui* 家鬼) who are expected to be reincarnated after an appropriate ritual (as in the Dizang Nunnery in Xinzhuang). Or they can be members of the

family who are expected to enjoy the care of the parents, and, once the hospitality is over, transform into family ghosts (such as in the Great Prophet Yang's *Yingling* Palace) (H-Y. Chen 2014, 84). In addition to longing for love, the fetus spirit seems to have other emotions. For example, in the Xinwu Temple of the Wealth God, the ritualist emphasizes that the fetus spirit should release any resentment during the ritual (H-Y. Chen 2014, 83-84). Chen concludes that the variation in the imagery of both the deities and the fetus spirits is a direct consequence of the diverse forms of the abortion ritual in Taiwan. Furthermore, these variations show that, despite the possibility that the ritual might have been imported from Japan, there are numerous differences between abortion rituals of Japan and of Taiwan. For example, compared to the Japanese abortion ritual which is commonly performed for the honour of *Jizo* (*Buddhist God of the Underworld*), Taiwanese abortion rituals are performed with the assistance of a variety of deities, depending on the temple or shrine (H-Y. Chen 2018, 206). There is a shortage of a specific atmosphere or a permanent space devoted to the *Yingling* and its protector in these temples (H-Y. Chen 2018, 210). In addition, in Taiwan, *Yingling* are expected to leave (for reincarnation or salvation) instead of staying in the mundane world to enjoy ongoing appeasement from the family (H-Y. Chen 2018, 215). As a result, in Taiwan there is a discrepancy between the teaching (the doctrines borrowed from Japan) and the actual ritual practitioner (practices embedded in local belief) (H-Y. Chen 2018, 206). Thus the "theory of Japanese importation" as well as the relationship between the two ritual traditions should be further explored (H-Y. Chen 2014, 85). While most temples attempt to send the fetus spirits back for reincarnation soon after the ritual, several temples strongly recommend that the fetus spirits should stay in the temple for *gongyang* (供養 continued worship) such as at the Dragon Lake Temple. Kosho Ikoma quoted his interview with Teacher Lin Jianyi, the founder of the Dragon Lake Temple:

It takes 4 months to 3 years for a dead person to be reborn through reincarnation. If the *gongyang* (worship) does not continue, the individual's resentment toward his/her parents and families remains. In addition, the fetus spirit could be reborn as an animal. Based on the above, a 3-year period is necessary for the fetus spirit to be reborn or to attain the Western Pure Land paradise (成仏). (Ikoma 2003, 51)

Their *gongyang* service resembles the style of the Japanese abortion ritual. This could reveal how this particular ritual form absorbed Japanese elements of practice. In addition, the decision whether to leave the spirit in the temple or not means that there are different conceptualizations of

personhood and fetus personality within different practices of abortion ritual in Taiwan.

1-3-4 Review and Reflection Highlighting the Importance of the Thesis

The scholars mentioned above have addressed how state policies, economic forces and religious beliefs have led to the rise of the abortion ritual during a certain period of post-WWII history. As a newly emerging phenomenon, the abortion ritual is situated within the conflicts or compromises between tradition and modernity. William R. Lafleur shows that there is a coherence between abortion rituals and local religious traditions. Elizabeth Harrison highlights the agency of ritual participants and how the ritual transforms and empowers these women. On the contrary, Helen Hardacre's arguments against discursive and institutional powers challenge the manipulation behind these rites. Hence, it is not surprising that, in her book review, she calls Moskowitz's articulation of the psychological function of abortion ritual, the "naiveté of functionalism" (Hardacre 2002, 766). Her research reveals the contrasts between "old" and "new" practices, claiming that the new ritual practices are fabricated as part of patriarchy's efforts to restore its power.

Indeed, there is a possibility that some abortion rituals performed in Taiwan may continue to reproduce current power differentials between women and the dominant patrilineal order. Nonetheless, history is not necessarily a continuum in which only patriarchy continually strives to maintain power. As Fang-Long Shih's book review argues, Moskowitz fails to recognize that certain religious practices can be areas of protest in which negotiations and contestation constantly occurs (F-L. Shih 2002, 767). This dissertation recognizes that history is fragmented, and the current reality is shaped by current forces, including women's intentions. As actors in the ritual space, a woman is able to exercise her agency. As Charles B. Jones reminds us, when observing similar rituals across various regions (such as the *utburd*, in which the ghost of the infant is abandoned and exposed by impoverished parents in Scandinavia), it is essential to examine the power of the weak, the helpless and the conquered, including women and children (Jones 2002). The dynamics of different rituals can result in very distinctive outputs. This dissertation attempts to go beyond Moskowitz's focus on the ritual's therapeutic functions through a demonstration of the diversity of abortion ritual practices. Moreover, by presenting a broad spectrum of abortion rituals, this dissertation affirms that this diversity can include various mechanisms. Furthermore, there is a great deal of expression and freedom of transformation in these rites (as Elizabeth Harrison's research shows). This dissertation attempts to achieve a deeper scrutiny into the actual

ritual processes and into the participant's responses, in order to examine the relationship between the bodily journey during the ritual and its surrounding ideology.

For Moskowitz, discourses (morality and doctrines) and practices (ritual process, real social effects) are separated. In his analysis, the abortion ritual, as a means of maintenance produced by the pre-existing cultural context, is used to reproduce the pre-existing power nexus. The act of the ritual in itself is not expected to trigger significant fluctuations in the culture as a whole. As Fang-Long Shih highlights, to Moskowitz, the abortion ritual is merely a means to reinforce and re-inscribe traditional values (F-L. Shih 2002, 766-767). On the contrary, this dissertation asserts that the autonomy of various abortion rituals stimulates new needs, creates new imaginaries of the supernatural world and generates new types of parent-child relationships. Some abortion rituals lead to the creation of social change through generating new ritual communities and opening up new potentialities for social and ritual experimentation. Finally, this dissertation differs from Moskowitz's research because it aims to explore how traditional conceptions of Chinese cosmology, personhood, gender, and body are practiced through abortion rituals as in Lafleur's research. Moreover, this dissertation investigates how these conceptions are transformed and mutated so that new practices of personal identity and parent-child relationship can arise. Furthermore, this dissertation closely inspects how the forces of modernity, including economic, social, political and religious forces, interact and compete within such a ritual field.

1-4 Division of the Chapters of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into 11 chapters, followed by a Conclusion. Chapter 2 elaborates the methodology of this research and scrutinizes the definition and autonomy of ritual. It investigates how religion in Taiwan acts as an arena where transcultural forces interact. Chapter 3 goes on to document the political, social and economic changes in Taiwan since the legalization of abortion and the popularization of abortion ritual in the late 20th century. Moreover, discourses emanating from different sectors, including government agencies, congress, feminist and religious activists, religious practitioners and participants in abortion rituals, are presented and examined. I also draw on governmental and legislative documents, including the Gazette of the Legislative Yuan dating back to 1970.

Chapters 4 through 11 provide different case studies of rituals I observed in different venues in Taiwan. In order to conduct the research, a one-year ethnographic study was conducted in

Taiwan from 2008 to 2009. In order to facilitate and enrich this fieldwork, I worked as a research associate at the Institute of Ethnology at Academia Sinica. Interviews were conducted, temples were visited, and rituals were observed. A Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans was obtained on June 3, 2008 at McGill University (REB File#: 359-0608) and was renewed 1 year later.

1-4-1 Ritual participants

The data on ritual participants was collected through purposive sampling. It was a non-probability sampling method, and the samples were selected at the researcher's discretion. The interviews with the ritual patrons aimed to investigate their experiences during the ritual processes. Moreover, through these interviews, the reasons behind the participants' decision to attend an abortion ritual were elicited.

Table 1. Basic Information on the informants

Informant	Age	Education	Occupation	Marital status	Number of children
A	33	High school	N/A	divorced	0
B	42	MA	PR	divorced	1
C	35	High school	Housewife*	remarried	2
D	45	Bachelor degree	Financial consultant	single	0
E (man)	33	College	IT	single	0
F	26	High school	Hotel	single	0
G	60s	N/A			
H	38	Bachelor degree		married	0
I	32	College		single	0
J	28	High school	Housewife	single	0
K	72		Hairdresser	married	4

L	55		Yuasa Battery	single	0
M	20s		Salesperson	single	0
N	20s	High school	Hairdresser/ Bartender	married	2
O	50-60s		Sex worker	in a relationship	1
P	50s		Housewife	married	4
Q	N/A		Nun		

Table 2. Information on the abortion(s)

Informant	Number of abortion(s)	Reasons for abortion	Location	Reason for ritual	Reason for temple	Feelings
A	1	Taking medication	Taoyuan	Misfortunes	TV show	Hopeful
B	2	Premarital pregnancy; Deceased daughter; Mother-in-law's miscarriage	Taipei	Suggested by friends		None
C	1	Taking care of husband's daughter	Hsinchu	Suggested	Local famous temple	None
D	3	Extramarital pregnancy	Taipei	Eager to visit her dead mother	Eager to visit her dead mother	Sad and happy; Relieved

E	1	Miscarriage	Taipei	Suggested	Internet	Relieved
F	1	Premarital pregnancy; Economic hardship	Miaoli	Dream	Famous: Specialized	Relieved
G	1 (participant attended on behalf of her daughter)	N/A	Miaoli			
H	1	Short of trust in marriage and relationship	Miaoli	Dream	TV show	Relieved
I	3	Premarital pregnancy	Miaoli	Medium	Internet	Relieved
J	1	Miscarriage	Miaoli	Health	Medium	Happy
K	1 (her mother's) 3(here grandmother's)	Died prematurely	Miaoli	Dream Hardships	Recommended by younger brother	Happy
L	3(here "siblings")	Miscarriage; Died prematurely/young	Miaoli	Medium Hardships Health	Magazine	Relieved
M	2	Premarital pregnancy	Miaoli	Responsibility	TV show	Relieved

N	3 1 (her mother-in-law's)	Premarital pregnancy; Died prematurely/young; Miscarriage	Taipei	Family issues Hardships	Friend	Dissatisfied
O	13	Unprotected sex (sex worker)	Lugang	Dream	Seniors	Happy
P	3	Economic hardship	Tainan	Rebellious son	Communal temple	Relieved
Q	1			Dream	Sutra-chanting	Calm

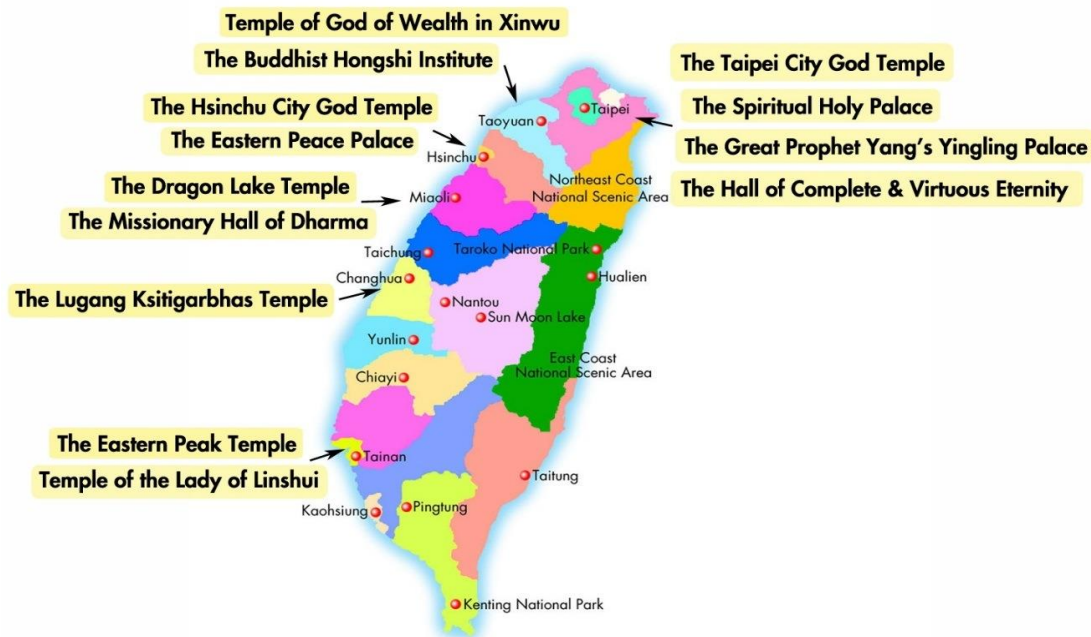
Table 3. A wide range of emotions after an abortion

Sense of guilt	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Very sorry" 2. "Very sorry, but I had no choice." 3. "I regret." 4. "I don't feel the <i>Yingling</i>, but I have a sense of guilt." 5. "I don't have much sense of guilt, but I think that I should not have had the abortion." 6. "The <i>Yingling</i> must be quite unhappy." 7. "That's an innocent child." 8. "Fetus spirits should not be fierce or haunting. They are babies. That kind of image was created by temples."
Unhappy with the <i>Yingling</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "He/she is a selfish child if he/she is still haunting".
Suspicious	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "I don't feel the <i>Yingling</i>." 2. "Temples shouldn't threaten women for money." 3. "I have no experiences being haunted. I'm suspicious of the stories about <i>Yingling</i>."

1-4-2 Rituals

As Figure 1 shows, a total of 13 temples were visited and their abortion rituals were observed. Some of the rituals occurred during the Hungry Ghost Lunar Month, while others were dispersed throughout the year.

Figure 1. Temples visited in Taiwan



As mentioned above, most rituals observed in Taiwan charged for their services. Very often, depending on the budget, the form of abortion rituals varied, ranging from simple to elaborate. The economic conditions, the sponsor's emotional connections and the eagerness to solve problems could all determine the form of the ritual. Some priests claimed that the ritual form does not determine its efficacy. Lin Junhui, the priest of the Linshui Furen Temple in Tainan, claimed: "if the sponsor is willing to pay a lot of money, we give them an elaborate ritual; otherwise, a simple one. Anyway there is always an option" (Interview with Lin Junhui September 17, 2008). I divided the rituals into five categories based on style and function. The following table shows the spectrum of the rituals. The forms vary from simple to elaborate, from individual to collective, from single-function to multifunctional.

Table 4. Types of rituals

Type of Ritual	Definition	Temples
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Individual Ritual (Chapters 4-5)	A ritual performed for one participant or one family, specializing in fetus spirit appeasement	Eastern Peak Temple Great Prophet Yang's Yingling Palace Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity
Collective Ritual (Chapters 6-7)	A collective ritual performed aiming to appease the fetus spirits	Dragon Lake Temple Xinwu Temple of the Wealth God
Multifunctional Ritual/Family Ritual (Chapter 8)	A ritual performed for one participant or a family for multiple purposes, including fetus spirit appeasement	Temple of the Lady Linshui
Supplemental Ritual (Chapter 9)	Abortion ritual is performed along with a general ritual, such as the grand salvation (<i>pudu</i>)	Spirit Holy Palace Eastern Peace Palace Dizang Temple
Buddhist Ritual (Chapter 10)	Abortion ritual performed in Buddhist fashion	Master Shih Chaohwei's Missionary Hall of Dharma Buddhist <i>Hongshi</i> Institute
Buddhist Ritual (Chapter 11)	Abortion ritual performed in Buddhist fashion	Master Hai Tao's Compassion Career

Each type of ritual is described and analyzed below in Chapters 4 through 11. Each chapter provides a symbolic and structural analysis of the ritual process. The aim is to decipher the symbolic meaning of each element of the ritual and to understand the use of these elements within its process. This dissertation seeks to understand how an invisible fetus spirit is visualized during the ritual process and how the religious meaning of abortion is concretized in the ritual space. The method is to observe and analyze the ritual process, including the use of space and time, narratives, ritual objects, the body language of the ritual practitioners, the order of each stage of the ritual and how each element of the ritual is arranged. Furthermore, how the patron exercises her agency is

observed. Chapter 2 provides additional theoretical background to the methodology used in the fieldwork and analysis of the rituals.

1-4-3 Interviews with Medical, Social and Religious Specialists

I also make use of interviews I conducted with medical professionals, social activists, and more than 15 religious priests from Taoist temples, Buddhist temples and independent shrines, as well as more than 30 sponsors/participants of the abortion ritual. Meanwhile, several anthropologists, historians, religious and legal scholars were consulted. A questionnaire was designed for each of these distinct professions/roles in order to understand their respective ideas concerning the abortion ritual. The results of the interviews were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

I held interviews with three senior midwives, who have been practicing since the Japanese colonial era, in order to reveal how abortions were dealt with in the past in Taiwan. Interviews with current OB/GYN doctors revealed how these professionals interpret the discourses and practices of the abortion ritual.

List of interviewees:

OB/GYN doctors

1. Lee (the Taipei County, the head of a private OB/GYN clinic)
2. Yao (the Taipei County, hospital of the Catholics system)
3. Guo (the Taipei County, hospital of the Catholics system)

Midwives

1. Lee (Kaohsiung)
2. Hong (Kaohsiung)
3. Lee (Hualian)

Social activists

Social activists in both pro-life and pro-choice camps were interviewed, focusing on their opinions regarding the discourses and practices of the abortion ritual. The organizations contacted were:

1. The Taipei Association for the Promotion of Women's Rights
2. The Taipei Association of Awakening Women
3. Taiwan Women's Link

4. Taiwan Gender Equity Education Association
5. Taiwan Women for Life
6. Catholics: Father Louis Aldrich (Ai Liqin 艾立勤) (School of Theology, Fujen University)
7. Buddhists: Shi Chaohwei 釋昭慧 (Hongshi Buddhist Research Institute)
8. The Great Coalition of Respect for Life and People's Movement (*Zunzhong shengming quanmin yundong dalianmeng* 尊重生命全民運動大聯盟): Qinglong Chen 陳青龍

Moreover, moral texts, TV shows, popular romances, as well as tabloid articles are compiled in Appendix C in order to demonstrate the media's (mis)representation of women and the fetus. At the same time, anthropological researches are consulted in order to assist in exploring the impact of social changes.

1-5 Primary Source Materials

In this thesis, I examine a range of primary medical sources to situate the construction of a woman and her child within the medical literature in China. These sources include the *Song of Conception and Pregnancy* (*Huitai ge* 懷胎歌), *Full Scroll of Conception and Pregnancy* (*Huitai quanjuan* 懷胎全卷), *Medicine of Women* (*Nüke Jiyao* 女科輯要), the *Heart Methods of Fetus and Childbirth* (*Taichan Xinfa* 胎產心法) and the *Book of Birth* (*Taichan shu* 胎產書). Secondary scholarly works consulted includes research by Charlotte Furth, Emily Ahern, Yi-Li Wu, Shigehisa Kuriyama, etc. In different chapters, I also examine how the fetus has been evaluated and treated in Chinese religious texts morally, medically and religiously. Sources include several Buddhist sutras, such as the *Blood Pool Sutra* (*Xiepenjing* 血盆經), the *Dharani Sutra of Buddha on Longevity, the Extinction of Offences and the Protection of the Young* (*Foshuo changshou miezui huzhutongzi tuoluoni jing* 佛說長壽滅罪護諸童子陀羅尼經), the *Sutra of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's Fundamental Vows* (*Dizang pusa benyuan jing* 地藏菩薩本願經) and the *Grand Supreme Elderly Lord's Classic of Inner Contemplation* (*Taishang laojun neiguan jing* 太上老君內觀經). The conceptualizations of the fetus in these texts are reflected in customary day-to-day practices. Several texts from popular literature are reviewed as well. For example, the *Plum in the Golden Vase* (*Jinpingmei* 金瓶梅), written and published during the 16th and the 17th centuries, mentions scenes of abortion and fetal education, which provide the readers with vivid data. Scholarly works focused on fetus education, abortion and infanticide are

consulted, including Charlotte Furth, Angela Ki-Che Leung's *Charity and Enlightenment*; as well as Jin-shiu Jessie Sung's research on the fetus god (*taishen* 胎神). Furthermore, primary and secondary sources related to childbirth in Taiwan, as well as surrounding religious beliefs and practices, including field surveys conducted by Japanese scholars during the Japanese colonial period and Taiwanese scholars in later periods, are discussed.

1-6 Background information on Abortion and Infanticide in the History of China

Abortion, as well as infanticide, has been practiced in China and Taiwan since early history. Japanese historian Shizuo Sogabe's detailed research illustrates the motives and "tactics" of infanticide in China: "China practiced a contraceptive method which is different from abortion. This method kills a newborn alive" (Sogabe 1962, 52). The term, "not to raise a child (*bujū* 不舉)", has been employed to identify the behaviour of killing, or abandoning and leaving the infant for death during the Han, Sui, Tang and Song Dynasties (Kinney 2004, 99; C. Liu 2017; J. Lee 1995). During the Qin and Han Dynasties, infant abandonment was commonly practiced as a replacement for infanticide and was highly tolerated by society, since infanticide was a harshly punished crime (Kinney 2004, 98). Kinney suggests the tolerance was caused by the "Han attitude toward sexuality" and "what appears to be a general absence of reliable method of contraception" (Kinney 2004, 114). During the Han and Wei periods, in addition to abandonment, live burials were practiced as a means of *bujū*. During the Southern and the Northern Dynasties, children, whose births were believed to be "inauspicious," were often sent to someone else, through surname changes, adoption or temporary care (*jiyang* 寄養) (J. Lee 1995, 747). Meanwhile, Since the Song dynasty, death by drowning was highly practiced as a mainstream means of infanticide, so "to drown the child (*nizi* 溺子)" gradually replaced *bujū* (Sogabe 1943, cited by C. Liu 1998, 10). Starting from the Ming Dynasty, due to the improvement of medicine, abortion served as an equally common solution to infanticide for women or families to solve an unwanted pregnancy (Y. Chen 2011, 296-299).

Inauspicious signs occurring during the pregnancy or related to the infant could result in infanticide. Marcel Granet observed that, in the Zhou Dynasty (1045-771 B.C.), various qualities of the newborn baby were inspected, including the date of birth (*bazi*) and voice,⁶ in order to

⁶ Granet found a case of infanticide that occurred due to the infant's wolf-like first cries (Granet 1958, 321).

determine if it was an appropriate offspring. During the Han period, according to Anne Behnke Kinney, popular beliefs addressed which inauspicious physical signs of the newborns gave reasons for infant abandonment (Kinney 2004, 99, 104, 110). Whether or not to proceed with infant abandonment was normally the family's decision. This decision was carried out by them, since they were the ones with the responsibility of child care (Kinney 2004, 111). Similarly, Jen-der Lee observes, from the Han to the Sui Dynasty inauspicious signs relating to the infant could have resulted in *bujü*, which shows that the baby was seen as a threat to the parents and the family. These included the inauspicious signs that occurred during pregnancy and delivery, including abnormal conception, abnormal delivery, difficult delivery, abnormal appearance of the baby and the conflicts of the time between when the infant was born and the parents according to astrological chart (*fangke* 防剋, impairing threats) (J. Lee 1995, 751).

In addition, *bujü* was used as a means for managing population and economic hardship. For example, during the Qin and Han Dynasties, economic hardship, especially heavy taxation, would very often drive parents to choose child abandonment (Kinney 2004, 103). Similarly, in the Sui and Tang Dynasties, *bujü* was often the parents' choice to avoid economic hardship (J. Lee 1995, 756). At the same time, sex selection was also widely practiced. Jen-der Lee's investigation shows that, starting from the Han to the Sui Dynasty, girls were abandoned because they could not contribute to the lineage like boys. Boys were killed to avoid having to provide military service (J. Lee 1995, 762).

On the other hand, infanticide performed for the purpose of gender selection (mainly targeted on girls) were also widely practiced. During the Warring States Period, Han Feizi recorded: "People congratulate each other when a boy is born. People kill the infant when a girl is born (*Channan ze xianghe, channu ze shazhi* 產男則相賀,產女則殺之)" (Han 1980, 358). Angela Ki Che Leung also points out that in pre-modern China the children who were drowned were mainly girls, which was called *ninu* (溺女) (Leung 2005, 85). The first factor resulting in drowning girls was the Confucian family ethic, which values sons over daughters, for sons were the parents' caregiver within the lineage while daughters were eventually married to another lineage (King 2014, 5). *Ninu* was widely practiced in the Ming Dynasty, due to the trend for luxurious weddings alongside rapid economic development. A lot of parents decided to drown their daughters when they realized that they could never afford the dowry (Hsu 2011, 26-43).

Other than infanticide and infant abandonment, several contraceptive measures were employed in order to avoid unwanted pregnancies, such as no ejaculation (J. Lee 1995, 788), calendar method (J. Lee 1995, 788) and medication which sterilized the woman (J. Lee 1995, 789). For abortion, the term *duotai* (墮胎) first appeared in the Han, Wei and Six dynasties (J. Lee 1995, 790). Despite these methods solving an unwanted pregnancy in an easier way, they were unreliable and the consequences outweighed the risks (J. Lee 1995, 787). Medication was prescribed for abortion, but was not always effective, and sometimes even killed the woman (J. Lee 1995, 790-791). During the Tang Dynasty, in spite of the fact that a scattering of abortions was practiced with the assistance of herbal medicine, not raising the infant was employed instead, as a major means of killing an infant (J. Lee 1995, 749). From the Song to the Qing Dynasties, acupuncture and operations as a means of abortion were also performed (J. Lee 1995, 792-793; Wu 2009, 35). The medical knowledge gradually matured and during the Ming Dynasty, the flourishing sex industry increased the need for abortion pills (Y. Chen 2011, 299). In the lower Yangtze region, Buddhist nunneries even became brothels: nuns were also prostitutes and this was called “flowery zen (*huachan* 花禪)” (Y. Chen 2011, 294). The nuns were also considered as providers of medical knowledge and abortion pills for women who could not easily solve their problems in their families (Y. Chen 2011, 295).

1-6-1 Societal and Governmental Reactions against Bujü

Compared to infanticide, abortion seemed to be more tolerated by the government and society. The laws of the Tang Dynasty (*Tanglü* 唐律) show that a man/woman should be punished if he/she hurts a pregnant woman physically and this resulted in a miscarriage. This idea focuses on the physical harm to the woman rather than to the fetus. Wu raises the example of the difference between the punishment for the miscarriage of an embryo (*tai* 胎, three months) and a fetus (after the third month of pregnancy) (Wu 2009, 32). Moreover, Wu stresses that the accusation of the crime was an “offence of causing bodily harm” rather than an “offence of homicide,” which means the subject was the woman, rather than the fetus (Wu 2009, 37). Similarly, if a woman deliberately harmed her own fetus, she was not subject to any accusations. Additionally, the law regulated pharmacies and medical practitioners in terms of medicine prescriptions and practices regarding abortion (Wu 2009, 38). Similarly, Francesca Bray claims that, in late imperial China, the health of a woman had priority over the life of a fetus (Bray 1997, 335).

Nonetheless, in the Song dynasty, stories of revenging ghosts and fierce punishment in the underworld were used by literati to deter people from abortion. There are several relevant stories in the *Yijianzhi* 夷堅志 (*Record of the Listener*), a collection of *zhiguai* 志怪 (recordings of the abnormal) compiled by Hong Mai (洪邁, 1123-1202) (see H. Liu 2013). One of them clearly states the punishment given to a woman following an abortion. According to Hsin-Chun Liu (2013), who reads these tales as reflecting the “collective consciousness” of the era, this story reveals the popularity of abortions during the Song period. Moreover, this story highlights Song people’s understanding that a woman who has had abortions would be judged and punished fiercely in the underworld and reborn as an animal.

For infanticide, Angela Ki Che Leung argues, infanticide has been a “confusing moral issue” (Leung 2005, 86) in China. *Bujiu* fell under critique particularly from the literati. Confucian scholar officials were against infant abandonment. This attitude, to some extent, determined the criminalization of infanticide. Nonetheless, the scholar officials were mainly against the infant abandonment that resulted from the popular belief in inauspicious signs related to the birth, rather than to those that were the result of economic hardship (Kinney 2004, 102). Jen-der Lee also discovered that Confucian scholar officials denounced the idea of “*fangke* 防剋” (believing the child’s birth is an inauspicious sign) (J. Lee 1995, 768). These scholars attributed the popularity of infant abandonment to the shortage of governmental investments in charity and childcare institutions. The government was urged to announce and apply the *Law calling for Merciful Policies for Fetus Nourishment* (*Kuanzheng yu taiyang ling* 寬政與胎養令) (J. Lee 1995, 775). Charity organizations which took care of abandoned children were sponsored and established by literati and the government. Leung’s research shows that the Song government inaugurated the Board of Compassion and Infants (*Ciyouju*, 慈幼局), which was probably one of the earliest governmentally operated professional orphanages in the world (Leung 2005, 28) During the Ming Qing dynasties, local elites launched charity orphanages, such as Halls for Rearing Babies (*Yuyingtang* 育嬰堂), assisted in rescuing abandoned babies (Leung 2005, 89). Comparing the Chinese Halls for Rearing Babies with their counterparts in medieval Europe, Leung claims that the Chinese organizations achieved quite satisfactory outcomes – a 10-20% of mortality rate in the Halls in the later 17th Century (Leung 2005, 95). Confucian and Buddhist thinkers who advocated private forms of social support helped the charity organizations spread widely since the Song

dynasty (Leung 2005, 95 & 210). Meanwhile, the Halls were very often religious sites. For example, some Halls worshipped goddesses who were believed to be baby protectors, including the Heavenly Princess (*Tianfei* 天妃), the Primordial Sovereign of the Coloured Clouds of Dawn (*Bixia Yuanjun* 碧霞元君) and the Guanyin Bodhisattva (Leung 2005, 91-92). Moreover, Leung claims, the manner of the Halls' operation of segregating the wet nurses and babies from outside families and society was very Buddhist (Leung 2005, 95).

In earlier customs in China and Taiwan, the bodies of deceased infants were normally abandoned in rivers or bushes (Leung 2005, 216 & Wu 2009, 55). However, the changes to people's understanding of a child's life resulted in the emergence of cemeteries for children and babies in the Qing Dynasty, which were called "cemeteries for the burial of babies and children (*daizang yinghai binyuan* 代葬嬰孩殯園)" (Leung 2005, 215). For example, the number of children buried in the cemetery founded by the charity organization *Jinling Tongshantang* (金陵同善堂) in Jiangsu province reached more than 15,800 in 1892 (Leung 2005, 216). Angela Ki Che Leung observes that the emergence of these cemeteries showed that a child started being regarded as a concrete social being instead of an "abstract life form (*chouxian de shengming* 抽象的生命)" (Leung 2005, 216).

1-6-2 Moral and Religious Reactions to Infanticide and Abortion

In order to mitigate the effects of Chinese society's male child preference, the literati and government took actions to prevent *ninü* (drowning of female infants). The Qing Emperor Shunzhi promulgated an "Edict Banning Drowning [of infants] (*Jinniling* 禁溺令)" in 1659 after an official reported on the trend of *ninü* in Fujian, Jiangnan and Jiangxi (Leung 2005, 97). Confucian literati constructed texts which stress that the act of female infanticide results in karmic retribution and harsh punishment (King 2014, 27). These songs, stories or bulletins were written in straightforward language, including "Song of Raising a Girl (*Junüge* 舉女歌) (or Song of Prohibiting the Killing of a Daughter (*Jieshanüge* 戒殺女歌)", the "Notice on Forbidding Drowning a Girl Baby (*Jin ninü gaoshi* 禁溺女告示)" by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, and "Song on Forbidding Drowning a Daughter (*Jie ninüge* 戒溺女歌)" by Dongyue yaoyuan daoren 東越藥園道人 (Y. Chen 2011, 314). These publications listed the advantages of having a girl, as well as the good qualities that a girl possesses. Girls were highly admired by elite families as the "pearl in the palm" (King 2014, 20). Stories about how parents loved their daughters and how they repaid their parents were told,

and filial daughter's legends were admired (King 2014, 21-22). Moreover, the publications reminded people of the consequences of a shortage of girls, such as difficulties of finding a wife. Hence, people were encouraged to raise baby girls (Y. Chen 2011, 314-315). Furthermore, these publications denounced the cruelty of infanticide. The law of karmic causality was highlighted in order to warn people of the consequence of killing a fetus/baby (Y. Chen 2011, 315-316). On the contrary, those families who killed their baby daughters were denounced, with the focus on the mother, the mid-wives, the mothers-in-law and sisters-in-laws (King 2014, 27), which made the society's perception of *ninü* still a gendered one.

Religious texts were also employed to prevent people from performing abortions and infanticide. As Francesca Bray analyzed, "abortion was not illegal in late imperial China, but it was a sin" (Bray 1997, 341). In Buddhism, abortion and infanticide were regarded as a "killing of a living being" (Bray 1997, 341). For example, popular morality books in the Ming dynasty such as "Ledgers of Merit and Demerit (*gong guo ge*)" defines drowning children and abortions as sinful acts (Bray 1997, 341). This sin, along with a woman's inferior status in a patriarchal marriage and the pollutions of her blood caused by reproduction all mark signs of gendered karmic sin (Bray 1997, 341-342). In addition to the Buddhist idea of karma, Taoist texts such as the popular *Scripture of Great Peace (Taiping Jing 太平經)*, were employed by literati to affirm the harmony between *yin* and *yang* based on the idea of *tian* 天, in order to prevent people from killing baby girls (J. Lee 1995, 770-771).

Abortion was also regarded as a killing sin in some Chinese Buddhist texts in as early as the Ming dynasty. The *Record of the Essentials of the Great Rite of Buddhist Acolytes Taking of the Ten Prohibitions (Shami Shijie Weiyi Luyao 沙彌十戒威儀錄要)*, written by Zhixu 智旭 during the Ming dynasty, lists the sins of killing and it includes abortion (Kan 2008, 377). Similarly, the *Commentary on the Enconomium for the Rites for the Acquisition of Precepts by Buddhist Acolytes (Shami xuejie yigui songzhu 沙彌學戒儀軌頌注)*, written by Hongzan 弘贊 during the Ming dynasty, states that: "[Any action] which results in the deliberate death of a fetus is a sin which leaves no chance for forgiveness (*bukehuizui* 不可悔罪) (Kan 2008, 377). According to historian Yuh-Nue Chen's research, numerous Buddhist scriptures describe or highlight the miserable consequences of abortion such as the Buddhist encyclopedias compiled in the 6th century including the *Section on Ghosts and Gods of the Unusual Images in the Sutras and Vinayas (Jinlu*

yixiang guishen bu 經律異像·鬼神部) and the Chapter on *Bad Karma* in the *Forest of Gems in the Garden of the Dharma* (*Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林). The latter text describe how a ghost suffers from the bites of demonic insects and animals due to its sin of “[giving] people medications to abort their babies” (Y. Chen 2011, 318). Similarly, the *Hungry Ghost Section of the Collected Scriptures on the Hundred Vows* (*Jibaiyuanjing Eguipin* 撰集百緣經·餓鬼品) describes a wife aborting the fetuses of her husband’s concubines, due to strong jealousy. She eventually falls down to the Realm of Hungry Ghosts and gives birth to 500 babies in a single day and night, but devours all of them because of her insatiable hunger (Y. Chen 2011, 318-319).

The souls of those suffering women who have had abortion are summoned and can be relieved through ceremonial regulations (*yigui* 儀軌), particularly confessional rituals (*chanyi* 懺儀) (Kan 2008, 376). For example, the “*Excerpts on the Yogic Ritual for the Distribution of Food to the (Hungry Ghosts with) Flaming Mouths*” (*Yujia jiyao yankou shishiyi* 瑜珈集要焰口施食儀), T21, 0483b” (Yuan Dynasty) summons: “lonely spirits, including enemy foes, creditor ghosts, and those who have had abortions (*yuanjia zhaizhu duotai guhunzhong* 冤家債主墮胎孤魂眾)” (Kan 2008, 376, quoting 瑜珈集要焰口施食儀卷一). The “*Sutra of the Buddha Preaching the Names of the Buddha*” (*Foshuo foming jing* 佛說佛名經) indicates that those people who had abortions (*duotai luozhi* 墮胎落子) should return to the Buddha and confess their sins (*guiming chanhui* 歸命懺悔) (Kan 2008, 376). Furthermore, Yuh-Nue Chen’s study on Land Painting (*shuiluhua* 水陸畫) during the Ming Dynasty - paintings hung in the ritual space of the Great Compassion Water and Land Dharma Service conducted by Buddhists and Taoists in Ming and Qing China - shows that the important Buddhist salvation ritual in China has turned its focus on infanticide and abortion (Y. Chen 2011, 284). The relevant paintings, which focus on the images of women who died during delivery, as well as the stillborn babies, are called “Water and Land paintings on abortion and death from delivery (*duotai chanwang shuiluhua* 墮胎產亡水陸畫)” (Y. Chen 2011, 288).⁷ Some of these paintings represent women who died during delivery in a peaceful

⁷ These series are entitled: “Aborted fetuses, death from delivery, death due to severe coldness and heat, and lonely spirits (*Duotai chanwang yanhan dashu guhunzhong* 墮胎產亡嚴寒大暑孤魂眾)”, “Abortion, death from delivery, enmity, injustice, resentment, all ghosts and gods (*Duotai chanwang chouyuan baohen zhuguishenzhong* 墮胎產亡仇冤抱恨諸鬼神眾)”, “Images of the deceased due to abortion and death from delivery (*Wangu duotai chanwangtu* 往古墮胎產亡圖)”, and “Portrait of all the ghosts who died from delivery and those who died with a sense of enmity,

manner (Y. Chen 2011, 288). On the other hand, the women who had abortions in “Images of the deceased due to abortion and death from delivery” have “dishevelled hair and dirty faces (*pengtou goumian* 蓬頭垢面), [and are] extremely sad and bitter (*beiku wanban* 悲苦萬般)” (Y. Chen 2011, 288). Chen suggest that they are represented this way in order to “warn people to behave according to normative rules...; otherwise (they will have to) take the consequences (Y. Chen 2011, 288)”. In addition to serving as a force for moral ideology, this type of painting could possibly also have served as a form of therapy to comfort the families of the dead (Y. Chen 2011, 284). Similarly, *the Ceremonial Regulations for the Cultivation of the Purificatory Fast of the Victorious Assembly of Water and Land for the Saints and Commoners of the Dharma-World* (*Fanjie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui* 凡界聖凡水陸盛會修齋儀軌) clearly addresses the hope of salvation for infants and their mothers, summoning those women who “had abortions and injured their fetuses, or those whose child died in their womb, or who had difficulties in birth and were unable to bear their child (Y. Chen 2011, 289).” By doing so, the spirit will be born in the Pure Land (Y. Chen 2011, 291). From another perspective, perhaps these Buddhist rituals provided women who had committed abortions or infanticide with the opportunity to confess, to make up for their faults and to erase their karmic sins (Y. Chen 2011, 291-292).

Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that no commemoration or funeral for the spirit of aborted or miscarried fetus was performed.⁸ The well-known novel *The Plum in the Golden Vase* (*Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅) in the Ming Dynasty describes quite a few scenes of miscarriages and abortions. For example, Wu Yueniang, Ximenqing’s wife, was more than five months pregnant and had a miscarriage by accident (Lanling Chapter 33). The author, Xiaoxiaosheng Lanling, comments: “The Embryo/Fetus (*peitai*) cannot become a life. The true *Ling* (spirit) goes to the distant and dark heaven” (Lanling Chapter 33). Pan Jinlian was pregnant six months by her son-in-law, Chen Jingji; hence, she asked Chen to buy herbal medicine from a doctor and aborted the six-month old fetus (Lanling Chapter 85). The author describes the fetus as a “child (*hai zi*)” (Lanling Chapter 85). Nonetheless, in both cases there is no indication of the soul of fetus or performance of a ritual.

injustice and resentment (*Yinchansiwang he chouyuan baohenerwang de zhongguixiang* 因產死亡和仇冤抱恨而亡的眾鬼像)” (Y. Chen 2011, 285).

⁸ Chen Yuh-Nue cites a story from the Southern Song illustrating the power of aborted fetuses: In *Karmic Retribution for aborting fetuses* 下胎果報 by Zhang Gaobai, a female doctor suffered from brain disease after selling abortion pills to her patients and thus abetting the abortion of hundreds of fetuses. She told her family that she dreamed of hundreds of babies beating her on the head. (2011, 318)

This brief review covers some of the many recent historical accounts of the social construction of the bodies of women as well as the understanding of the personhood of the fetus. In addition, it scrutinizes the cultural, social and economic reasons for infanticide and abortions. Ideas of children's personhood evolved over time. In the late Imperial period of China, the tension between infanticide/abortion and social norms was partly relieved through charity orphanages sponsored by local communities and governments. The prevalence of the practice nevertheless led to the emergence of earlier forms of abortion rituals in China, particularly in Buddhism. The presence of aborted fetus in religious discourses invites a renewed exploration of the meaning of personhood. The social network is realized through cultural mechanisms; "personhood is not confined to living human beings" (Gillespie 2001, 75). Such a conception allows the dead to be continuously active in the world of the living and to be relocated in social relations and negotiations.

Chapter 2

Methodology: Deciphering the Contextual and Symbolic Meanings of the Abortion Ritual

The methodology of this dissertation focuses on the symbolic and structural analysis of the ritual process. The aim is to decipher the symbolic meaning of each element of the ritual and understand the use of these elements within a ritual process. The method is to observe and analyze the ritual process, including the use of space and time, narratives, ritual objects, the body language of the ritual practitioners, the order of each stage of the ritual, and how each element of the ritual is arranged. Furthermore, how the participant practices her agency is observed, as well as in what way her agency is practiced.

2-1 A Rite of Passage

The abortion ritual is a type of rite of passage. Victor W. Turner and Catherine Bell scrutinize the concept of rites of passage introduced by Arnold van Gennep. A rite of passage is composed of separation, transition, and incorporation or aggregation. Turner raises the concepts of “structure vs. anti-structure” as well as “communitas vs. liminality” to highlight the socially disaggregating and existentially isolating moments that occur within a ritual, as well as moments of intense social reconnection (Turner 1969, 94; 1979, 16). Turner claims that these processes distinguishes sacred time and space from profane time and space. During the ritual, a “cultural realm” is constructed in a sacred aura through the use of symbolic objects and behaviours (Turner 1979, 16). Hence, secular “things,” “relationships,” and “processes” are reversed or inverted, and even the previous social status of an individual or community can disappear (Turner 1979, 16). Therefore, the ritual participants enter an uncertain stage. Eventually, they return to a new profane social status, and society returns to solidarity as a whole (Turner 1979, 16). Turner reminds us that along with this type of rite of passage, a “parallel passage in space” often takes place simultaneously (Turner 1979, 17). The demarcation between profane and sacred spaces represents the distinction between “pre-ritual” and “post-ritual” status (Turner 1979, 17). The above process allows for negotiation, competition, or even manipulation between people or even groups (Turner 1957, 230). Turner discusses how a ritual can be a social drama revealing the “tension” in social relations (Turner 1957, 93). Turner argues that regularity and stability cover society with “an opaque surface” (Turner 1957, 93). With its conflicts, a social drama serves as a “limited area of transparency” (Turner 1957, 93), which allows researchers to observe the process of social life.

Catherine Bell surveys a wide range of theories about ritual (1992), and rites of passage are one of the six genres of ritual actions she examines (1997, 161). Bell defines rites of passage as “ceremonies that accompany and dramatize such major events (Bell 1997, 162)”, and they serve as “life-crisis” or “life-cycle” rites. (Bell, 1997, 162). The purpose of a rite of passage is to culturally and socially recognize the transition of an individual’s status after he or she goes through a stage of life, such as birth, coming of age, marriage, and death. The performance of such a ritual allows him or her to be “properly identified and accepted” (Bell 1997, 163).

Bell lists a sequence of rites of passage surrounding pregnancy and childbirth in China to show how a mother and a newborn child’s statuses are gradually inscribed in the family and community through such a process (Bell 1997, 167). A newly wedded woman should go through “fertility rites” (Bell 1997, 165) or other ritualized routines to bring luck for conception and bearing a son. (Bell 1997, 164-165). After conception, the belief in *Taishen* (the God of the placenta or the God of the pregnant womb, Bell 1997, 165) makes sure that the space where the pregnant woman resides is free of a variety of types of physical disturbances. After the baby is born, the woman should be isolated for a month or so because she is believed to be dangerous and vulnerable due to the pollution of reproduction (Bell 1997, 166). One month after childbirth, the “full month ritual” is performed, and the baby’s name is announced (Bell 1997, 167). A baby boy is much more desirable than a baby girl because he guarantees the continuity of the family line. He carries the family name(s) while girls lose their names after marrying a man from another lineage (Bell 1997, 168). One hundred days after the birth marks the end of the pollution of reproduction. For the child, the soul (*Taishen*) is fully connected with him, and for the mother, she can return to normal life (Bell 1997, 167-168).

Moreover, the woman earns the recognition of the lineage because she fulfills her duty as a mother. She will continue to practice a variety of rituals—worshipping gods and appeasing ancestors and ghosts so that the child is well protected (Bell 1997, 168). Bell further explains how the model of rites of passage inspires psychologists to formulate the concept of “human individuation” (Bell 1997, 174). Transformation of the individual occurs after the ritual. Another example is pilgrimage. A subject goes through the three stages proposed by Arnold van Gennep: going on a journey, retreating from one’s community to enter a strange and sacred place where he or she is situated in a holy dynamics and, finally, returning to where he or she belongs (Bell 1997, 174). Bell raises the Chinese classics *Journey to the West* as an example to show how pilgrimages

result in “transformation” or “renewal” since travellers “find it hard to fit back into the old life afterward” (Bell 1997, 175).

Why is a rite of passage necessary? Catherine Bell recalls Claude Lévi-Strauss’ theory which claims that “there is a deep human impulse to take the raw changes of the natural world and ‘cook’ them” (Bell 1997, 163). Lévi-Strauss’ methodology is centered on the pattern of binary opposition embedded in the cultural, mythological, and linguistic constructions shared by all human societies. In the well-known *The Raw and the Cooked*, he states that, “[R]aw’ and ‘cooked,’ ‘fresh’ and ‘rotten,’ ‘moist’ and ‘parched,’ and others - can serve a people as conceptual tools for the formation of abstract notions and for combining these into propositions” (Lévi-Strauss 1966, 41). The raw represents nature and cooked culture. For Lévi-Strauss, culture is defined as “a meditation of the relations between man and the world” (Lévi-Strauss 2008, 41). Cooking is meditation because it requires a procedure, efforts, and equipment. Similarly, boiling is culture comparing to roasting, since boiling requires water and a container, which is “doubly mediated” (Lévi-Strauss 2008, 41). Like culinary art, rites of passage transform “physical inevitabilities” into “cultural regularities” (Bell 1997, 163). A biological condition, such as conception, pregnancy, or birth, can be interpreted and comprehended in a cultural context.

Following the analysis above, this thesis examines how an abortion ritual identifies and transforms the fetus’s status and the position of woman within the social order through the post-abortion phase, the ritual process, and post-ritual phase. As Bell’s analysis of birth rituals shows, a ritual triggers and accomplish a transition. A rite of passage serves as a milestone of life. Furthermore, it is crucial to observe how the ritual as a social drama makes the transformation possible. The dynamics, the actors, the movements, as well as the symbolic meaning of objects and languages, are to be closely analyzed.

2-2 Analysis of Ritual Symbols

Participants in the major rituals of vital religions, whether tribal or post-tribal, may be passive and active in turn with regard to the ritual movement, which, as van Gennep and, more recently, Roland Delattre have shown, draws on biological, climatic, and ecological rhythms, as well as on social rhythms, as models for the processual forms it sequentially employs in its episodic structure. All the senses of participants and performers may be engaged; they hear music and prayers, see

visual symbols, taste consecrated foods, smell incense, and touch sacred persons and objects. They also have available the kinesthetic forms of dance and gesture and perhaps cultural repertoires of facial expression to bring them into significant performative rapport. (Turner 1980, 162)

Turner presents his symbolic interpretation strategy, suggesting that ritual efficacy is achieved through the use of ritual symbols and the labour invested in ritual experiences.

Ritual is, in its most typical cross-cultural expressions, a synchronization of many performative genres and is often ordered by a dramatic structure, a plot, frequently involving an act of sacrifice or self-sacrifice, which energizes and gives emotional coloring to the interdependent communicative codes which express in manifold ways the meanings inherent in the dramatic leitmotiv. Insofar as it is “dramatic,” ritual contains a distanced and generalized reduplication of the agonistic process of the social drama. Ritual, therefore, is not “threadbare” but “richly textured” by virtue of its varied interweavings of the productions of mind and senses. (Turner 1980, 161-162)

During a ritual, there is a “stage,” “actors,” “a heightened atmosphere,” “spectators,” even “the smell of the crowd” and “the roar of the greasepaint” (Turner 1979, 94). Also, during such a performance, a “plural reflexivity” (Turner 1979, 94) occurs in which the members of a group or a community attempt to “portray,” “understand,” and “act” on itself. (Turner 1979, 94). For Turner, the vivid ritual process allows him to observe how society changes while individuals change themselves. “[A symbol is] the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behavior; it is the ultimate unit of a specific structure in a ritual context” (Turner 1967, 19; 1973, 1100).

Hence, this thesis employs Turner’s strategy to examine ritual process and symbols. For Turner, within a ritual, symbols are the crucial factors that reveal a ritual’s meanings. He defines ritual symbols as both a language and an action.

2-2-1 Strategy 1: Symbols within a Semantic Structure

For Turner, a ritual is a “total assemblage, or system” of ritual symbols’ performance (Turner 1973, 1101). Within such a system, there is a “nucleus of dominant symbols,” which

involve multiple meanings and senses—“extreme multivocality” (Turner 1973, 1101). The nucleus symbols recur and occupy a central position in each ritual performance, symbolizing “the fixed points of the total system” (Turner 1973, 1101). Turner discovers that, despite dominant symbols having multiple referents at each ritual or each episode within a ritual performance, “only one or a related few of its referents are drawn to public attention” (Turner 1973, 1101). However, there are a big number of dependent instrumental rituals—“enclitic” rituals—which are either univocal or assist in the ritual procedure “like prepositions in language” (Turner 1973, 1101).

According to Turner, through the different permutations and combinations of symbols, different ritual themes are conveyed to the community. Symbols function as an educative apparatus.

Since the settings in which the themes are ritually presented vary, and since themes are linked in different combinations in each setting, members- of the culture who have been exposed to the entire ritual cycle gradually learn, through repetition, variation, and contrast of symbols and themes, what the values, rules, behavioral styles, and cognitive postulates of their culture are. Even more important, they learn in what cultural domains and with what intensity in each domain the themes should apply. (Turner 1973, 1101)

Yet, for Turner, symbols are not merely an atemporal reflection of society or social organization (1975, 35). Instead, symbols (words, objects, and actions) express important cultural themes. The ritual assists participants in communicating and expressing their perception and faith toward the community and the world.

In order to achieve the above efficacy, Turner claims that ritual symbols, including words, actions, and objects displayed in a ritual, are located in a “semantic structure” (Turner 1973, 1100). This “symbol vehicle” “deals with relationships between signs and symbols and the things to which they refer” (Turner 1973, 1100). The choice, usage, and arrangement of the symbols determine the ritual structure. Turner then demonstrates their characteristics, the first being “multiple meanings (significata)” or “condensation” (Turner 1973, 1100). A symbol is able to represent multiple things, objects, and actions. “[Symbols] perceived by the senses in ritual contexts (that is symbol vehicles) have many meanings” (Turner 1973, 1100) and, thus, are dynamic, rather than static. Second, it is the “unification of apparently disparate significata”

(Turner 1973, 1100). A symbol is able to integrate objects, things, and actions in discrepancy into one. “The essentially distinct significata are interconnected by analogy or by association in fact or thought” (Turner 1973, 1100). Third, it is the “polarization of significata” (Turner 1973, 1100) or “two poles of meaning” (Turner 1967, 35). On the one hand, the symbol represents the abstract “moral and social orders,” which Turner names “ideological (or normative) pole of symbolic meaning” (Turner 1973, 1100). On the other hand, the symbol is presented in a concrete form, which is named “the sensory (or orectic) pole” (Turner 1973, 1100). Turner scrutinizes how the two poles work as a whole by examining the image of a milk tree (a focal symbol in the girl’s puberty ritual in Ndembu). Here is the ideological pole:

Its normative pole represents womanhood, motherhood, the mother-child bonds a novice undergoing initiation into mature womanhood, a specific matrilineage, the principle of matriliney, the process of learning “women’s wisdom,” the unity and perdurance of Ndembu society, and all of the values and virtues inherent in the various relationships-domestic, legal, and political-controlled by matrilineal descent. (Turner 1973,1100)

While the sensory pole works this way:

The same symbol stands for breast milk (the tree exudes milky latex-indeed, the significata associated with the sensory pole often have a more or less direct connection with some sensorily perceptible attribute of the symbol), mother’s breasts, and the bodily slenderness and mental pliancy of the novice (a young slender sapling of *mudyi* is used). (Turner 1973, 1100)

As a result, the milk tree expresses important cultural themes in both an accessible and intimate way. It is “expected to stimulate desires and feelings” (Turner 1973, 1100). The two poles—ideological and sensory—could be coherent, but they could also be in conflict with each other. Through the communication and interaction of the two poles, the ritual process is able to be carried out. This process could reinforce or modify reality.

2-2-2 Strategy 2: Contextualizing Symbolic Analysis

Victor Turner reminds us that ritual symbols have to be understood in their social and cultural contexts and relationship with other symbols (Turner 1973, 1101-1102). He stresses how he “found [he] could not analyze ritual symbols without studying them in a time series in relation

to other “events,” for symbols are essentially involved in social process” (Turner 1967, 20).

Hence, Victor Turner urges researchers to go beyond the local understanding of a symbol and pursue its total meaning. He quotes Carl Jung, who stated that “[a] sign is an analogous or abbreviated expression of a known thing. But a symbol is always the best possible expression of relatively unknown fact, a fact, however, which is none the less recognized or postulated as existing” (Turner 1967, 26). Turner affirms that a ritual should be located in its “significant field setting,” and the “structure” and “properties” of the field should be demonstrated (Turner 1967, 26-27). The structure and properties of ritual symbols can be observed from “three classes of data” (Turner 1967, 20), or the three “especially significant” dimensions of symbols; the exegetic, operational and positional (Turner 1973, 1103). The exegetic dimension refers to the “external form and observable characteristics” (Turner 1967, 20). It demonstrates how the actors (members of a given society) interpret the meaning of a ritual. As for the operational dimension, it indicates the “interpretations offered by specialists and by laymen” (Turner 1967, 20); therefore, the investigator’s observation and record are its essential aspects. The final dimension, the positional one, point out the “significant contexts largely worked out by the anthropologist” (Turner 1967, 20) and explains how the investigator contextualizes the symbols within the given society.

The above method assists the investigator in achieving a full understanding of a ritual symbol. In addition, Victor Turner raises the necessity to notice absence in a ritual: “[t]he investigator is interested not only in the social organization and structure of those individuals who operate with symbols on this level, but also in what persons, categories, and groups are absent from the situation, for formal exclusion would reveal social values and attitudes” (Turner 1973, 1103). What is not spoken is equally important to what is spoken. Turner calls the unspoken words “nonverbal symbols” (Turner 1973, 1103).

2-2-3 Strategy 3: Actions of Symbols

Nonetheless, symbols do not merely function as representations to be analyzed. Victor Turner claims that symbols (words, objects, and actions) express important cultural themes. As a ritual helps participants communicate and express their perception and faith toward the community and the world, it should be understood within the symbolic system of that society (Turner 1973, 1103). Turner stresses how he “came to see performances of ritual as distinct phases in the social processes whereby groups became adjusted to internal changes and adapted to their external

environment” (Turner 1967, 20).

Cultural symbols are not only language conveying values and norms. They can also be powerful actions that are to be performed and experienced by the participants during the ritual process. He affirms that this is the efficacy of symbols:

It is also a fusion of the powers believed to be inherent in the persons, objects, relationships, events, and histories represented by ritual symbols. It is a mobilization of energies as well as messages. In this respect, the objects and activities in point are not merely things that stand for other things or something abstract, they participate in the powers and virtues they represent. (Turner 1973, 1102)

Symbols participate in social movements and changes. Turner states: “symbols instigate social action” (Turner 1967, 36), and they are active, powerful, and endowed with multivocal meanings. Ritual symbols originate from social relationships and are “a factor in social action,” while being a “positive force in an activity field” (Turner 1967, 20). He goes on to say that symbols “produce action, and dominant symbols tend to become focuses in interaction” (Turner 1967, 22).

Following the assumption above, Turner examines how a symbol is able to transform into a power. According to Turner, a symbol has two qualities: power and symbol. Power refers to the direct communication of the object and, symbol, to its analogous representation. Both qualities are involved in a ritual. He stresses that “[t]he same objects are used both as powers and symbols, metonymically and metaphorically it is the context that distinguishes them” (Turner 1973, 1102). The difference between representation and power lies in how the symbols are manipulated: “When a substance is used to treat a patient, it is being used for its power. When the same substance is used to represent an idea or a feeling, it is used symbolically” (Turner 1973, 1102).

2-3 Ritual in Relation to Transnational Flows: a Vernacular Modernity Mobilized by Religion

Despite all the predictions of the theorists of secularization and globalization, religions did not decline during modernization. Religion is an active force impacting social orders and responding to other forces. When observing religious conflicts in the 20th century, Jürgen Habermas states, “religious traditions and communities of faith gained a new, hitherto unexpected political importance” (Habermas 2006, 1). He divides religious and secular communities into two

bodies. He suggests that there should be a mutually “learning process” (Habermas 2008, 28) between them. Through the learning process “both sides, each from its own viewpoint, must accept an interpretation of the relation between faith and knowledge that enables them to live together in a self-reflective manner” (Habermas 2008, 29). Habermas suggests that the public sphere fosters the power of the liberal bourgeoisie along with the development of consumerism, mass media, and the state (Habermas 1991, 10-11, 16-18).

Kenneth Dean’s research on rituals in Southeast China shows that rituals do not stand against “civil society” or “public sphere” as a force of resistance to “progress” or “modernization” (Dean 1997). He argues that Habermas’ conceptualization of the two ideas above can be problematic. First, to Habermas, the definition of power seems to be limited to legitimation (Dean 1997, 174) rather than “a pressure for fundamental political or economic changes” (Dean 1997, 175). Second, to Habermas, the public sphere is a solid unitary whole and stands against the private sphere (Dean 1997, 174). Third, Dean argues that Habermas’ analysis ignores how the powerful transnational flows of “ethnic groups, multiple mass media, technology, capital and ideas” (Dean 1997, 174) in a contemporary global world make an isolated civil society impossible.

Dean pictures a “disruptive community” in dynamic and organic movements (Dean 1997, 177). He asserts that, in a “postmodern” phase, power is viral and is disseminated to all social institutions based on capitalist logic. Social agents such as family, church, or government are not enclosed and isolated from each other. Instead, they compete, integrate, negotiate, or appropriate (Dean 1997, 192). Hence, the boundary between the public and private spheres is blurred. Or, there is not even such a boundary, as these spheres are, in fact, intertwined. Hence, a single rigid governing apparatus that produces and reproduces ideologies to control local communities does not exist anymore. Dean highlights: “The metaphor of structure and superstructure that was central to the conception of the mediating institutions of civil society no longer holds” (Dean 1997, 176).

He further argues that: “a unitary public sphere no longer resides within the parameters of an organic nation-state” (Dean 1997, 177). Instead, struggles—such as gender—happen everywhere, in every locality, as “hybrid sites” (Dean 1997, 177). Therefore, for cultural analysis, it is crucial first to investigate the particularities of the context, including the “flows of force,” the “formation of codes,” and the “channeling of affect and subjectivity” (Dean 1997, 179). Based on the abovementioned particularities of the context at a specific time and space, Dean stresses that an individual’s identity is temporary, a “calcification of potentiality” (Dean 1997, 179), and is

ready to change, mutate or reverse. During this ongoing process, this individual model will “reimpose itself [the model of an individuality] on a seething flux of vectors of change, sensory trajectories, and affective investments” (Dean 1997, 179).

Dean affirms that power is deployed and operates in these different sectors. According to his observation of the transforming religious activities in Southeastern China since the late imperial period, each phase involves a different set of relationships between local cultural elements—such as central and local governments, monasteries, lineages, and popular cults (Dean 1997, 184). Dean claims that:

In each period and region through Chinese history there have developed distinct ritual traditions in the context of distinct cultural arenas and apparatuses of power. These arenas and apparatuses have been developed for the induction of bodies into identities. Shaped by the determinant mechanisms of local culture, these identities accept certain parameters of repeatedly performed identification: the family, the lineage, the village, the culturally defined region, the economically oriented market region, the socially differentiated class membership ... [these identifications are established] through rituals. (Dean 1997, 179)

During this process, space has been occupied and used in new ways and reinterpreted with new meanings by recurring rituals (Dean 1997, 183). Like the state, rituals create narratives and institute actions with every community member’s participation (Dean 1997, 185). A distinct ritual form may determine a distinct set of effects on the community and the movements of bodies, which is a process of “elaborating local culture” (Dean 1997, 185-186). Due to each event’s particularity, each ritual’s identity formations and power relationships are unique. “New ritual forms can present an entirely different set of relations in relation to the surrounding context” (Dean 1997, 180). Hence, he rejects the “essential nature” of a priori status or the formation of individuality and subjectivity (Dean 1997, 180). A ritual space is not a stable place with pre-determined order. Rather, it is the “transformation of these places by the movements (vectors, velocities, variables of time) that traverse them” (Dean 1997, 183). In other words, a ritual space is a “‘practiced place’ that is actualized by the multiple, conflicting movements deployed within it” (Dean 1997, 183 citing de Certeau, 1984). Moreover, based on its cataclysmic nature, ritual, or a ritual tradition, acts as an “abstract technology of the self” in the particular context (Dean 1997, 180). Dean highlights that “[t]he mingling of bodies with physical and supernatural forces proceeded by

phases, however, linked not dialectically but through a process of self-organization” (Dean 1997, 186).

Furthermore, struggles do not only occur within a nation-state. As Jürgen Habermas acknowledges, religion has triggered “global conflicts” (Habermas 2008, 20) and resulted in the crisis of the exclusive sense of European citizenship as a totality. For Dean, however, nation-state borders cannot prevent foreign impact (such as overseas Chinese) from participating in such dynamic movements (Dean 1997, 190). “Otherness” permeates through these multilayered domains and reaches a global level. Dean asserts that “[w]ithin the simultaneous articulation of interconnectedness and individuation that characterizes control society, there arises the phantasmagoria of a global public sphere that seems to hover before our eyes on the Internet, beckoning us into the Web” (Dean 1997, 177). Dean argues that a ritual can generate an “alternative” community which is able to respond, contest, confront, or cooperate with other forces and break ground in a public space (Dean 1997, 174). These contesting communities are called “multiple public spheres” (Dean 1997, 191) and range from a transnational diaspora to online chat rooms. Individuals deal with these multifaceted sources of identity formation and are swept up into their flows. Therefore, based on the above, when observing abortion rituals in Taiwan, it is necessary to observe the particularities of time, space, power, and discourse within each context, and to explore the co-evolution of new rituals and new social potentialities.

2-4 Conclusion

When a symbol has power, it physically impacts the individual, but it is a symbol when it serves as a representation. Based on Turner’s methodology, this research attempts to decipher ritual symbols found in the abortion rituals of Taiwan, including language, action, space, and objects. In addition, based on Dean’s arguments, this research attempts to answer the following questions: how does abortion ritual fit into the above model of the rites of passage for a ritual? How does the ritual achieve the effect of detaching the participant from the social order and then later relocate them into a reshaped one? Can new rituals change social relations as a whole, rather than simply re-integrating individuals back into pre-existing social roles and categories? Through the lens of the ritual process, this thesis examines the interplay of social and ritual change surrounding the formation of the fetus’s imagination in modern Taiwan.

Chapter 3

A Discourse Analysis of Debates over Abortion and Abortion Ritual in Taiwan

This chapter attempts to demonstrate the conflicting ideas surrounding abortion and the complex imaginations of the fetus in Taiwan by means of analyzing discourses from various sectors. The first section demonstrates debates between religious and feminist activists concerning the legalization of abortion in modern Taiwan. In addition, the section sheds light on the activists' understanding and critiques of the abortion ritual in Taiwan. The second section focuses on religious discourses on abortion presented by religious institutions which perform abortion rituals. This section also demonstrates the ritual patrons' feelings and thoughts toward their abortions and the ritual.

3-1 Abortion in Taiwan: a Review of Legal History

This section reviews the legal history of abortion in Taiwan since the nineteenth century, including the lawmaking process leading to legalization of abortion in the 1980s as well as renewed debates twenty years later over the introduction of a "consideration period".

3-1-1 Taiwan during Premodern, Colonial and Postwar Periods

Abortion was first criminalized in the late Qing dynasty, as a result of the importation of the Western legal system into China as a model for political and economic reforms (Wu 2009, 39). After Taiwan was ceded to Japan at the end of the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), abortion was criminalized under the Japanese Penal Code as well as the under the Western legal model later adopted in Taiwan (Kuan 2008, 104–105). After the Kuomintang (KMT, the Chinese Nationalist Party) government retreated to Taiwan in 1949, abortion continued to be criminalized by the Criminal Codes (Kuan 2008, 106–107). Nonetheless, illegal surgeries were conducted secretly in private clinics (Kuan 2008, 76). According to Yan-Chiou Wu's archival research, there were approximately 30,000 to 50,000 abortions in 1961. Nonetheless, she admits that this number was much lower than that provided by some doctors in obstetrics and gynecology (Wu 2009, 75).

3-1-2 The Family Plan Campaign: 1950s-

In 1950, the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR), founded in accordance with the China-U.S. Economic Cooperation Agreement of 1937, distributed a booklet entitled "Happy Families (*Xingfu Jiating* 幸福家庭)" to promote birth control. Following this initial effort

came the Family Plan, launched in 1964 (Zhuang 1998, 551). This has been used as the primary rationale for pregnant women to have abortions (Moskowitz 2001, 17-21). The government not only provided information about contraceptives but also promoted a view as to how many children to have and when to have them. At the same time, more slogans promoting the family plan were created and gradually accepted by society, such as “the population increase in Taiwan during a single year can eat up (as much grain as would fill the entire) Shihmen Reservoir.” (*Taiwan meiyinian de renkou jiang chidiao yizuo Shihmen shuiku* 台灣每一年增加的人口將吃掉一座石門水庫), “two children are just right; one child is not too few” (*Erge haizi qiaqia hao, yige haizi bu xianshao* 二個孩子恰恰好, 一個孩子不嫌少) (Zhuang 1998, 551-552) and “Boys and girls are equally as good” (*Nanhai nühai yiyanghao* 男孩女孩一樣好) (Zhuang 1998, 551-552).

3-1-3 The Eugenic and Health Protection Law: 1984-1985

In the beginning of 1982, the KMT government’s effort to control population growth finally led to a bill called the Eugenic and Health Protection Law that was submitted to the Legislative Yuan (Kuan 2008, 110). Article 9 lists the six conditions which allow a woman to have an abortion, and the sixth condition caused controversy. Under this article, abortion is permissible “when the pregnancy or delivery of the fetus will affect the pregnant woman’s mental health or that of her family life.” This article provoked sharp disagreements in the Legislative Yuan as the restrictions on abortion were not made explicit and could be seen by some as an indirect agreement to all abortions (Kuan 2008, 112). Nonetheless, Article 9 also indicates that “a married woman must obtain the consent of her spouse before the abortion, unless her spouse is of unknown whereabouts or mentally deranged.” The law was written in conservative “prudent” fashion at the same time.

During the check-and-balance process, the bill received keen debate in the Legislative Yuan, mainly between the “tenured legislators” who retreated to Taiwan with the KMT and have been serving as the representatives of Mainland China provinces, and the new legislators, who were recently elected by local Taiwanese. The former were strongly against the idea of legalizing abortion, in contrast to the latter, who appealed to women’s needs for legal medical protection (Kuan 2008, 110). To the “pro-life” camp, abortion was regarded as murder and act contrary to traditional Chinese values (by Legislator Wang Xiudian 汪秀瑞, the Legislative Yuan Gazette 1984, 17-18). The massive abortions carried out in the communist People’s Republic of China

based on its One-Child policy reinforced the impression that abortion was a cruel act aimed against children's welfare (by Legislator Hu Qiuyuan 胡秋原, the Legislative Yuan Gazette 1984, 22). In addition, the "pro-life" camp presented a letter from an American activist who urged Taiwan to prevent abortions and moral corruption (by Legislator Wang Xiuduan 汪秀瑞, the Legislative Yuan Gazette 1984, 20). President Ronald Wilson Reagan's controls over abortion in the U.S. were also raised as a model (by Legislator Han Tong 韓同, the Legislative Yuan Gazette 1984, 15). On the other hand, the "pro-choice" camp pointed to feminist movements in the U.S. as an example to show how urgent it was to protect women's health (by Legislator Lin Lianhui 林聯輝, the Legislative Yuan Gazette 1984, 37). In addition, the newly elected local Taiwanese legislators presented ideas of a woman's right over her own body by stressing that a woman's personhood and choice have priority over the life of the fetus (by Legislator Chung Jung-Gi 鍾榮吉, the Legislative Yuan Gazette 1984, 28). As Hsiaowei Kuan observes, most of the time, the debates were dominated by issues at the state and social levels instead of at the level of women's individual agency (Kuan 2008, 138). The law was eventually passed in 1984 and went into effect in 1985 (Kuan 2008, 110). While a large number of women have chosen abortion as the means to terminate an unwanted pregnancy, the Eugenic and Health Protection Law regards abortion as illegal in principle, and allows for abortions only under certain conditions. Kuan argues, that it is "lacking a legal realism in its legal tradition" (Kuan 2008, 110).

3-1-4 Conflicts between Feminist and Religious Groups: 1987-

Pro-feminist and pro-religious camps were the two leading protagonists in the debates on abortion, as well as their development over the last decades. During the process of the legalization of abortion in Taiwan, for the feminist groups, a woman's right to abortion was regarded by feminist groups as an essential part of bodily autonomy. Nonetheless, the feminists focused on other issues regarding women's rights but did not put all their efforts into the abortion issue until the religious coalition took prominent actions to involve themselves in the making of the Eugenic and Health Protection Law (Kuan 2008, 6). At that point, the feminist groups began lobbying the abortion issue in the Legislative Yuan and articulating their ideas through public debates against the religious groups (Kuan 2008, 246).

During the 1980s and 1990s, religious groups remained low-profile and passive about the legalization of abortion (Kuan 2008, 226). Nonetheless, the silence was broken by Father Louis

Aldrich (also called Ai Liqin 艾立勤), a professor in the Faculty of Theology and the founder of the Center of Bioethics at Fu-Jen Catholic University. Being shocked by the number of abortions performed in Taiwan, Father Aldrich decided to take action. During the early 2000s, the Center of Bioethics distributed 245,000 copies of an American-made anti-abortionist film, “The Eclipse of Reason,” which displays every detail of the surgical process of a late-term abortion, to high schools through Buddhist, Taoist and Christian groups (Kuan 2008, 228-229). In 2002, Father Aldrich made a call to all the religions of Taiwan and formed an alliance with leaders of 1,300 religious groups, including Buddhists, Taoists, I-Kuan Tao (一貫道), the Religion of The Heavenly Emperor (*Tiandijiao* 天帝教), the Religion of The Heavenly Virtue (*Tiandejiao* 天德教), and Christianity in Taiwan (Kuan 2008, 229). In addition, the coalition collected more than 100,000 signatures (Q. Chen, 2006). This alliance was named the Great Coalition and People’s Movement for the Respect for Life (*Zunzhong shengming quanmin yundong dalianmeng* 尊重生命全民運動大聯盟). The coalition was joined by several prominent Buddhist figures, including Venerable Master Sheng Yen of the Dharma Drum Mountain (*Fagushan* 法鼓山) and Master Cheng Yen of Tzu-Chi, which “had a symbolic meaning in the history of the antiabortion movement” (Kuan 2008, 229). Even if the coalition had a loose organization and structure and the religions were mostly based on different doctrines and teachings, they all shared one concern: the increasing number of abortions in Taiwan (Kuan 2008, 230). The coalition hoped the situation could be improved by various strategies, including assigning a waiting period to abortion (Kuan 2008, 230). The chief executive officer, Chen Qinglong, pointed out that, since the Buddhists have the biggest number of disciples and followers in Taiwan, they could act as one of the strongest members and partners in the coalition (Interview with Chen Qinglong, Oct. 2, 2008).

My interviews with feminist and religious activists show that their definitions of life differed sharply. The feminist activists claimed that a fetus is not a life due to the fetus’ vague moral status. The feminists, including Ms. Jian of the Taipei Association for the Promotion of Women’s Rights (TAPWR, *Taibeishi nüxing quanyi cujinhui* 台北市女性權益促進會) and feminist physician Jia-Yen Lee asserted that according to medical knowledge and legal definitions applied in Taiwan, a fetus is not a life until the 24th week (Interview with Ms. Jian, Oct. 6, 2008; Interview with Dr. Jia-Yen Lee, Dec. 15, 2008). Dr. Jia-Yen Lee, a feminist doctor, explains that medically speaking, the infant can only be called a life once it is born (normally more than 24

weeks of pregnancy) and survives (including in the incubator) (Interview with Dr. Jia-Yen Lee, Dec. 15, 2008). On the other hand, religious activists claim that a fetus is a life from conception. Dr. Aldrich stressed that abortion is an act against love to the fetus, who was created by God (Interview with Father Louis Aldrich, Oct. 2, 2008). Mr. Qinglong Chen, the spokesperson of the Great Coalition of Respect for Life and People's Movement, argued that feminists materialize and dehumanize the fetus. He gave an example: "Let us imagine, if we see a black shadow in the darkness, and you do not know if it is a person or a dangerous bear. Will you shoot it right away?" Similarly, "how can we abort a fetus when the moral status is vague and unknown to some people?" (Interview with Qinglong Chen, Oct. 2, 2008). The two groups' conception of women's rights also differed. Father Louis Aldrich affirmed that his goal in promoting the anti-abortion campaign in Taiwan was to remind people to use their reason and freewill and learn how to love. On the contrary, Ms. Jian (TAPWR) claimed that a woman should have the absolute right to make the decision depending on her family economy, spousal relationship and mental status (Interview with Ms. Jian, Oct. 6, 2008). Her power to decide to have an abortion is exactly the same as her power to decide to have any other kind of surgery, such as plastic surgery.

3-1-5 The Reproduction Protection Law and the Consideration Period: 2000-

During the past decade, marriage and birth rates in Taiwan have both dropped drastically. The Council for Economic Planning and Development of the Executive Yuan (*Xingzhengyuan Jingji jianshe weiyuanhui*, 行政院經濟建設委員會) acknowledges that the trend results from "rapid expansion of education, economic independence of both genders, as well as changing social values," and expressed their worries: "if this tendency goes on, we are afraid that the valid fertility period of women will shrink, and seriously compromise the increase of the birth rate" (The Council for Economic Planning and Development of the Administrative Yuan 2009). In 2000, a meeting on the reform of the Eugenic and Health Protection Law was organized by the Department of Health. Attendees included feminist groups, religious groups as well as relevant field experts (Kuan 2008, 127). The name of the law was changed to the Reproduction Protection Law, based on experiences in Japan, in which people argue that the term "Eugenic" can be seen as a discriminating term against people with disabilities. This new bill as well as its legislation process became a battlefield between feminist and religious groups (Kuan 2008, 127). On the one hand, religious groups proposed adding a 6-day waiting period for mandatory counselling about the law, as part of the process of obtaining a legal abortion. On the other hand, feminist groups proposed

deleting the requirement of spousal consent from the original legislation (Kuan 2008, 128). The two camps strove to persuade the Department of Health. In 2006, a newly drafted bill by the Executive Yuan was finally submitted to the Legislative Yuan (Kuan 2008, 129). The bill can be called a negotiation between the two camps. Article 11 (Article 9 of current law) indicates: “Before performing such an abortion, a medical institution should provide the woman with counselling. In addition, the abortion should be performed when the woman signs her consent after a three-day waiting period” (Kuan 2008, 129).

The Legislators were divided into two camps. The first was the pro-religious group, while the second group were supportive of the feminist groups. As one legislator claimed, it was great to see the two camps cooperating to respect life. “The problem is: whose life to respect? The woman’s or the baby’s?” (Legislator Huang Sue-Ying 黃淑英, the *Legislative Yuan Gazette* 2006, 74-75). Interestingly, both camps were composed of female legislators. The legislators were all newly elected local young legislators, a result of the political and social changes over the last twenty years. Issues related to the state or to “Chinese cultural identity” were gradually replaced by individual-oriented concerns and Taiwanese identity. For example, the feminist camp argued that it is a “a national shame (*guochi* 國恥)” when the government and the legislators had to consult foreign (American) conservative delegates and anti-abortionists for law-making concerning Taiwanese women’s bodies: “are the experiences of our Taiwanese women not experiences? Are our women so stupid that we need to consult foreigners about our abortion policy? Do our national policies need to be promoted by religious groups?” (Legislator Huang Sue-Ying 黃淑英, the *Legislative Yuan Gazette* 2006, 74-75). The religious camp then retorted: “So what? Religious compassion is like the character of a mother. A mother does not punish. Instead, she helps and supports” (Legislator Yang Li-huan 楊麗環, the *Legislative Yuan Gazette* 2006, 70). According to Hsiaowei Kuan’s calculation, during the debates 63.99 % issues were related to the individual level, in contrast to state and social levels (30.55%) (Kuan 2008, 138). The differences between this debate and the earlier one reveal the major political and social changes of Taiwan.

3-1-6 OB/GYN Doctors

Some OB/GYNs who perform abortions have been suffering from mental and social stress. More than twenty years ago, Dr. Lai, a well-known OB/GYN in Changhua City in central Taiwan, left home, roamed about the city and slept in some public buildings at night. He chose to exile himself because his sister died on the operating table when he performed a surgery on her. He

realized he has been doing bloody jobs through numerous abortions: “I made a sum of money as soon as I terminated a life.” Urged by his conscience, he chose a life style which he felt more comfortable with (Zhuang & Huang 2008). Dr. Lai’s story shows that OB/GYN doctors are involved in keen debates on abortion. Feminist activists regard OB/GYN doctors as professionals who are responsible for carrying out their duty (interview with Ms. Jian, Oct. 6, 2008). However, religious activists do not agree that the OB/GYN doctors are simply practicing their profession: “are they forced to do it (performing abortion)? Or do they have a choice?” (Interview with Buddhist priest Shih Yanxin, June 15, 2008).

My interviews with the OB/GYN doctors also showed contradictory opinions on abortion between doctors. Dr. Lee, a well-known senior OB/GYN doctor in the New Taipei City and an active member of the Taiwan Association of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Dr. Jia-Yen Lee, a feminist doctor practicing her profession in Kaohsiung, are supportive of women’s right to abortion and doctors’ right to perform abortions. Dr. Lee argues that society easily stigmatizes their profession. However, as OB/GYN doctors, “we are helping rather than killing!” (Interview with Dr. Lee, Jun. 21, 2008). He mentioned the case of Dr. Lai in Changhua who was his friend as an example: “He was suffering from severe stress. It is unfair to say he has paid the price of the sin of performing abortions: (Interview with Dr. Lee, Jun. 21, 2008). Dr. Jia-Yen Lee also recalled that some of her OB/GYN colleagues refused to perform abortions as they aged and approached death. She admitted: “Both patients and doctors are located within the [anti-abortion] discursive regime” (interview with Dr. Jia-Yen Lee, Dec. 15, 2008). However, on the other hand, Dr. Wang, who serves at a clinic of Catholic background in New Taipei City, suggests that although the fetus is an unshaped human, it still has a life, “due to the life, the embryo is able to divide and grow” (Interview with Dr. Wang, July 2, 2008). Dr. Wang does not agree with the feminist movement’s claim that abortion is a woman’s free choice. “If women can make decisions independently, they should have prevented unwanted pregnancy in the first place rather than exposing their bodies to risks” (Interview with Dr. Wang, July 2, 2008). Dr. Peng, a colleague of Dr. Wang in the same clinic, affirms that terminating pregnancy (abortion) is not the means to resolve the problems the woman has in her life (Interview with Dr. Peng, July 2, 2008). Therefore, when patients come to see Dr. Peng to consult about abortion, he encourages them not to have abortion if they just simply do not want to have the baby. Due to this belief, Dr. Wang and Dr. Peng’s clinic has been losing patients because their clinic does not perform abortions or any form of assisted reproductive

technology (ARTs), including IVF (in vitro fertilization), donor sperm and donor eggs, in spite of the fact that these measures are permitted by the Eugenics and Health Protection Law and the Ectogenesis Law (Interview with Dr. Wang and Dr. Peng, July 2, 2008). Nonetheless, Dr. Peng's concern was in fact shared by Dr. Lee who supports abortions. Dr. Lee affirms that the lack of support from the government and workplace (such as parental leave and job security) makes rearing a child challenging in Taiwan (Interview with Dr. Lee, Jun. 21, 2008).

3-1-7 Women in Taiwan: between Tradition and Modernity

The population policy in Taiwan during the 20th Century shows how the State's ambition for modernization was made true through its control over the body of its citizens and its cooperation with global power. In her studies on population governance in contemporary China, Susan Greenhalgh observes:

Over the past quarter century, the emergence of population as a domain of thought and practices has been enormously productive, creating new objects and domains of administration, new forms of governance, new pedagogies of the nation, new types of docile bodies, new ethical conundrums, and even new meanings of the human. (Greenhalgh 2005, 370)

To the PRC government, the idea of modernization is connected to numeric analysis. "Numbers" are powerful, as they seem scientific, and are believed to be accurate and objective. They also explain the backwardness of the nation and allow for a strategy for the future. Science is the new ideology, and it is practiced through the management of population. Population is "a space of investigation and administration, in short, a space of governance" (Greenhalgh 2005, 358). A reasonably controlled population is the key to the nation's welfare; furthermore, it is a passport with which the nation can enter global society as a responsible member (Greenhalgh 2005, 360).

Anthropologist Heather Paxson's research in Greece shows that in a modern nation, the belief in population control, including the overall number and the quality of the population, is deeply rooted in popular practices. Nowadays, the government does not need to impose this policy on its citizens. Rather, the citizens aspire to practice it:

Not only do people today make conscious decisions about family size, they (are supposed to) act to achieve this desired outcome through premeditated fertility control. And they explicitly contrast this with an early modern ethic- what Athenians label as traditionally Greek- that demands compliance with convention

without expecting individuals to question their motives for a particular act: the knowledge that one's duty is conventional is reason enough. (Paxson 2004, 39)

Similarly, Margaret Lock's study of a Japanese woman who had a child with Down's syndrome shows that, in spite of the Japanese concept of "nature", Japanese women have been situated within the high expectations of family members and are overwhelmed by Western knowledge and its approach to successful reproduction. Lock finally argues that the Foucauldian concept of "biopower" as well as the conception of the organism in the medicalization of reproduction in Japan also involve roles for powerful family members and results in an even more complex condition for women (Lock 1998).

When observing the debates surrounding abortion in Taiwan, despite of the differences between the debates, several strategies were continued in the second-wave debate from the first wave. First, the locality of Taiwan/China is highlighted. Feminist scholars argue that to criminalize abortion is an importation of foreign values to Taiwan. Nonetheless, politicians against abortions and religious groups also claim that protecting the fetus is part of Chinese tradition. Both groups suggest that they are raising the best solution for women in their own culture. Second, however, the formation of the population policy in Taiwan as well as the surrounding debates have been participated in by U.S. professionals and social activists. On the one hand, the U.S. sent demographic experts to Taiwan to assist in the formation of the family plan, which affirms the necessity for population control. Moreover, numerous feminists in Taiwan were educated in the U.S. and introduced feminism, including concepts of autonomy and rights, to Taiwan. On the other hand, U.S. religious activists were involved in the debates on abortion, and an American missionary even succeeded in organizing a religious anti-abortion alliance in Taiwan. This suggests that the conflict and cooperation between the U.S. (or the "West") and Taiwan (or the "local") shape the main theme of the debates. The government, the feminist groups and the religious groups all more or less rely on the American model while claiming that local tradition is protected through their movements. These similarities between the two groups reveal Taiwan's position at the intersection between globalization and localization. Themes within these discourses will be further examined in later chapters when actual abortion rituals are analyzed and ritual participants are interviewed. For the woman, is abortion a right, a means of negotiation, or more? At the same time, is abortion ritual only about institutional manipulation or can it be an empowering process? When dealing with scientific perspectives on conception and pregnancy, how does abortion ritual create

an alternative reality for the participants? Furthermore, how does that reality trigger a woman's new identity in her reality? The answers to these questions carry forward the debates above and further locate the women in the center of the discursive regime.

3-2 Social Activists' Voices Surrounding the Abortion Ritual

Interestingly, when being asked to discuss their opinions on the abortion ritual, the feminist group, religious group, and physicians all disagree with the discourses embedded in the abortion ritual, and some of them further criticize the consumeristic manner in which some temples organize their rituals. Nonetheless, meanwhile, they also acknowledge that the ritual may be necessary to some women for the need of an appropriate funeral for the fetus.

Activists and doctors were against abortion ritual due to religious manipulation. Dr. Jia-Yen Lee argued that fetus spirits do not exist, so abortion ritual represents a ridiculous discourse to her (Interview with Dr. Jia-Yen Lee, December 15, 2008). According to her observations, most of the time people attend an abortion ritual due to external influence, i.e. the advice of priests or suggestions of friends or families. Hence, Dr. Jia-Yen Lee argued that abortion rituals were the manipulation of religious institutions. Similarly, Drs. Wang and Peng (Catholic clinic) agreed that this religious belief has been manipulated by religious institutions as the means to collect wealth (Interview with Dr. Wang and Dr. Peng, July 2, 2008). Dr. Peng argued that some people claim that they can see the fetus in a baby's shape, but since the fetus is not completely shaped, how can it be represented in a form of a baby or child? Hence, according to Dr. Peng, abortion ritual is superstitious. He argued that the ritual is merely the means for women to achieve comfort while they are suffering from the sin of killing (Interview with Dr. Peng, July 2). Drs. Wang and Peng both argued that the haunting fetus spirit is an illusion caused by the psychological effects of abortion and can be ignored. Ms. Jian (Taipei Association for the Promotion of Women's Rights, TAPWR), too, asserted that religious institutions taking advantage of this kind of psychological effect to threaten or to exploit the woman is by no means acceptable. To her, since a fetus is not a life, to pacify a spirit which does not exist is needless (Interview with Ms. Jian, October 6, 2008).

Religious activists also do not agree with abortion ritual due to the fact the discourses are not coherent in religious teachings. To Father Louis Aldrich, the abortion ritual in Taiwan represents the local understanding of the fetus. However, as a Catholic, Father Louis Aldrich does not agree with the vengeful image of the fetus spirit created by religious institutions. He argues that

the rationality of the fetus has not fully developed, so emotions, such as anger or love, have not fully developed. As a result, the images of the vengeful fetus are impossible (Interview with Father Louis Aldrich, Oct. 2, 2008). To Qinglong Chen (Great Coalition of Respect for Life and People's Movement), the idea that a fetus is a life claimed by the religious institutions is not something new to Taiwan's tradition. However, according to Buddhism, the destined connection between the parents and child cannot be easily changed or distorted by a ritual. Chen argued that the abortion ritual is a means to accommodate (*qianjiu* 遷就) the sin of abortion. Religious institutions take the opportunity to meet the women's needs (*touqi suohao* 投其所好)-relief from sin and sense of guilt-by inventing new rituals (Interview with Qinglong Chen, October 2, 2008). This is a reciprocal relation between buyers and sellers. Indeed, the "newness" of the abortion ritual in Taiwan caused activists and doctors to doubt its authenticity. Feminist scholar Yan-Chiou Wu criticized: "Abortion ritual in Taiwan is a non-issue (*meiyou yisi* 沒有意思). It is merely a copy of the Japanese abortion ritual" (Interview with Wu, November 6, 2009). Dr. Peng also suggests that this type of ritual was not practiced in earlier Taiwan (Interview with Dr. Peng, July 2, 2008).

Nonetheless, at the same time, the activists and doctors agreed that the abortion ritual may provide a solution for religious women. Dr. Jia-Yen Lee affirms, "there are no rationales to religious belief. Disciples would not be changed due to a doctor's opinion" (Interview with Dr. Jia-Yen Lee, December 15, 2008). As a doctor, she was always willing to help the patient find a temple that is righteous and charged reasonable prices. Dr. Lee (New Taipei City), too, does not agree nor disagree with the belief. To him, since the fetus spirit is invisible, it is difficult to judge if the spirit exists. However, he does not object to personal choice if "the woman can find a spiritual sustenance from the ritual" (Interview with Dr. Lee, June 21, 2008). Similarly, as the abortion ritual can be seen as a funeral performed for the fetus, Dr. Peng understood that some families may hope that a funeral can be performed for a fetus (Interview with Dr. Peng, July 2, 2008). Ms. Jian (TAPWR) acknowledged that the abortion ritual fits the religious tradition in Taiwan. In her opinion, the ritual seemingly works well, in that it claims abortion is a sin but can be erased by the efforts made by the woman. However, similar to Qinglong Chen (Great Coalition of Respect for Life and People's Movement), Ms. Jian argued that karma cannot be changed by a ritual as many religious institutions claim.

All groups agreed that abortion may impact the woman psychologically. Ms. Jian (TAPWR) acknowledges that religious priests are similar to psychiatrists for women who suffer

psychologically from an abortion (Interview with Ms. Jian, October 6, 2008). However, all groups disagreed that the abortion ritual is the best help the woman could seek. Dr. Jia-Yen Lee talked about her only one patient who suffered from psychological pain. The patient converted to Buddhism after having an abortion, and since then she has believed that her illness is related to her abortion. To Dr. Jia-Yen Lee, this is another example showing how religion creates new problems for women. In Dr. Jia-Yen Lee's opinion, a woman would not suffer from these atypical symptoms (such as sense of loss or sense of guilt) if she is not religious. The pain was shaped by the society instead of the woman herself (Interview with Dr. Jia-Yen Lee, December 15, 2008). If the woman does suffer from psychological impact, Qinglong Chen and Ms. Jian suggested that the woman should consult psychological professionals and treatment (Interview with Qinglong Chen, October 2, 2008 & Interview with Ms. Jian, October 6, 2008). Ms. Jian further proposed that women's groups organize workshops or seminars to help women in need. To her, the function of the abortion ritual is only to help the woman get rid of her confusion and anxiety temporarily. She claimed that this type of morally condemning discourse will not last long, if women awake along with social progress and change, which is the goal of feminists in Taiwan (Interview with Ms. Jian, October 6, 2008).

The debates above demonstrate the conflicting powers surrounding abortion in Taiwan. The following sections of this chapter demonstrate religious discourses surrounding the abortion created by religious institutions as well as the ritual participants' voices. These discourses voiced by different sectors contrast sharply in terms of the personhood of the fetus, the need for a ritual in the post-abortion stage, and the experiences during the ritual. These discourses examined in this chapter constitute a more comprehensive picture of how the Taiwanese society imagines the fetus spirit.

3-3 Religious Discourses Surrounding Abortion Ritual, Institutions and Patrons

This section covers the religious discourses surrounding abortion ritual in Taiwan.⁹ These

⁹ These discourses were collected during field research in 2008 and 2009, during which 13 temples and shrines were visited, interviews with priests were conducted and their respective abortion rituals were observed. In addition, data about the Xingde Temple (Xingde Fotang 行德佛堂), the Montreal branch of the Consistent Way (*I-Kuan Tao* 一貫道) was included as well. The latter data includes interviews and notes taken during its Dharma Assembly during 2017-2018, and the content of the institute's booklet on *Yingling* (*Shenger buzhi sier buzhi: Sancao kaishe huixiang fuqiuqi: Lingying, Yingling zhi kaishe* 生而不知死而不知一三曹開赦迴響赴秋期一靈嬰、嬰靈之開赦 2003). I-Kuan Tao asserts that immortals and buddhas (*xianfo* 仙佛) were so concerned about excessive number of abortions

temples and shrines share similar discourses in some respects but differ in others. One main difference is the representation of the fetus and its spirit, which reveals a newly constructed dimension of Chinese cosmology. These discourses discuss the fetus spirit within its spiritual genealogy, its continuum and its relationship with parents, family and society. These discourses are also embedded within various kinds of abortion ritual.

3-3-1 Where is the Fetus Spirit from?

All priests agree that the fetus spirits come via reincarnation. Some priests stress that they have been waiting a long time to be reborn. Others affirm that the spirits are destined to be connected (in a karmic relationship) with their parents. The fetus spirits probably owed the parents and have come to repay them (Interview with Teacher Su, Oct. 20, 2009), or the parents owed them in previous lives. Conversely, Buddhist priests, including Shih Chaohwei (Interview, Jul. 31, 2008) and Shih Yanxin (Interview, June 15, 2008), stress the power of resonance among the spiritual consciousness (*lingshi* 靈識). The spirit of the new life is hailed and waits for the sexual desire of the man and woman to be aroused.

Among the priest interviewees, the Taoist idea of spirit composition, consisting of the three heavenly souls and seven earthly souls (*sanhun qipo* 三魂七魄), was mentioned by Priest Zheng (the Altar of Heaven) (Interview, June 20, 2008), Teacher Su (The Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternality) (Interview, October 20, 2009) and Great Prophet Yang (The Great Prophet Yang's *Yingling* Palace) (Interview, July 17, 2008). Most of the time, priests perform the ritual regardless of when the abortion is done during the pregnancy.

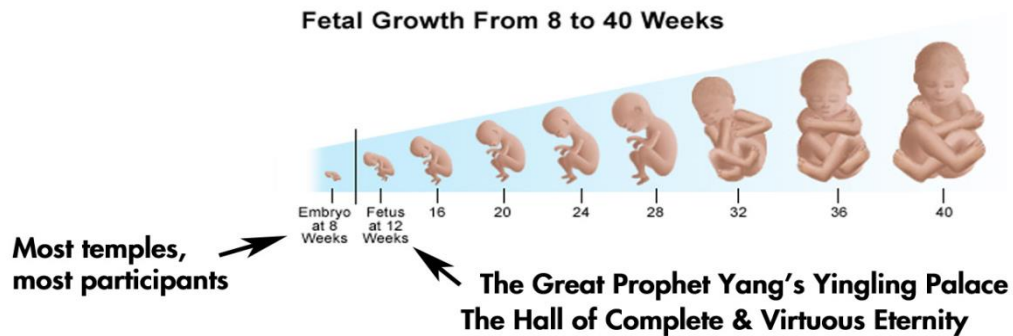
I-Kuan Tao describes the process in a mixed manner combining the two philosophies above. On the one hand, I-Kuan Tao agrees with Buddhism that the *ālaya-vijñāna* (*Alaiyeshi* 阿賴耶識) acts as the spiritual consciousness of a deceased and a to-be-reborn life at the same time. Nonetheless, on the other hand, the *Alaiyeshi* needs to be registered in the Southern Star (*Nandou* 南斗), which is a very Taoist idea (Shande Wenhua Bianjibu 2003, 12). The precise time of birth is written in the jade book and applied in the Underworld. Nonetheless, I-Kuan Tao emphasizes that in addition to the *Alaiyeshi*, which carries all the karmas throughout the past lives, there is an universal pure quality shared by every human being, which is called the One (*Yi* 一). Based on this

in the human world so they inspired their senior teachers (*sancai dianchuanshi* 三才點傳師) to deliver their messages to the society. The booklet was written based on the message that the senior teachers witnessed. (*I-Kuan Tao* Dharma Assembly, Montreal, Nov. 5, 2017)

universal quality the fetus is able to grow and transform. Despite having different *Alayeshi* all fetuses are able to develop into a similar shape (Shande Wenhua Bianjibu 2003, 13).

3-3-2 When does Life Begin?

Figure 2. Fetal growth from 8 to 40 weeks according to religious discourses



Most priests agree that life is a continuous process. For example, Sunny, a medium and transcriber based at the Spiritual and Holy Palace, suggests that, when the embryo is formed, the spirit is waiting there. Fetal development may be a process full of challenges (Interview with Sunny, Jun. 9, 2008). I-Kuan Tao stresses that the intentions of the parents at the moment of contraception shape the child's personality, especially the mother's (Interview with Senior Teacher Lian Chunjie, May 25, 2018). The health of the fetus results from the karma between the mother and the child in addition to the child's *Alaiyeshi*. For example, if the mother killed animals and birds, as well as their fetuses or eggs, the negative karma can result in diseases in her fetus' body. All this negative karma, though, can be improved through righteous behavior, such as acting as a vegetarian and avoiding all forms of killing. (Interview with Senior Teacher Lian Chunjie, May 25, 2018) Thereafter, fetal education (*taijiao* 胎教) is crucial (Shande Wenhua Bianjibu 2003, 71-73; I-Kuan Tao Dharma Assembly, Montreal, Nov. 25, 2017). I-Kuan Tao highly values vegetarianism as it is a crucial behavior showing compassion to all lives. Some members' children have been vegetarian since they were still in the mothers' wombs, called in-womb vegetarian (*tailisu* 胎裡素) by the members (I-Kuan Tao New Year Assembly, Montreal, Feb. 18, 2018).

Yet, not all priests agree that life begins at the moment of conception. Prophet Yang (the Great Prophet Yang's *Yingling* Palace) and Teacher Su (the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity)

suggest that life begins at the 3rd month (or 49 days) after conception (Interview with Prophet Yang, July 17, 2008 & Interview with Teacher Su, October 20, 2009). Prophet Yang has an elaborate description on the formation of life:

Within the first 49 days of pregnancy (after conception) the *ling* (靈 spirit, consciousness) exists in the embryo. The sperm and the egg integrate into each other, move to the uterus (scientific form) and form the embryo. Meanwhile, the fetus spirit's *qi*, which is a flow of energy, a kind of movement, given by its mother, results from the integration of yin and yang. The mother's body acts as a medium to convey yin and yang to the fetus spirit. The spirit of a dead person can have *qi*. For example, people claim they feel blowing wind when they see a ghost (Interview with Prophet Yang, July 17, 2008). The *qi* is weak during this time period. After 49 days, the *qi* arises, although very weak. After 4 months, the *ling* and the *qi* combine and the body and shape of the fetus are settled. Only then can the combination of *ling* and *qi* be called *yingling*. This status will continue until the 3rd year after the child is born. During this period of time, the fetus/child does not have sub-consciousness. In other words, from the 4th month of the pregnancy to the 3rd year after birth, the soul of the child is called *yingling*. (Interview with Prophet Yang, July 17, 2008)

Similarly, Teacher Su believes that the embryo needs three months to mature:

One year in the *Yang* world is equivalent to 1 day in the *Ling* realm. Three months of pregnancy is equivalent to being 10 years old. After 10 years (3 months of pregnancy), they can be independent and can be called *Yingling*. Between the 3rd to the 9th month of the pregnancy, the fetus spirit took shape and is still waiting in the fetus spirit region waiting to be born. The *Yingling* has to borrow money from the underworld treasury officer (*kuguan* 庫官) to pay for the journey to this world. An abortion terminated their life, and another consequence is that they owe money! (Interview with Teacher Su, Oct. 20, 2009)

Given these ontological disparities, institutions attract participants with different needs. For example, a woman who has miscarriage at the 4th week of pregnancy may be told that she does not need to have an abortion ritual by one temple but that she does by another.

3-3-3 Abortion is...

Some priests are strongly against abortions. The condemnation focuses on the sin of killing (religious interpretation), and moral corruption. To religious priests who claim abortion is a sin, abortion is an act which distorts and cuts off the karmic relationship between the mother and the child. However, some priests simply accept it as an undeniable social change. Several Buddhist and Taoist experts look at the trend from an empathetic point of view, and agree that an impotent human has limits while dealing with changes in life.

Table 5. Religious attitudes toward abortion

Sin	<p>Mr. Lin: staff of the Eastern Peak Temple, (Dongyuedian 東嶽殿) (Interview, June 19, 2008)</p> <p>Teacher Su: the Ultimate Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity (Wuji yuanshan tang 無極圓善堂) (Interview, Oct. 20, 2009)</p> <p>Master Haitao: Buddhist leader of the Hall of Life (<i>Shengming daochang</i> 生命道場) (Nianforen, 2011)</p> <p>I-Kuan Tao (Interview with Senior Teacher Lian Chunjie, May 25, 2018)</p>
Distortion of Causal, Karmic Relationship	<p>Priest Chen: the Dragon Lake Temple (<i>Longhugong</i> 龍湖宮) (Interview, June 15, 2008)</p>
Negative social impact	<p>Baiyun Shanren 白雲山人: the Yang Daxian Temple of Fetus Spirits (<i>Yangdaxian yinglingdian</i> 楊大仙嬰靈殿) (Interview, July 17, 2008)</p> <p>Priest Ke: the Hsinchu City God Temple (Xinzhu Chenghuang Miao 新竹城隍廟) (Interview, July 1, 2008)</p> <p>Priest Li: Taipei Fu Chenghuang Miao (Interview, Sep. 17, 2009)</p>

New social phenomenon, no judgment	<p>Mr. Cai, (Chief Staff, The Eastern Peace Palace 東寧宮) (Interview, Aug. 28, 2008)</p> <p>Prophet Yang: (the Prophet Yang Palace of Fetus Spirits, Yangdaxian Yingling Dian 楊大仙嬰靈殿) (Interview with Prophet Yang, July 17, 2008)</p> <p>Priest Zhang (Priest performing abortion ritual in the Lugang Dizang Temple) (Interview, August 25, 2009)</p>
Part of life, Not supposed to be condemned excessively	<p>Master Shih Chaohwei (Scholar; leader of The Buddhist Research Institute of Hongshi) (Interview, July 31, 2008)</p> <p>Master Shih Kaiyun (Buddhist master attending rituals in Master Haitao's Hall of Dharma) (Interview, Aug. 31, 2008)</p> <p>Ms. Lin (Chief staff, The Lugang Dizang Temple, 鹿港地藏王廟) (Interview, August 15, 2008)</p> <p>Priest Zheng (The Altar of Heaven, Tiantan 天壇) (Interview with Master Zheng, Jun. 20, 2008)</p>

3-3-4 Does the Fetus Spirit really Exist? Do They Really Need a Ritual?

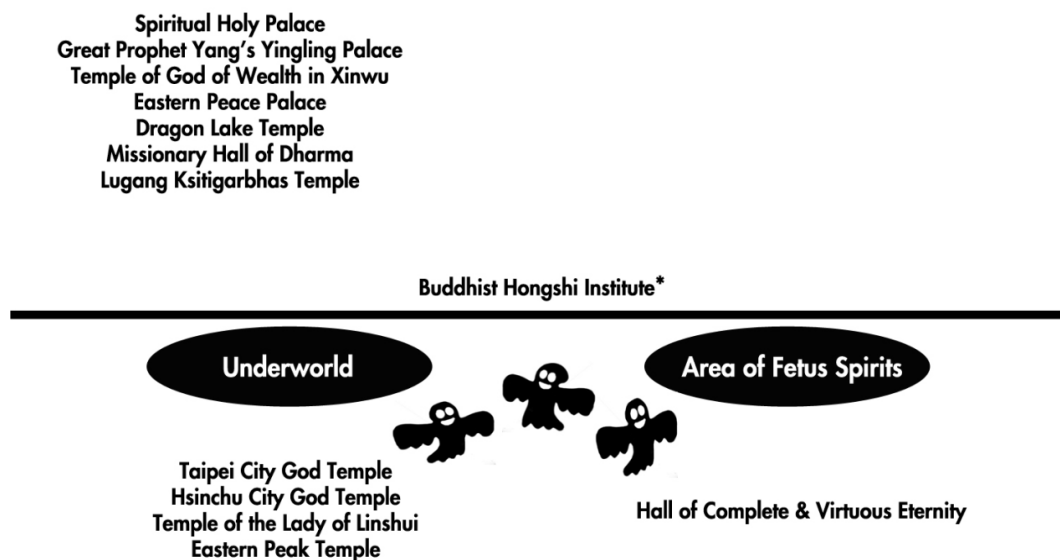
Most priests assert that abortion ritual is necessary. Some argue that the ritual has actually been performed in Taiwan for a long time: “In earlier days, the term *Yingling* did not exist. Rather, the fetus spirits were called the flower fetus or the flower spirit (*huataihun* 花胎魂). However, it does not mean that this type of rite (abortion ritual) did not exist in Taiwan!” (Interview with Eastern Peak Temple staff Mr. Lin, Jun. 19th, 2008). Master Lin of the Temple of the Lady Linshui Temple argued, “People deny the existence of the fetus spirit because they have never experienced the existence of spirits personally. During the Japanese colonial period, people in Tainan even chanted : “being a chicken or being a duck is endless. Please go back to reincarnation (做雞做鴨無了時, 投胎轉世)” when they kill a chicken and a duck. As long as spirits exist, fetus spirits exist. How can we say they don’t exist only because we didn’t develop them into a category?” (Interview with Master Lin, Dec. 20, 2008).

Nonetheless, some priests argue that the fetus spirit has been demonized by various religious institutions and worshippers. For example, Master Zheng of the Altar of Heaven, Tainan,

claimed that, according to Taoism a human has twelve souls, including the three *huns* (三魂 *sanhun*, the Yang heavenly souls) and the seven *pos* (七魄 *qipo*, the seven Yin earthly souls) (Interview with Master Zheng, Jun. 20, 2008). The three *huns* are attached to the gravestone. One of the *pos* is attached to the tablet, while others wander in unknown places, including reincarnation. He assumes the fetus only has two souls, as it is still in an incomplete forming process. Hence, to imagine that the fetus spirit can be as harsh as an adult is simply unnecessary. He argued: “When we believe something exists, then it exists.” So when we are frightened, monsters are created (*jing ze chengguai* 驚則成怪). But, if one does not fear, then the mind is in peace” (Interview with Master Zheng, Jun. 20, 2008). Similarly, Master Shih Chaohwei argues that haunting fetus spirits rarely exist since consciousness goes back to reincarnation according to Buddhist teaching (Interview with Shih Chaohwei, Jul. 31, 2008).

3-3-5 Where do They Go after Being Aborted?

Figure 3. Spaces where the *Yingling* is located after being aborted



As shown in Figure 3, some priests agree that, after being aborted, the fetus spirits wander in the Yang world (above the line) and could haunt the mothers or the families. Yet, temples specializing in matters of the Underworld would claim that the spirits are suffering in the Underworld. However, interestingly, priests in these temples do not deny the fact that the fetus spirits could

haunt the *Yang* world, too. These contradictory discourses could result from the Taoist idea of the three heavenly souls and seven earthly souls.

During an interview, Teacher Su at the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternality raised a different image of the fetus spirit: “There is a fetus spirit region (嬰靈區 *Yinglingqu*) in the Underworld, where spirits gather and wait to be reborn. Only after three months of pregnancy do they become fetus spirits. At that point, they become eligible to register in the underworld, and that is also when the fetus takes shape. Before the third month, the embryo does not have a spirit. After registration, the spirit gets smaller and smaller in the underworld, but in the *Yang* world, they gradually become a fetus spirit” (Interview with Teacher Su, Oct. 20, 2009)

As the host of the temple specializing in trips to the underworld (*guanluoyin* 觀落陰), Teacher Su affirms that the fetus spirits do not have a place in the Palace of Primordial Constellations (*yuanchengong* 元宸宮), so they wander in the Underworld (Interview with Teacher Su, October 20, 2009). That way, ritual participants can see their aborted children in their own palace of primordial soul. The staff of the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternality provided an example. One of their clients saw an angry boy in her palace of primordial soul. Another client felt sore on her left thigh. After entering the palace during her trip to the Underworld, she saw a child sitting on her lap (Interview with staff of the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternality, Oct. 20, 2009).¹⁰

Members of the I-Kuan Tao believe that there is a designated area in the underworld in which spirits of aborted fetuses are located, called the Yingling Blood Pond Purification Spirit Pond (*Yingling xiechi jingling chi* 嬰靈血池淨靈池). This pond is full of sacred water which is able to cleanse the spirits (Shande Wenhua Bianjibu 2003, 14). Spirits of aborted and miscarried fetuses are called *Lingying* (靈嬰), and spirits of children between 0 and 5 years old are called *Yingling* (嬰靈), an inversion of the term (Shande Wenhua Bianjibu 2003, 78). These two types of spirits will stay under the charge of the Lady of the Birth Register (*Zhusheng niangniang* 註生娘娘) in the “*Yingling* fetus spirit region (*Yingling zonghe yu* 嬰靈總合域). Then they will move to the Quiet Cultivation Spiritual Office (*Jingxiu lingsuo* 靜修靈所) and wait to be examined. This involves ascertaining their karmas, the number of times they have reincarnations and thus what are

¹⁰ For more analysis of the journey to the Underworld and the Palaces of the Eternal Astral Sign, please see Chapter 6.

their opportunities to be reborn. They will receive a license (*zheng* 證) and go to the next life when the time is right (Shande Wenhua Bianjibu 2003, 15).

3-3-6 What does the Fetus Spirit Look like?

The priests provided different images of the fetus spirits. Very often, the spirits are described as personified figures, and to most priests, they appear to look like babies or children, and to act like them emotionally and physically. Sunny, a medium and transcriber at the Spiritual and Holy Palace, described her vision of a fetus spirit holding its mother's hand, gazing at her, or lying on its mother's chest or shoulder. "Sometimes", she said, "they look like kindergarten children. Some of them crawl; some of them already know how to walk; some of them do not know how to speak yet. Their images are between 0-5 years old. In the fetus spirit region, only been 5 days have passed" (Interview with Sunny, Jun. 9, 2008).

In addition, the fetus spirits have emotions like adults. Just like a baby or a child, they are, very often, attached to their parents. Some priests, such as Master Lin of the Temple of Lady of Linshui, suggest: "Fetus spirits often follow the parents, but they are not fierce or angry like the mass media represents them. They only seek the attention and care of their parents (Interview with Master Lin, September 17, 2008).

According to Masters Ke and Lin of the Hsinchu City God Temple, the fetus was connected to its mother upon conception, so the fetus spirit follows its mother (Interview with Priest Ke, July 1, 2008). The reason that the mother is easier to be affected is because they share a common quality, *yin*. Indeed, quite a few priests suggest that the attachment often targets the woman. Teacher Su gave the example of one of his clients' experiences. He guided the woman to the palace of primordial soul, and saw two girls and one boy. Their ages ranged between 1 and 6 years of age, the girls being around 1 and 2-3 years old and the boy being 6. They walked and cried "Mama, mama!" Teacher Su asked the woman: "You have had abortions, and three abortions, right?" This was in fact the case, but the experience was embarrassing for the client, since quite a few staff members and participants were listening (Interview with Teacher Su, Oct. 20, 2009).

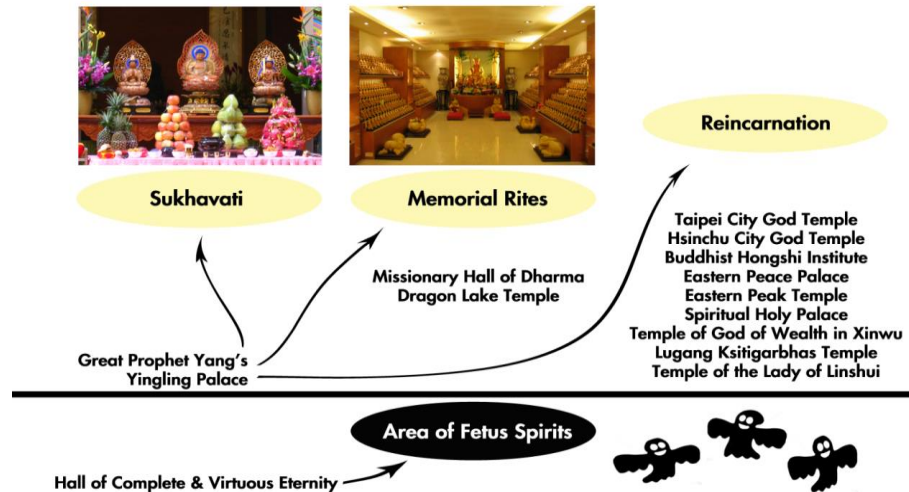
I-Kuan Tao texts also provide tragic images of *Yingling*. Through the power of the *Founding Buddhas* (earlier leaders of the I-Kuan Tao), the senior teachers were able to travel to the underworld and witness how the fetus spirits suffer in 1992: "It was a dark and doomed space, and on the stone wall were drawers in square shape. Each drawer is full of *Yingling* and *Lingyings* in baby shape (I-Kuan Tao Dharma Assembly, Montreal, Nov. 5, 2017). The Underworld General

(*Difu Jiagnjun* 地府將軍) allowed the senior teachers for 2 hours to remove as many *Lingying* and *Yingling* as possible from the drawers for reincarnation.... The senior teachers tried in every possible way to help. But in the end the senior teachers removed 426 *Yingling*, not even 1% of all the *Yingling* there. (I-Kuan Tao Dharma Assembly, Montreal, Nov. 5, 2017)

At the same time, due to this attachment to the mother, the fetus spirit is also connected to their siblings: “The fetus spirits can run around the bed playing in the bedrooms of the parents. They also could bring their siblings outside to hang out. Children are innocent so they can see the fetus spirits” (Interview with Staff Mr. Lin, the Eastern Peak Temple, Jun. 19, 2008). However, this type of attachment is not always a happy one. Masters Ke and Master Lin of the Hsinchu City God Temple suggest that the fetus spirit follows the mother and causes illness of the reproductive system, depression, or delusions (Interview with Priest Ke, July 1, 2008; Interview with Priest Lin, Jul. 16, 2008). Psychological afflictions can happen. Master Lin suggests that the fetus spirit could also cause conflicts amongst the woman’s actual living children and can also be a reason for their bad temperament. The image of the fetus spirit, hence, can be frightening. Sunny recalls one of her experiences (Interview with Sunny, Jun. 9, 2008). One of her friends has had two abortions. When the friend became pregnant for a third time and was considering abortion again, Sunny saw an angry child beside the friend. According to Sunny, the fetus spirit showed up in order to send a message: “Do not hurt a life again!” Hence, Sunny chanted Buddhist sutras for the fetus spirit and dedicated merit to it. Her colleagues in the Spiritual and Holy Palace suggested that the fetus spirit was angry because it is hard to go through reincarnation and be reborn as a human (Interview with Sunny, Jun. 9, 2008).

3-3-7 After the Ritual

Figure 4. Destinations after an abortion ritual



Generally speaking, among the temples observed, there is mention of three possibilities of the future destinations for a dead person's spirits. For abortion ritual, as shown above, most of the rituals send the fetus spirits back into reincarnation. The staff of the Eastern Peak Temple, Mr. Lin, denounced the Japanese way of abortion ritual, *kuyō*. He argues that abortion ritual is different from raising a child and that the aim is to send the fetus spirit away (Interview with Mr. Lin, Jun. 19, 2008).

Two temples - the Great Prophet Yang's Yingling Palace and the Dragon Lake Temple - follow the Japanese style of memorial rites, *kuyō*, and keep the tablets of fetus spirits in a hall, so that they can enjoy the care of the deities, the merit and the education of the sutras chanted by the priests, and the nourishment from the offerings. In addition, the Great Prophet Yang's Yingling Palace is the only temple which claims it is able to send the fetus spirit anywhere according to the client or the participant's situation.

In contrast, Teacher Su at the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternality claims that the fetus spirits go back to the Area of Fetus Spirits in the Underworld after the ritual, waiting to go back into reincarnation when the next opportunity comes. During the ritual, one can ask a deity to take care of the fetus spirit in the Area of Fetus Spirits until it grows up and can be independent. If nobody takes care of the fetus spirit, the spirit will go to the parents, which will affect the parents negatively. As a result, patrons may appease the yingling with paper money and offerings. After hundreds or thousands of years, the spirit will become smaller and smaller until they can go back into reincarnation.

Some priests claim that the fetus spirit is successfully sent to wherever it should go after

the ritual. Nonetheless, several priests, such as Priest Lin at the Hsinchu City God Temple, argues: “Who knows? We do what we should do. But the result is determined by the City God” (Interview with Priest Lin, July 16, 2008). According to him, if the result is good, the participants can feel it. One of his clients had a dream after the ritual. She saw a child sitting in a bucket, floating on water. There were trees along the river. She approached the trees and picked the child up, which, at that point, she woke up. The mother interprets the dream as the child being rescued.

I-Kuan Tao, too, organizes its own abortion ritual. The religion stresses that since it is an unusual time now Heaven (*shangtian* 上天) gracefully allows them to practice the ritual in a much more efficient way than other religions, including Buddhism. Worshippers simply pay a fee, and their names will be passed on to the I-Kuan Tao headquarter. There, a transferring merit document (*biaowen* 表文) will be recited by the staff and karmic merit (*gongde* 功德) can be created right away (Interview with Senior Teacher Lian Chunjie, May 25, 2018).

As the interviews above show, legal and religious teachings surrounding abortion and abortion ritual provide a wide range of images of the fetus spirit, moral judgements on abortion as well as different views regarding the efficacy of the ritual. For an in-depth account of Taiwanese discourses on abortion, including recent media representations of fetus spirits which include new materials not discussed in Moskowitz (2009), see Appendix A, B, C and D. These discursive differences as well as the corresponding contrasting ritual processes will be analyzed in the following chapters of this dissertation.

Chapter 4

Individual Ritual: the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace

The ritual examined in this chapter was observed in the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace (楊大仙寶寶聖靈殿 *Yangdaxian baobao shenglingdian*), located in Taipei City. The ritual was held on July 17, 2008. As an individual ritual, it meant that it was performed exclusively for a patron and her family. This was a one person or one family type of fetus spirit redemption, it is understandable that this was much pricier than other types of abortion rituals. During such a ritual, the participant is highly involved in the process and the ritual space and the rite allows for intimate interactions between the deities, priests, patrons and fetus spirit. Moreover, it can be designed in a more customized way in order to fit the patron's needs. Hence, the uniqueness of the interaction between the participant and the fetus spirit is highlighted. This chapter particularly focuses on the visualization of the fetus spirit through ritual practices, including the uses of language, gesture and ritual objects (the divination blocks) as a ritual technology.

4-1 Background Notes on the Fetus and Its Gradual Development: the Fetus in Medical and Ritual Texts

This section focuses on the embryo, fetus and child through examining how conception, gestational disorder and delivery were diagnosed medically and ritually in traditional Chinese medical systems. The medical and religious visualizations of the fetus merged into each other and created an unstable, vulnerable, but meanwhile, potentially threatening image of the fetus.

According to the *Song of Conception and Pregnancy* (Huaitaige 懷胎歌), there are ten transformations, with one in each month, during the ten-month gestation:

The first month, conception and (the embryo) is like a drop of dew

The second month, the pregnant mother's heart is dim (mengmeng 朦朦)

The third month, (the embryo) has a vague human image

The fourth month, the fetus has a human form

The fifth month, the fetus develops into a boy or a girl

The sixth month, the six roots (of the senses) are complete

The seventh month, the seven apertures (qiqiao 七竅) are opened

The eighth month, the belly is so heavy that the woman feels like she is carrying a mountain

The ninth month, the mother turns around like a circle

The tenth month, the baby is detached from the mother's body.¹¹

In medical and Taoist practices, the formation of the embryo was also believed to correspond with the cosmic order. The appropriate correspondence toward the supernatural rules assures a successful pregnancy. The Taoist classical text, *Huainanzi* 淮南子, also indicates the nine stages of embryonic formation:

We receive our spirit from heaven and our body from the earth. This is why it is said: the one produces the two, the two produces the three, and the three give birth to 10,000 things, the 10,000 beings turn their backs on the *yin* and embrace the *yang*, while the sprouting of breath gives birth to the central harmony which is man.

(*Huainanzi*, Chapter 7, cited by Levi, 1989, 106)

This process of embryo formation shows that “the genesis of the world is accomplished” (Levi 1989, 106). Similarly, the *Abstract of the Medicine for Women* (*Nüke Jiyao* 女科輯要) claims that pregnancy is created by a force of nature through the *qi* of the man and the woman (Shen 2004, 76). *The Great Patriarch Laozi's Treatise on Internal Awareness* (*Taishang Laojun neiguanjing* 太上老君內觀經; DZ641) indicates that three *yang* souls, from heaven, and seven *yin* souls, from earth, come within the embryo and settle down after the third month. The initial physical appearance of the fetus does not take shape until the third month. The souls attaching to the fetus gradually shape a human being. When the person dies, the *yang* souls are to be worshipped separately at the grave, in the ancestral tablet, as well as in the underworld (Freedman 1958, 86).

4-2: The Temple: the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace

Located in a neighbourhood which gathers mass worshippers, fortune tellers and tourists, the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace's signs in bold colours are in contrast to its modest neighbour across from it, Hsing Tian Kong (Enacting Heaven Temple). The bright yellow of the signs and its huge red characters show that, in the palace, various difficulties of life are able to be solved, including:

Appeasement fetus spirits (*chaodu Yingling* 超度嬰靈)

¹¹ The *Song of Conception and Pregnancy* (*Huaitai ge* 懷胎歌) and the *Full Scroll of Conception and Pregnancy* (*Huaitai quanjuan* 懷胎全卷), Daoist manuscripts from the liturgical collection of Chen Rongsheng, Daoist master in Tainan.

Reconciliation with creditors (*huajie yuanqin* 化解冤親)
Dragon caves and treasured locations (*longxue baodi* 龍穴寶地)
Life foundation treasured locations (*shengji baodi* 生基寶地)
Fetus spirits settlement and worship (*anfeng Yingling* 安奉嬰靈)
The eight characters and path of fate (*bazi yuntu* 八字運途)
Men and women's marriages (*nannü hunyin* 男女婚姻)
Careers, wealth and profit (*shiye caili* 事業財利)

Zhifu Yang, called Yang Daxian (the Great Prophet Yang), launched the Great Prophet Yang's *Yingling* Palace in 2005. He and the other host, the White Cloud Hermit (*Baiyun Shanren* 白雲山人) have been running the Palace and organizing abortion rituals for those who enquire (Interview with Yang Daxian, July 17, 2008). In addition, Yang Daxian is sometimes interviewed by tabloids, regarding the issues of abortion and its ritual in Taiwan. He has high visibility in the tabloid, *Scoop Weekly*. In addition to the abortion ritual service, Yang Daxian focuses on the Life Foundation (*shengji* 生基), a geometrical arrangement which can be seen in Hong Kong as well. The Life Foundation, a future tomb located in a space with auspicious *Fengshui*, in which the hair, nails or clothes of a living person are placed, is believed to be able to bring fortune, merit and success to that person.

Yang Daxian, also named the Jade and Wood Devotee (*yuqiao jushi* 玉樵居士), used to be a Taoist priest. According to him, Taoist priests are divided into two categories: *daoshi*, priests in the Tao robe (*daopao*) including red head *daoshi* and black head *daoshi*, and *fashi*, such as himself (Interview with Yang Daxian, July 17, 2008). He claims that *fashi* are superior to *daoshi* and are capable of practicing rituals without the robe, ring, incantation, dancing and talismans (*fuling*). Nonetheless, at the same time, he claims that all religions come from one origin, and his palace is a ritual space in a syncretic fashion of Taoism and Buddhism (道佛習合 *daofu xihe*), a term similar to the amalgamation of kami and Buddha in Japan (神佛習合 *shinbutsu shūgō*) (Interview with Yang Daxian, July 17, 2008).

Meanwhile, Prophet Yang does not deny that his abortion ritual style, to some extent, is under the influence of Japanese practices. During the interview, he showed a tabloid clipping, which was an article about the impact of the “water children (水之子 aborted babies, Japanese term)”. The first paragraph dictates that the term was invented by the Chinese during the Tang dynasty and adopted later on by Japan and Korea. The aim of the article was to remind parents who have had abortions that the misfortunes they have might result from haunting fetuses, through

which the fetus spirits are begging for care and love. The professional priests at the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace are the right people to turn to when in search of redemption. Apparently, this article is the result of the cooperation between the tabloid and the Palace for commercial needs. The word "water children" shows that the Taiwanese religious market selectively employs foreign terms and practices as a means of promotion. These terms and practices embedded in "Japaneseness" are employed as an advanced or exotic symbol to people in Taiwan as discussed in Chapter 1 (Introduction).

Yang Daxian and Baiyun Shanren claim all beings in the world have energy, including the energy of the heaven (*tianling*), the earth (*diling*), and humans (*renling*) (Interview with Yang Daxian and Baiyun Shanren, July 17, 2008). Hence, there are celestial movements and earthquakes and, to humans, that energy is the soul. The *tailing* (胎靈 the fetus spirit) indicates a spirit existing within 49 days after conception. Yang Daxian employed "scientific" language to describe fetus formation. The sperm and egg unite at the cervix and flow into the uterus to form the fetus. This process takes place during the first one and half months after conception. According to Yang, there is a spiritual energy (*lingqi*), equivalent to the soul, which comes into existence as early as two months from conception, at the moment the sperm and egg unite. The *lingqi* is light and thin during the first 49 days. There is a spirit, but no energy yet and thus, during the first 49 days (one and half months), the fetus does not move. At the fourth month after conception, it gains a shape and body, and, until the baby is born and reaches three years old, the soul, the fetus spirit, will not have a subconscious. Only after the fourth year will it gradually develop a subconscious (Interview with Yang Daxian, July 17, 2008).

According to Yang Daxian and Baiyun Shanren's observations, women have abortions due to economic hardship or family conflicts. Yang Daxian indicated that, among the sponsors of the abortion ritual in his Palace, 20% are men, 50% are women and 30% are couples. Recently, more and more young men have been coming to worship fetus spirits. Both hosts denounce the OB/GYN doctors who perform abortions and, according to their calculations, an OB/GYN clinic can survive financially when at least 2 abortions are performed. They also believe that, nowadays, there are at least 10,000 OB/GYN clinics in Taiwan, meaning "more than 7 million abortions are performed in Taiwan each year!", as they complained (Interview with Yang Daxian and Baiyun Shanren, July 17, 2008).

According to Yang Daxian, there are three possible destinations for the fetus spirit after the

ritual. The first, which is also the best, is the Pure Land in the West. The second is to go back into reincarnation and be reborn. The first and the second options are costly, 36,000 NT (1,200 CAD), since the priest has to make extra efforts to help the fetus spirit in improving its karmic merit in order to reach the destination. The third, which was highly recommended by Yang Daxian, is to remain in the Baby's Holy Spirit Palace to be *kuyō* (*gongyang*, 供養) for three years. What is noteworthy is that the participant can decide which one to choose for their fetus spirit. The most popular option is the third one, being the least expensive (6,000 NT; 200 CAD) and the most feasible option. Yang Daxian has a similar reasoning to the Dragon Lake Temple about the three-year memorial service in the temple. According to him, three years is the appropriate duration for the fetus spirit's resentment to be relieved. To listen to the Buddhist sutra in the Palace for three years can assist the spirit in cultivating their morality, and, after that period, they are able to go to the Heaven in the West or return for reincarnation (Interview with Yang Daxian, July 17, 2008).

To the ritual participants in the Palace, Yang Daxian suggests that the best way to send the fetus spirit back to reincarnation is after the three-year worship. When the process is done, the red tablet can be burned. In order to confirm the fetus spirit is willing to leave, the worshipper should cast the divine blocks to discover the will of the fetus spirit. However, there are some fetus spirits who do not want to leave. In this case, they are worshipped in the palace permanently. During the ritual, Yang Daxian encouraged the participants to pray this way: "The baby who cannot have affinity (*wuyuan de baobao* 無緣的寶寶), please do not scare me anymore. I have hired a priest to help you. I know you are beside me" (Interview with Yang Daxian, July 17, 2008). Moreover, Yang Daxian stated that the patron should not command the fetus spirit for selfish purposes, such as "give me health!" By doing so, the patron is provoking the fetus spirit and prolonging the spirit's stay.

4-3: The Ritual Patron: Little Butterfly

Age: 27

Occupation: Housewife

Taipei City

Little Butterfly is a beautiful young woman who had two abortions when she was 18 years old because she got pregnant accidentally with her first boyfriend. Little Butterfly does not regret her decision, as she did not want to have children at that time. Her ex-boyfriend had told her:

“You’re still young. You’ll regret if you give birth to them.” Therefore, when she was lying on the operation bed waiting for the surgery, she murmured to the fetus: “It’s not my fault. Go look for your father”. Strangely, 2-3 years after the abortions, she never got pregnant again. She supposed that her ex-boyfriend’s semen began to have problems. However, she got pregnant soon after getting married.

Now, Little Butterfly is a housewife and has a son, born in 2004, and a daughter, in 2006. She complains that her husband’s family prefers her son to her daughter, who died in her sleep due to severe heart disease after the 2007 Chinese New Year before turning 1. Little Butterfly’s daughter was a sweet girl who, other than sleeping, always wanted to be held. Little Butterfly misses her a lot. She visited temples, hoping to communicate with the girl through mediums, but has gone so often that the mediums finally stopped her. Recently, she has adopted a Maltese dog and she said: “I believe she is my daughter, reborn.”

Little Butterfly is not happy with her life, which, to some extent, seems to imprison her. She worked in clothing stores and pubs, which were exciting jobs to her, but she had to quit after getting married in order to take care of her husband and children. Then, her husband was put in jail and, since then, she has been restrained by her parents-in-law. For example, she cannot easily go out because they want to prevent her from having affairs. Because of that and the need to take care of her son, she cannot work. As for having some money to spend on herself, she can only rely on an allowance provided by her in-laws. Yang Daxian told Little Butterfly that she does not have “windfall fortune” (*piancaiyun* 偏財運), which was quite disappointing to her. She loves her daughter, but her in-laws are not concerned about her feelings, as they prefer sons, and her visits to mediums to contact her daughter have been denounced as superstition. Becoming tired of this life, she has been considering divorcing her husband, but the request has been refused.

Little Butterfly came to Yang Daxian because her friend highly recommended his palace. She sought help because her husband had committed a crime and was sent to jail, causing her family economic hardship. She hoped that the ritual can help her get rid of the misfortunes and bring good fortune to the family, such as having her husband released early. In addition to the spirits of the two aborted fetuses and her infant daughter, Little Butterfly participated in the ritual for her mother-in-law. While she consulted Yang Daxian, it was revealed on her mother-in-law’s zodiac plan (*mingpan* 命盤) that she had a miscarriage 40 years ago, which was later confirmed by the mother-in-law herself. Due to this accurate prediction, Little Butterfly decided to have the

ritual performed in the Palace.

Little Butterfly had not worried about haunting fetus spirits until her husband was arrested and many misfortunes came to her. One day, she went by a fortunetelling vendor and the master kept calling out to her to invite her in. She wondered if he could see the fetus spirit following her. Based on that experience, she believed it was urgent to have the abortion ritual performed as soon as possible, since she heard that the situation would not improve if the fetus spirit was not appeased right away. In order to pay for the abortion ritual, she had no choice but to borrow money from her mother-in-law. She could not tell her the reason for the loan, because her mother-in-law considers the abortion ritual as superstition. So Little Butterfly lied, saying that the money was to pay for insurance. She also said: “This ritual is performed partly for her [the mother-in-law].” She used a Taiwanese proverb to describe how she felt about her mother-in-law’s ungrateful attitude: “working until sweating, complaining until drooling (*zuodao liuhan, xiandao liuyan* 做到流汗, 嫌到流涎)”.

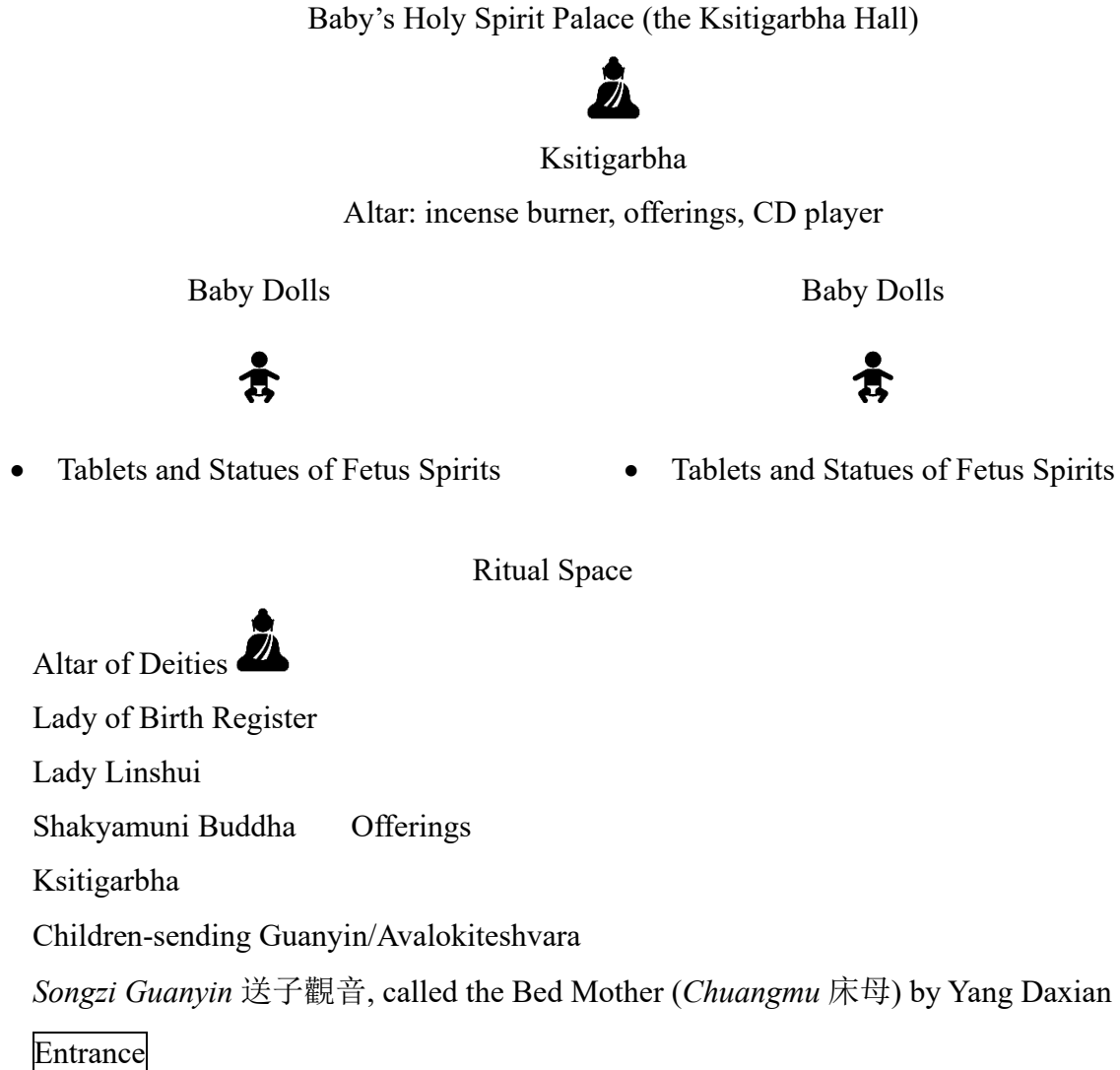
After the ritual, when I asked Little Butterfly if I could interview her, she immediately agreed, despite Yang Daxian saying: “You can simply interview me.” She wondered if the ritual was effective. The first thing came to her mind was the large amount of money she had just paid. Nonetheless, she also felt relieved, feeling like something has been done. When I spoke with Little Butterfly one year after the ritual, she complained that nothing has changed in her life and that she still was suffering.

4-4: The Ritual

The first floor of the Great Prophet Yang’s Baby Holy Palace is its reception area and the offices of Yang Daxian and Baiyun Shanren. The second level is filled with desks and chairs and serves as a seminar room. The top floor is the Baby’s Holy Spirit Palace (*baobao shenglingdian* 寶寶聖靈殿). It also doubles as the Ksitigarbha Hall, where a Ksitigarbha statue and fetus spirits tablets are placed. In this space, chanting Buddhist sutras are broadcasted everyday, all day long. The other side of the Baby’s Holy Spirit Palace is the ritual space, where statues of various deities are placed and the ritual is performed. The deities include: Shakyamuni Buddha, Ksitigarbha, Lady of Birth Register (Zhusheng niangniang 註生娘娘), Lady Linshui, and Children-sending Guanyin/Avalokitesvara. Yang Daxian named the three goddesses above the Yingling Sacred Mothers (Yingling Shengmu 嬰靈聖母). While showing me the ritual space, Yang Daxian told me

some stories of fetus spirits appearances in the Palace, such as strange sounds in the lobby or the incidents where the lights suddenly switched off.

Figure 5. Ritual space in the Great Prophet Yang's *Yingling* Palace



Yang Daxian organizes the individual rituals for participants, but he does not conduct the abortion rituals himself. In fact, the observed ritual was executed by Priest Wang, who often performs Taoist rituals in his own shrine in the Wanhua area, Taipei. Priest Wang leads rituals both as a Black Head priest and a Red Head priest, which means he performs both funerals and problem-solving rituals. He was hired by Yang Daxian to execute the abortion ritual in the Palace. Since the *yang qi* starts decreasing and the *yin qi* increases after 1pm, creating the best environment for spirits to arrive, that is when the ritual should begin, according to Yang Daxian.

The ritual performed for Little Butterfly aimed to redeem and appease three fetus spirits

and one infant spirit. On the day the ritual took place, Yang Daxian accompanied Little Butterfly through the ritual process. As Priest Wang was preparing the ritual, Yang Daxian told Little Butterfly: “It is good that you can attend the ritual. But when the sponsor is too busy to come, we make videos for them as evidence.”

The first step of the ritual is to recite an official notice in front of the altar. The Priest led Little Butterfly to bow to the deities. He then walked around in front of the altar, ringing a hand bell in his hands, the Three Purity Bell (*sanqingling* 三清鈴) with the trident sword (*sanchajian* 三叉劍) shape on the top, representing the Three Purity Heavenly Celestials. The ringing invites deities and drives away demons. He strokes an earthen bowl (*pan* 磬) with the bell on regular basis. The sound is to inform the deities and dispels misfortunes at the same time.

The second step was to hail the wandering fetus spirits to the ritual space. Priest Wang alerts the fetus spirits in question by calling out the fetus spirits’ titles, Little Butterfly and her husband’s names. He stroked the earthen bowl three times and cast divine blocks to check the result. The first result was laughing blocks (*xiaojiao* 笑茭), which means the deities were amused by the questions stated. So Priest Wang recited the same questions and cast the divine blocks again, but the laughing blocks came up again. Finally, at the third time, the fetus spirits arrived. Yang Daxian explained: “Since one of them has been wandering outside for 40 years, it is not easy to recall.”

The third step was to “nail” the fetus spirits into the tablets. The tablets of the Great Prophet Yang’s *Yingling* Palace are all made of decorative metal and wood. For the spirits of this ritual, Little Butterfly had indicated the names Dabao (“Big Baby”) and Erbao (“Second Baby”) for her aborted fetuses and also provided her beloved daughter’s name for the tablets. As for her mother-in-law’s miscarried fetus spirit, she called it “Uncle (*Abo* 阿伯)”. Yang Daxian claimed that the fetus spirit is a boy, meaning it was Little Butterfly’s husband’s older brother (because he was the child of Little Butterfly’s mother-in-law). Priest Wang held the incense in his hands, calling: “Come up here!” He wrote a talisman on the tablet with the incense in his hand, then commanded loudly: “Enter!” and stamped his right foot on the floor. He told the tablet: “In the future, we are going to call you by the name Dabao. Whenever you hear us calling, you have to listen! Do you agree?” Then he cast divine blocks, and the answer was holy blocks, which was an approval.

After the other two requests were approved, the situation was suddenly interrupted by the

4th tablet due to the unusual “response” of the miscarried fetus spirit of Little Butterfly’s mother-in-law. Priest Wang repeatedly commanded the spirit to stay in the tablet at least 5 times and even tried to “pacify” the fetus spirit with a bag of snacks, but the result of the block casting was either laughing blocks or ominous blocks, which means the fetus spirit was not happy with the request. Finally Yang Daxian suggested: “Then let’s send him away.” So Priest Wang asked: “So do you want us to send you to the Heaven in the West?” He cast divine blocks and the result was finally positive! Little Butterfly was kind of worried: “Is he unhappy? Can I speak with him to see if he has anything to tell me or his mother?” Yang Daxian answered: “No need. He is eager to leave. So he will not come back to this world to bother your mother-in-law anymore.” Little Butterfly was anxious: “Then my money is wasted (because he will not stay anyway)!”

Hence, Priest Wang switched to a new official notice. The old one was folded and put aside on the altar by Yang Daxian. The new official notice requested the deity in charge, Ksitigarbha, to guide the fetus spirit to the Heaven in the West, as the fetus spirit had been suffering and wandering in the Yang World for a long time. After doing so, he asked the fetus spirit: “Do you agree with this arrangement?” Again, the answer was positive. Little Butterfly accepted the arrangement.

The ritual was pricey. In the end of the ritual, Yang Daxian charged Little Butterfly 60,000 NT (2,000 CAD), mainly because of the special ritual for her mother-in-law’s miscarried fetus spirit. This price is high compared to the average charge (see Moskowitz’s investigation in Chapter 1).

4-5: Analysis

This section analyzes the above ritual by means of focusing on the participant’s agency as well as how the ritual filled her personal needs through divine communicative means and objects. This process involves enormous customizing and consumerist strategies which allows the ritual participant to interact with the fetus spirit closely.

4-5-1 The Struggling Mother, Wife and Daughter-in-Law

Attending rituals and religious activities provides Little Butterfly with an opportunity to escape from and reconstruct the power relationship between herself and her in-laws. Through her communication with her daughter via the mediums, she is located in her desired parent-child relationship. This relationship is simple but strong, only between her and her beloved daughter without any interference from the in-laws. Her love for her daughter is acknowledged. Similarly,

she went to the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace based on her own choice (not a communal temple in her neighbourhood). During the abortion ritual, Little Butterfly was no longer the powerless daughter-in-law since she was able to investigate her mother-in-law's history and discovered the miscarriage. Through the appeasement, she took action to fix her mother-in-law's mistake and to rescue her husband from an unjust lawsuit, hoping to acquire a brighter future for the family. She transformed from a taker to a giver and that is why she complains that the in-laws do not appreciate after her so many efforts.

Meanwhile, the ritual did not only serve for the benefit of the in-law family. In spite of the fact that the money was borrowed from the mother-in-law, Little Butterfly appeased the three fetus spirits of her own: two from her ex-boyfriend and the other, her favourite child. It did not only function as a resolution for her husband's misfortune, but also served as a remedy to satisfy her own needs.

Moreover, Little Butterfly showed a very different way of thinking from her in-laws or typical patriarchal ideas. She affirmed that she does not regret the two abortions she had and agrees that abortion is necessary if a woman is not ready to be a mother. In addition, as advice to mothers-to-be, she reiterated that girls are equally as good as boys. She then even suggested that girls are much better than boys, because they are sweet and considerate. While talking about children, she suggested that people do not need to have too many, but they should try, by all means, to provide them with a good education and a loving environment. She did not conform to social norms. Little Butterfly's experience shows that abortion ritual is employed by participants as the means for self-healing and problem solving.

4-5-2 Religious Commodification

The Great Prophet Yang's *Yingling* Palace serves an example of the urban ritual style in Taiwan. As mentioned above, the Palace is located in the religious district with the Enacting Heaven Temple (Hsing Tian Kung/Xingtiangong) at its centre. The Hsing Tian Kung has been present in the area since 1968 (*Xingtiangong Wuda Zhiye* 行天宮五大志業). Along with rapidly growing disciple numbers and popularity, the neighbourhood has developed into a religious tourist district. Various fortunetelling vendors took up business spaces of the underground passage and various popular gourmets are located in the neighbourhood. According to statistics, these shops' profit can reach up to 16,000,000 NT (540,000 CAD) per year. The Temple is also a popular Japanese tourist destination (Tsai & Cheng 2012, 2)

According to Chia-Lin Chang's observations, the temple's popularity partly results from its exorcism service (*shoujing* 收驚, to subdue fright). Different from a professional *shoujing* ritual (*dashou* 大收, the major subdual) performed in other temples, Hsing Tian Kung's minor subdual (*xiaoshou* 小收) performed by devoted lay women only takes 3 minutes (Chang 2009, 206) and is free of charge (Chang 2009, 214), which everyone can easily take advantage of. Chang's survey shows that most clients attend the service because of three major factors. First are psychological and pathological factors, such as "offending the *sha*" or "sickness" (Chang 2009, 213). Second are religious factors, such as "receiving blessings", "experiencing its efficacy" or "experiencing the religious aura" (Chang 2009, 213-214). Third are factors originated from social networking, such as "going by the Hsing Tian Kung," "attending it on the way while coming to the Temple to *baibai*," "visiting the temple with friends or families," or "recommended by friends or families" (Chang 2009, 214). Hence, Chang claims that the meaning of the *shoujing* ritual was been re-interpreted by these disciples (Chang 2009, 215-216). This ritual not only heal the visitors' sicknesses, but it also satisfies their psychological needs for religious aura and social networking needs (Chang 2009, 215).

In addition to the popular *shoujing* service, the Hsing Tian Kung's several new policies represent the popular values and moralities of urban citizens nowadays. The Temple has been ambitiously reforming the ritual process recently. For example, presenting offerings as well as burning incense and paper money were banned in 2014 in the name of environmental protection and the offering tables and incense burners have been removed accordingly (Lee 2014). The Temple claims: "If a disciple has a kind and pure heart, they naturally spread the fragrance of morality, which is the most favoured to the Enzhugong (*Guanshen dijun* 關聖帝君)" (Zhang 2014). Richard Madsen shows how Hsing Tian Kung highlights morality over ritual, and attempts to serve as an earthly religion of the people (or the bourgeois) (Madsen 2007, 114 & 121). The rituals are tied to the universalistic moral values shared by people from different cultures and traditions (Madsen 2007, 114). While the decision to abandon ritual objects was admired by a lot of people as an act of "returning to the nature of belief," incense and offering vendors in the neighbourhood were extremely unhappy (Pan & Huang 2014). Furthermore, scholar Wei-Huan Lee argues that this decision shows how the bodily experiences in a ritual is discredited by "modern" and "progressive" secularists as a trade between the ritual participant and the deity. This mindset exemplifies the movement of rationalization which ridicules the essential qualities of

religiosity (Lee 2014).

Nevertheless, the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace stands as a keen contrast to the simple, rationalized and bourgeois philosophy presented by the Hsing Tian Kung. As described above, the jargon on the colourful signs, used by the practitioners at the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace, are rooted in "irrational" or even "superstitious" fear to the unpredictable fates. Most of the services can be seen performed by specialists in rural and urban areas of China. For example, James Hayes observes the rich written manuscripts and their uses by specialists in "protective rituals" in village life of the New Territory, Hong Kong (Hayes 1985, 92). He describes the types/themes of these ritualistic services: *feng-shui* or geomancy (Hayes 1985, 93); the knowledge, writing and preparation of charms (Hayes 1985, 96); and divination and fortune telling (Hayes 1985, 98). These themes easily come to mind when one looks at the signs of the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace. According to Hayes, these rituals are "manipulation of the forces thought to influence human fate" (Hayes 1985, 92). They are described as "protective" because they attempt to insure the "safety" and "well-being" of life, including this one and next one (Hayes 1985, 92). Indeed, the abortion ritual observed in the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace serves the needs of Little Butterfly in this present life: "[to] get rid of the misfortunes and bring good fortune to the family." Those misfortunes were attributed to the fetus spirits, which can be seen in the abortion ritual attended by Little Butterfly. This attribution can be seen in various temples that perform abortion rituals in Taiwan, as examined in Chapter 1. Misfortunes in health, family, interpersonal relations, finance and work place could all be regarded as caused by a haunting fetus. Hardacre calls these practitioners and spiritualists "religious entrepreneurs" (Hardacre 2002, 157). They tend to emphasize more the personal charisma or supernatural power to attract clientele (Hardacre 2002, 157; Moskowitz 2001, 94-114). Based on the above, it is not surprising that Mr. Yang named himself "the Prophet" and even included it in the shrine's name, "the Prophet Yang."

The Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace promises to guide the client through the fear to the unknown, as long as they are willing to pay. Little Butterfly might act as an autonomous daughter-in-law and wife during the abortion ritual but, at the same time, she is a subject hailed by the mechanism of religious commodification. The abortion ritual that took place at the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace is a good example of a consumerist style of religious practice. Being called to the ritual, named and required to stay in the palace, as well as being led to the

reincarnation or the Heaven in the West, the “flexibility” or “compatibility” of the fetus spirit shows that the abortion ritual is performed in a custom design fashion. Each product and its price are clearly identified and categorized. The more service and labour the ritual consumes, the higher the capital invested. Moreover, elements from Chinese religion (the *Yingling Shengmu*) and Japanese religion (*kuyō* of statues) are chosen and combined intentionally to be deployed and displayed in the space in order to satisfy the specific needs of the client. Through the ritual process, Little Butterfly followed each step of the service and decided which service she ought to purchase next. More importantly, her reason to attend this ritual –appeasing the fetus spirits– can only be achieved through purchasing these services. Her sincere apology (free of charge) cannot help. The divine aura in the Hsing Tian Kung was transformed into a trouble-shooting mechanism in the Great Prophet Yang’s Baby Holy Palace.

Misfortune is unpredictable but, during the ritual, the space’s decoration, tablets and baby statues were all made in an easygoing and user-friendly fashion. There were no intricate religious doctrines, no scary-looking statues of deities or messengers from the Underworld and there was a person acting as a medium between the professionally knowledgeable priest and the anxious participant. Moreover, the ritual process was explained by Prophet Yang to the client in a straightforward way so that she understands the product she was purchasing. Within the ritual space is a course of treatment to fit the needs of lay people in a secular context.

As scholars have discussed, contemporary religions have developed themselves into a capitalistic exchange between money and goods, which results in a prosperous market of merchandise and tourism. Robert P. Weller’s observation of ghost worship shows how the contractual relationship between a ghost and a client is constructed through a quick profit trade. He also suggests that the prosperous religious markets in Taiwan that emerged during the process of democratization shows how the diminishing state-supported religious monopoly is replaced by “entrepreneurial temples” in the market (Weller 2008, 23). Vincent J. Miller’s post-modernist studies of “Consuming Religion” also suggests: “When consumption becomes the dominant cultural practice, belief is systematically misdirected from traditional religious practices into consumption.... Traditional practices of self-transformation are subordinated to consumer choice” (Miller 2005, 225). Miller claims that this type of commodification relies on religious materiality, rather than belief. Symbols and practices of the traditional context are attached with new meanings. Furthermore, consuming these symbols and practices becomes the means of resolution (Miller

2005, 88). Consumption replaces close human relationships and serves as the source of satisfaction for an individual.

Nonetheless, to some extent, a consumerist ritual Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace is not too different from a ritual of fright subdual (*shoujing*) in Hsing Tian Kung. As analyzed above, the *shoujing* ritual in Hsing Tian Kung meets the psychological needs of participants (Chang 2009, 215). The abortion ritual also satisfied Little Butterfly's needs. A personalized ritual allows her to access the divinity in her personalized way. This personalized way of accessing religion opens up a new mode of religiosity. While analyzing the flourishing market for "deity dolls (*shenming gonzai* 神明公仔)" in Taiwan in the 2000s, Hsun Chan admits that to make a powerful deity into a cute doll to be carried by consumers with them sounds like a disturbing idea to many scholars (Chang 2017, 8). However, according to Chang, deity dolls as intimate listeners and protectors—different from authoritarian deities—are emotionally healing (Chang 2017, 10-11). Furthermore, the emergence of deity dolls signifies the maturity of religion in Taiwan, which allows for "modernized" and "diversified" ways of worship (Chang 2017, 10). Furthermore, Chang states that, as an object, a deity doll is like a solemn statue, which is able to shape the participant's feelings, emotions as well as senses of time and space through bodily perception and bodily experience. The significance of ritual objects is to be analyzed as follows.

4-5-3 Communication: Language, Gesture and the Divine Blocks

Despite the entrepreneurial nature of the abortion ritual performed at the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace, Little Butterfly did achieve a sense of involvement. The ritual not only provided the participant with immediate feedback, but it was also able to give her a "customized" manmade karmic merit and the destiny of the fetus spirits. The spirits showed their various intentions and the ritual was able to respond. During that time, the sacred distance between the mundane being and the divine order of reincarnation ceased. The future destination of the fetus spirit can be determined and the spirit can finally rest there, with the participant's assistance. Disciples act on behalf of the divine, which empowers the participant to transcend from a powerless victim of abortion to an active mother and daughter-in-law who is able to arrange the future life of the fetus spirit. This type of empowerment creates a sense of involvement and achievement for the participant.

This communicative process is accomplished through language, gestures and divine blocks. In the other types of Taiwanese abortion rituals observed in this thesis, the fetus spirits can

only be summoned and communicated with through a medium or specialized ritual (such as *guanluoyin*, discussed in the next chapter). Otherwise, most temples mainly employed an official notice, paper money and prayers as a means of communication, which can be seen as “indirect” visualizations. On the contrary, the presence of the fetus spirit was particularly prominent in the Great Prophet Yang’s Baby Holy Palace through the verbal and body languages of the ritual practitioners. Both these uses of language dramatically conceptualized the fetus spirits. Through conversation and “scooping,” the fetus spirit “showed up.” They listened to the priest like children would. The priest is not only a servant of the deities but also a translator for the fetus spirit. Through the visualization, the fetus spirits turned into active members of the social relationship. Little Butterfly “retrieved” the connections with her three children and her *Abo* and their kinship was revived and expanded.

In addition, the will of the fetus spirits was conveyed through the divination blocks. The divination blocks are called *bei* (盃 or 杯, in the South Min dialect spoken in Taiwan the pronunciation is more like *poe*) or *jiao* (筊, 琖 or 筴). They were made of jade in earlier days (Lin 2012, 8, citing Study on the Vocabulary in Zhuzi Yulei, *Zhuzi yulei cihui yanjiu* 朱子語類詞匯研究), shell, bamboo or wood (Lin 2012, 18). Nowadays, they are painted red. The moon-shaped block has one round side and one flat side. Two divination blocks are tossed in a ritual in order to ascertain the will of the divinity or the spirit invoked. Before casting the divination blocks, it is necessary to light candles, burn incense, *baibai* (bow or kneel and pray with joined hands) and to carefully explain the matter at hand to the divinity. The disciple holds the *jiao* and *baibais* three times and then circles the *jiao* above the incense once, before throwing them on the floor. Different combinations refer to different responses:

- Both round sides up (*yinbei* 陰杯): ominous blocks: negative, inauspicious
- Both flat sides up (*xiaobei* 笑杯): laughing blocks: mixture of positive and negative answers
- One flat side and one round side (*shengbei* 聖杯): holy blocks: positive, auspicious. (Hong 2009)¹²

¹² Divination blocks have an ancient history. In the *Zhuzi yulei cihui yanjiu* 朱子語類詞匯研究, there is an annotation: “*Fuxi* (伏羲) drew trigrams during that (ancient) time, which was an imitation of the casting *jiao*”.¹² The use of *bei* or *jiao* for fortunetelling can be traced back to the oracle bone scripts of the Yin and Shang periods as well as to rod divination (*shizhan* 筮占) employed when consulting the *Book of Changes* during the Zhou Dynasty (*Zhouyi* 周易) (Lin 2012?, 18). Related forms of divination were called *meibu* (枚卜, sheet/coin fortunetelling) in *Zuozhuan* 左傳, *tingzhuan* (筴筮) in *Lisao* 離騷, and *beijiao* 盃琖 in Hany Yu 韓愈’s essays during the Tang dynasty (Lin 2012, 18). Holy blocks *shengbei* 聖筴 are also called as “*shengjiao* 勝筴 (victorious blocks)”. It is said that it is auspicious

It was still surprising that the spirit of Little Butterfly's *Abo* showed his disapproval of staying in the Palace with five sequential laughing blocks or negative blocks and his desire to leave right away was expressed instantly by the "holy" blocks.¹³ David K. Jordan created a table to demonstrate the different combinations of two divine blocks and their probabilities:

Table 6. David K. Jordan's tabulation of the results and their probabilities of tossing divine blocks

Probabilities of Different Combinations of Tosses of a "Fair" Poe				
Name	First Poe	Second Poe	Probability	Positions
i. chhìo-poe 笑盃	flat side up	flat side up	25%	Same
ii. im-poe 陰盃	rounded side up	rounded side up	25%	Same
iii. siū ⁿ -poe 聖盃	rounded side up	flat side up	25%	Different
iv. siū ⁿ -poe 聖盃	flat side up	rounded side up	25%	Different

Source: Jordan 1982.

Furthermore, David K. Jordan mentions that a ritual normally requires the worshipper to cast the blocks several times in a row until a final answer can be confirmed. In that case, he constructs a formula based on the convention: "The probability of a statement requiring N formulations to be confirmed is equal to the product of the probabilities of disconfirmation (1-C) on all previous trials times the probability of confirmation (C) on the Nth trial, or $C(1-C)^{N-1} = (1/8)(7/8)^{N-1} = (7/64)^{N-1}$ " (Jordan 1982).

to receive one flat side and one round side of the blocks because of the interaction between *yin* and *yang* (Lin 2012, 17).

¹³ Her experience reminded us of another similar, but even more dramatic, story. The 1st Volume of *Stone Forest and Swallows' Words* (*Shilin yanyu* 石林燕語) by Ye Mengde 葉夢得 during the Song dynasty talks about the legend of Zhao Kuangyin (趙匡胤), the founder of the Song dynasty: When the founder of the Song dynasty (*Taizu* 太祖) was not yet in power he entered the Gaoxin temple in Nanjing while drunk. There were *beijiao* made of bamboo on the incense table. He picked them up to predict his fame and position... starting from an ordinary soldier to a provincial military governor (*Jiedushi* 節度使), he cast sequentially, but received no response. (Someone besides him) suddenly said: "After this, shouldn't you try Son of the Heaven (emperor)?" He cast and holy blocks appeared right away (Quoted by Lin 2012, 18).

Jordan created a table to show the probability (1982):

Table 7. David K. Jordan's calculation of probability for multiple formulation

Probability of Confirmation by Poe on the Nth Formulation		
Formulation Number	Probability of Confirmation at N	% of Divinations with Confirmation (cumulative probability)
N=1	12.5%	12.5
N=2	10.9%	23.4
N=3	9.6%	33.0
N=4	8.4%	41.4
N=5	7.3%	48.7
N=6	6.4%	55.1
N=10	3.8%	83.1
N=20	1.0%	Nearly All
N=50	0.018%	Nearly All
N=100	0.0000002%	Nearly All

Source: Jordan 1982.

Hence, the more someone tosses divine blocks, the less they are able to get a desired answer, which is an “infinite series of declining probabilities” (Jordan 1982). Tossing divine blocks is often limited to three times, which allows the believers to obtain a desired answer within a reasonable time (Huang 2013).

More interestingly, a group of elementary school students in Taichung county did various experiments by tossing divine blocks 1000 times to examine the probabilities of the results (Zhijiao Tantaio 2007, 6). Similar to David K. Jordan's calculations, their experiments showed that the probability of obtaining holy blocks is higher. Furthermore, their testing of other hypotheses achieved interesting discoveries. First, while tossing one divine block, it is more possible to get a

round side than a flat side. Hence, while tossing two blocks it is more probable to get two rounds sides (also called “crying blocks *kujiao* 哭筊” by some people, which has a stronger sense of disapproval than “laughing blocks”) (Zhijiao Tantaio 2007, 8) than two flat sides. This result can be applied to blocks in almost all shapes (curved or not and abrasive or not), except blocks in flat shapes, which have a higher probability to have two flat sides than two round sides (Zhijiao Tantaio 2007, 15). Second, the worshippers’ postures also vary the result. Before casting the blocks, if the worshipper places the blocks in their hands with two round sides up (intentionally), the possibility of getting holy blocks (positive answers) is significantly higher than placing the blocks with two flat sides up (Zhijiao Tantaio 2007 18 and 20). Third, the hardness of the floor also impacts the result. It is more possible to get a flat side than a round side when tossing the blocks on a soft mat than on a hard concrete floor. On the contrary, a round side would appear more often on a concrete floor (Zhijiao Tantaio 2007, 21). Hence, based on the experiments above, according to some mathematics scholars, it is very likely that the law of probability allows the believers to manipulate the results to some extent (Lai 2015).

However, in spite of laws of chance, David K. Jordan notes that, since casting divine blocks is a religious behaviour, the results are “governed by divine intelligence and will” in the disciple’s understanding (Jordan 1982). At the same time, according to his observation, it seems that believers are also aware of the mathematical influence on the results, yet, it is believed to not be a good behaviour to “tempt the Lord thy God” (Jordan 1982) by testing the statistics. The posture to cast divine blocks is also standardized, and the number of times of casting is controlled. In other words, the statistics can be taken advantage of but easily recognized at the same time. A good casting requires that the believer understands its statistical nature but maintain a modest attitude toward the deity. Based on these requirements, conventions have been created (such as three castings in a row and prioritizing the result of the most recent casting) and absurd questions should not be asked or none should be asked at all. According to Jordan, these requirements are a “cultural response” to the laws of chance (Jordan 1982). Hence, Jordan comments that casting divine blocks is a practice relying on “individual or collective self-deception” (Jordan 1982). The power which preserves the self-deception is exactly where ethnographical interests lie.

Is Little Butterfly’s ritual a “self-deceptive” one? At least, not with regard to the divine block casting. Her case shows that casting divine blocks surpasses the laws of chance. She cast at least five times before she received a positive answer, which, according to Jordan’s table above, is

only a 6.4% probability! To an anxious believer, this rare situation seemed to deliver a strong message, which inevitably pushed her to a sacred and spiritual interpretation of the mysterious result (“he is not happy”). Furthermore, the fetus spirit’s strong message requested and resulted in a ritual process modification. While the priest and the participant were hoping Abo’s fetus spirit would stay in the Palace, the fetus spirit’s will was expressed through the divine blocks and his final destination was changed to the Heaven in the West (“let him leave”). In other words, the divine blocks that served as the means of communication between the spirits and the believer intervened in the standard process by providing information that influenced the ritual’s final result. Therefore, the ritual object’s efficacy is shown, which serves another example of the vivid communication process in this particular ritual.

4-5-4 The Tablets

In addition to the divine blocks, another ritual object that serves as evidence that the fetus spirits are well taken care of are the tablets. Tablet usage in the abortion ritual in the Great Prophet Yang’s Baby Holy Palace calls for the examination of the concept of the soul in Chinese religion. James Thayer Addison, a religious scholar of an American missionary institution in the 1920s, observes how the tablet is able to function as the place where the soul of the dead resides through the rite of *dianzhu* (點主):

The front inner surface bears the characters shell *chu*, which mean "lodging place of the spirit." the front outer surface bears the characters *shén wei*, which mean "seat of the spirit." In writing the inscriptions, a certain point or dot on the character for *chu* and a dot on the character for *wei* are omitted. Completing these two characters by adding to them the missing points constitutes the ceremony by which the tablet is consecrated. In the presence of a family gathering and with elaborate formality a mandarin of high rank takes a vermilion pencil and imposes the missing red dots upon the characters. Sometimes two ceremonies take place, with mandarins of different grades officiating, one for the completion of the *chu* and one for that of the *wei*. By whatever means the consecration is accomplished, the tablet becomes thereby the permanent abode of the spirit. (Addison 1925)

After the above process, the tablets then become a representation of the ancestors to their descendants. According to Seiichiro Suzuki’s observation of ancestral worship in colonial Taiwan, ancestral tablets are “worshipped by the family in the morning and the evening. The tablets are

served as a living spirit. Therefore, all the offerings and worshipping by the descendants have to be sincere” (Suzuki 1989, 8). To be offered a tablet indicates the recognition of a contributor’s status within a family and lineage. In her research of the cult of the dead in a village of northern Taiwan, Emily Ahern investigated how the ancestral tablet manifests the relationship between the dead and the living. She lists the qualifications which allow a person’s tablet to be worshipped in an ancestral hall. Her research shows that “the creation of a tablet depends on the obligation a living person feels toward the deceased” (Ahern 1973, 139); i.e., lineal structure, marital status, land inheritance and other obligations.

Normally in a Chinese funeral, the deceased is always given a written tablet as a “repository” where the soul resides, except “those who died as infants or as wandering strangers” (Watson 1988, 13). Nonetheless, in some circumstances tablets are also placed for ghosts who are not worshipped by their descendants; for example, the Temple of Unmarried Girls (*Guniangmiao* 姑娘廟) in Shiding, Taipei county, and the Temple for people who died of feuds between the settlers from Zhangzhou and Quanzhou (*Laodagongmiao* 老大公廟) in Keelung. Wei-ping Lin points out that the tablets of ancestors and those of ghosts are different. The tablets of ghosts do not receive the rite of *dianzhu*.

To place a tablet is the means for the descendants to establish a long-lasting relationship with the ancestors. Through the material [tablets] human and spirits are able to connect. As a result, since the tablets of the ghosts do not receive *dianzhu*, nor are any statues made for them, it shows that people only aim to pacify the ghosts, rather than establishing a long-lasting relationship with them. (Lin 2011, 22)

Lin’s observation explains the use of spirit-tablets in various ghosts rituals in Taiwan. For example, during the ghost month, paper tablets are displayed in the ritual space to receive offerings. They are burned after the ritual and represent the departure of the ghosts to reincarnation (or back to the underworld). The transformation, from being invited to being sent off, shows that the pacification is temporary and utilitarian. Worshippers are not willing to establish a long-lasting relationship with them.¹⁴

Nonetheless, the abortion ritual performed at the Great Prophet Yang’s Baby Holy Palace shows there is another kind of imagination toward the fetus spirit in Taiwan. If the fetus spirit is

¹⁴ Paper tablets were used in most abortion rituals observed in this thesis, which shows the participants’ intention to only maintain a limited-time relationship with the *Yingling*. Please see Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

defined as a type of ghost, then the ritual presents a different understanding of the tablets. Unlike the ghosts treated in the Hungry Ghost (*pudu* 普渡) rituals, the fetus spirits are invited to stay. Through the “nailing” trick, the wandering spirits are relocated in the tablets. Furthermore, they are given names, which are exactly like names a parent would give their child. To give the fetus spirit a name represents the approval of the connection with the spirit. Through naming, a relationship between the living and the dead is established (“mother and Dabao”). This naming and care allow the parents to compensate for the abortion. However, the attachment does not last long. Eventually, the fetus spirits have to be sent back to reincarnation after the three-year in-palace *gongyang*. A similar style of abortion ritual is performed at the Dragon Lake Temple. Both temples stress that the best way to pacify a fetus spirit is to let them stay in the temple for three years, while learning divine knowledge and enjoying their parents’ care. Gradually, the fetus spirit is relieved from resentment and comprehends the dharma. Then, they can go back to reincarnation without any attachment to the parents, which is accomplished through the disposal or destruction of the tablets. The ritual in Great Prophet Yang’s Baby Holy Palace and the Dragon Lake Temple shows a negotiated image of the fetus spirit: a type of spirit between a ghost (outsider, a threat) and family (insider, a dependent). As a result, the miscarried fetus of Little Butterfly’s mother-in-law preferred leaving. The distance between him and the family determines that he is a fierce and indifferent spirit, thus a three-year reconciliation is not necessary. For those *Yingling* who still remain close to the family (for reasons such as a recent abortion), their tablets were transformed into cute babies, and bigger baby statues are placed in the Ksitigarbha Hall. These babies wear colourful outfits and big smiles, which create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for young urban customers. It is noteworthy that these babies are all presented in traditional Chinese image: half-naked chubby babies in red aprons, like those appear in Chinese New Year pictures. This could hint that the abortion ritual in Taiwan borrows both Japanese and Chinese elements in shaping its style.

4-5-5 *Kuyō* or *Chaodu*?

The abortion ritual performed at the Great Prophet Yang’s Palace inevitably reminds visitors of the *Mizuko kuyō* practice in Japan. First, a *Jizo* statue is placed in the centre as the host deity in charge of the ritual. Second, numerous tablets of fetus spirits are placed inside the space, making the Palace similar to the cemetery-like Japanese temples that provide the *mizuko kuyō* service. Third, the tablets are placed there so that the spirits can be worshipped thus, *kuyō*. The three-year in-place worship can also be observed at the Dragon Lake Temple in Miaoli, while most

temples I visited told me that the spirits should be sent back to reincarnation right away.

Indeed, the Japanese style of abortion ritual has been localized in Taiwan. In his research on the abortion ritual in Taiwan, Moskowitz describes how the difference and discrepancy between the souls of a fetus/infant and an older child/adult are addressed during the ritual. He remarks that the term *baibai* is used for worship of one's ancestors or gods. Nonetheless, *baibai* is not used for abortion ritual:

Yang (養) is the term most commonly used in reference to dealing with fetus demons. The more reverential form of the term, *gongyang* (供養), is most commonly used with fetus ghosts. Both *yang* and *gongyang* mean "to raise," as in raising one's children, and to "provide," as in providing support for one's parents. (Moskowitz 2001, 178)

However, at the same time, he indicates that one of his informants, a Buddhist master, urged him to use the term "*chaodu* 超渡" instead:

She told me that I should say *chaodu*, a Buddhist term that means to raise a soul from its suffering in the next world. I have settled for the phrases "to provide for," "to appease," or "to send on to its next life," according to the context. Yet, if these terms have slightly different resonance from "worship," they are equally differentiated from exorcism (*qugui, qumo*), or chastisement of deceased offspring that occurred in earlier times. As with worship, people appease fetus ghosts both out of concern for their own welfare and that of the spirits. (Moskowitz 2001, 178)

It is understandable why Moskowitz employs the term "*yang*" and "*gongyang*," since his fieldwork mostly focuses on the abortion ritual performed at Dragon Lake Temple. Just like Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace, the Dragon Lake Temple performs the three-year in-place style of abortion ritual. However, most of the temples I visited employed the term *chaodu*. Most of the abortion rituals I observed aimed to send the fetus spirits back to reincarnation right after the ritual. During the interview, Priest Lin, the master priest at the City God Temple in Hsinchu, argues: "Of course you want them to go back and start a new life as soon as possible. Why do you want them to stay?"¹⁵ It is clear that the difference between *gongyang* and *chaodu* stems from this central idea: are the fetus spirits going to stay or leave?

¹⁵ Interview with Priest Lin, July 16, 2008.

To invite the ghost to stay could be evidence that, to some extent, the abortion ritual in Taiwan was imported from Japan. The term “*gongyang*” is probably inspired by the Japanese term “*kuyō*.” Helen Hardacre translates *mizuko kuyō*, the Japanese abortion ritual, into “rites for water children” (Hardacre 1997, 2). Elizabeth G. Harrison translates *mizuko kuyō* into “memorial services for dead children” (Harrison & Igeta 1995, 67). According to Harrison, *mizuko kuyō* is “modeled on memorial services for ancestral spirits, in which a member of the clergy often performs a *kuyō*, or memorial rite” (Harrison & Igeta 1995, 68). She further explains:

Through the performance of a *mizuko kuyō* service and the provision of various sorts of “nourishment” (the literal sense of the word *kuyō*), including offerings of money, food, flowers, prayers, incense, and the reading of religious texts, participants hope that such children will be brought to the attention of a deity, that they will not suffer greatly wherever they are, that they will soon be reborn into a good life, and that they will stop creating problems for their living families, if this is perceived to be taking place. (Harrison & Igeta 1995, 68-69)

In the Japanese abortion ritual, the fetus spirit is expected to leave and return to reincarnation as well. Hence, Harrison indicates that “some people see this as a one-time duty” (Harrison & Igeta 1995, 68). Nonetheless, “many participants speak of this practice as a lifelong commitment” (Harrison & Igeta 1995, 68). Similarly, William R. Lafleur describes that participants’ constant visits to Purple Cloud Temple - one of the most spectacular sites for abortion rituals in Japan - are “modeled after that of reunion rather than separation” (Lafleur 1992, 10). Nonetheless, this idea of life-long dedication was not popularly practiced in Taiwan. *Gongyang* in Taiwan seems to be the negotiation between *kuyō* in Japan and *chaodu* in Taiwan. This is a design which may fits the customers’ needs and budget.

4-6 The Personhood of the Fetus: the Soul(s) (the *Sanhun Qipo*)

The abortion ritual performed in the Great Prophet Yang’s Baby Holy Palace calls for the examination of the fetus spirits’ soul(s). Various scholars agree that the dead have at least three souls. Maurice Freedman explains:

The conception of the fate of the dead logically required a tripartition of the soul, for there were three different places to which an individual proceeded on death, and in each of these three places he received different rites. He went into his grave; he

was established in his tablet by the soul-dotting rite; he passed into the underworld to experience judgement, punishment, and usually rebirth. The threefold division of the soul was in fact explicitly reflected in the ideas expressed by Chinese, although one would doubtless exceed the warrant of the evidence in concluding that a systematic conception of the soul as three distinct entities was present in the minds of all Chinese. (Freedman 1958, 86)

During a funeral, the three souls are relocated into three sites. In her research on the cult of the dead, Emily Ahern states: “The dead, besides manifesting themselves in hall tablets and in their bones at the graves, appear in yet another guise, as residents of the underworld” (Ahern 1973, 220). Nonetheless, several scholars suggest that there are two souls, or forces. While analyzing the concept of souls in Chinese religion, J.J.M. de Groot cites the Scripture of Inner Mediation (*Neiguanjing* 內觀經; DZ 641, tr Kohn 2010:179-187) to describe how the three *huns* and seven *pos* develop from the interactions of *yin* and *yang*:

When his parents have sexual intercourse, man receives the beginning of his life. In the first month it forms the *tsing* (精) of the placenta, which is a coagulation of blood. In the second month it forms his first shape, that is to say, the complete fetus. In the third, *shen* (神) substance of the Yang forms his triple *hwun* (魂), which moves to make him live. In the fourth month the spirit manifestations (靈) of the Yin produce his septempartite *poh* (魄), which, remaining motionless, dominates his body. (de Groot 1982, 62)

Similarly, Myran L. Cohen indicates, according to literary and ethnographic materials, it is believed that: “The fundamental yin-yang dualism gave rise to the distinction between the *po*- the earthly *yin* soul which went into the grave with the body of the dead, and the *hun*- the yang soul of the ancestral tablet” (Cohen 1988:182).

Nonetheless, Stevan Harrell assumes there is only one *ling-hun*. He agrees that the division of one soul into three is commonly practiced by folk belief and ancestral worship in Taiwan. However, in fact, the three souls are one soul, or at least “functionally one” in three contexts:

When rural Taiwanese perform ancestral sacrifices at home, they naturally think of the *ling-hun* in the tablet; when they take offerings to the cemetery, they think of it in the grave; and when they go on shamanistic trips, they think of it in the yin world. (Harrell 1979, 523)

Taiwanese anthropologist Wei-Ping Lin suggests that the concept of the three souls hints at the Han society's concern about the patriline's continuity. As well, to the descendants, it is important to lead the souls of the dead to the appropriate places; otherwise, the displacement results in the ghosts haunting the descendants (W-P. Lin 2011, 20). Indeed, according to Stephan Feuchtwang, two types of spirits become ghosts: those who do not have descendants to worship them after death, and those who die a violent death (Feuchtwang 1974, 109-111) who are believed to be "fixed to a place, the place of their death" (Feuchtwang 1974, 123). These souls have to be called and guided to the right place. For example, de Groot observes the "to call the hwun (*zhaohun* 招魂)" ritual in Amoy:

For the use of that same disembodied *hun*, as they call it in their own tongue, the Amoy Chinese prepare a temporary body in the shape of a tablet, which they call *hun peh*, "silk cloth for the *hwun*," and afterwards they use this object as a means to convey that soul solemnly to the grave in the suite of the corpse, under guidance of invigorating torches. (de Groot, 1982, 63)

Similarly to the abortion ritual observed in the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace, the soul goes through the process of appropriate guidance and is eventually located in the right place. However, for the fetus spirit, this is the only gateway to peace, while adult souls are located at a permanent tablet and the underworld at the same time. The number of souls is another key issue to examine.

During the ritual, the fetus spirit's souls are hailed. They stay in the tablet after being nailed, and three years later they are ready to leave for reincarnation or the Pure Land in the West. They are not like those souls of the dead who die a violent death, attached to the place where they died, they are more like wandering spirits. In the ritual process performed in the Prophet Yang's Palace, the number of souls the fetus owns remains unknown; i.e. it could have more than one soul. However, these souls are treated as one. It can be either the *yang-hun* idea raised by Myran L. Cohen, or the idea raised by Stevan Harrell: one *ling-hun* treated differently in different contexts. Nonetheless, it is clear that the quality of the souls is different from those of an adult. First, the number of souls of a child can be less than those of an adult. The simplified ritual shows the fetus spirit is a minor being compared to an adult. Second, the fetus spirit's soul(s) have a kind of "mobility" which allows for the movement from one place to another. Both of the above refer to the discrepancy between the soul of the fetus and the soul of an adult.

The “mobility” of the soul(s) is sometimes seen as an exceptional situation. For example, in her research on the cult of the dead in Taiwan, Emily Ahern suggests that ancestors can be fierce. The boxes of ancestral tablets should never be moved, or the ancestor could “become angry and cause harm to their descendants” (Ahern 1973, 119). Her investigation shows that, to the villagers, the souls of the ancestor do stay within the tablets. However, they leave the tablets for several days before the New Year and come back on New Year’s Day. As a result, the descendants are able to open the hall box and place new tablets in it without offending the ancestors (Ahern 1973, 119). In this case, the departure of the ancestors’ soul(s) only happens during a certain period of time during the year.

In turn, the “mobility” of the soul(s) is seen as an abnormal situation and has to be fixed. For example, in her research on the popular *shoujing* (收驚 to subdue fright) ritual performed in various temples/private shrines, including the Hsing Tian Kong, Hsun Chang observes how the ritual presents the Han people’s understanding of the soul(s) (Chang 1993, 207-208). Chang suggests: first, a “person” is composed of a body and multiple souls within the body, i.e., *huns* and *pos*. The idea of a normal person refers to the harmonious state of the *huns* and *pos* combination. Second, the body and the souls can still be separated, regardless of the first condition. Third, for example, the soul(s) may escape due to fright. Fourth, the soul(s) escaping from the body rely on external forces/assistance in order to return. Fifth, the person returns to their original status based on the re-combination of the body and the soul(s) (Chang 1993, 207-208). Also, “mobility” is seen as the reason for being fragile; for example, the wandering *taishen* (胎神)¹⁶ belief and practices. Some scholars suggest that *taishen* is a type of power created by pregnancy of the women, such as Jin-shiu Jessie Sung (Sung 2000), while some scholars suggest that *taishen* is the fetus spirit, such as Stevan Harrell (Harrell 1979, 523-524) and Moskowitz (Moskowitz 2001, 44).

On the other hand, mobility can also serve as a source of power. P. Steven Sangren draws a line between *yin* (disorder) and *yang* (order) based on the relationship between souls and the earthly world (Sangren 1987, 141). According to him, ghosts who die of violent death and seek revenge in the *yang* world as well as those kin who do not enjoy worship of the descendants “mediate *yin* and *yang*” (Sangren 1987, 145). Moreover, he claims, since people who die a violent death are often remembered, they are *yang* comparing to those who are forgotten (Sangren 1987,

¹⁶ For more detailed analysis on *taishen*, please consult 2-1: A Rite of Passage.

145). Sangren further argues that the notion of power in such a Chinese context refers to “a function of the mediation of order and disorder. (Sangren 1987, 143)” The mediation between *yin* and *yang* also forms the logic of rituals, including the Hungry Ghost Festival (Sangren 1987, 141, 146 and 148) In other words, ghosts are able to impact the mundane world when they travel between the *yin* and *yang*.

Being exceptional, abnormal and fragile, this is how the fetus/child is imagined in the Chinese context. These qualities have to be corrected through various ritual practices in order to insert the fetus spirit back into the spiritual order. This mobility allows the fetus spirit to wander beyond the normative social structure with its own power.

4-7 Conclusion

This chapter examines the abortion ritual performed in the Great Prophet Yang’s Baby Holy Palace. The analysis focuses on the use of ritual objects including the divine blocks and tablets. It is argued that the ritual objects generate powerful meanings within the ritual process: they express the will and shape the image of the Yingling. Moreover, the display of the ritual objects symbolizes the closure from a broken relationship between the parent(s) and the child as well as the fulfilment of the goal of the ritual. This chapter also examines the construction of the personhood –the conceptualization of souls in Chinese cosmology– of the fetus through the ritual process. Furthermore, this chapter analyzes the customized fashion of the ritual, fitting the needs of urban consumers. Meanwhile, the analysis contrasts this abortion ritual and *Mizuko Kuyō* in terms of their teachings and their ritual processes. The ritual observed in this chapter shows how the Japanese abortion ritual influenced the construction of the Taiwanese one. Nonetheless, in fact, the abortion ritual in Taiwan may be presented in a fully localized manner. Another example of just such an individual ritual is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Guanluoyin in the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity

This chapter analyzes how the ritual *guanluoyin* 關落陰 or 觀落陰 ("touring the passes of the underworld" or "viewing the supernatural world") is used by religious institutions and ritual participants as a newly invented form of abortion ritual in Taiwan today. Previously this ritual was rarely used to visit *Yingling*. Nonetheless, in present-day Taiwan, *guanluoyin* is employed by several religious institutions as one of the options for abortion ritual. The evolution of the functions and practices of *guanluoyin* reveal how the ritual is transformed by the desires of the participants as well as the commercial needs of the religious institution, both of which are embedded in the rapid socio-economic changes in contemporary Taiwan. This chapter examines the ritual process that I observed in Taipei in October 2009 and the experience recounted by one ritual participant.

5-1 The Ritual: *Guanluoyin*

Guanluoyin is a ritual in the Chinese religious tradition in which the shaman travels to the underworld or the supernatural world through a trance. The tour of the underworld aims to serve the needs of the living to communicate with the dead, either to seek advice from ancestors or to pacify discontented ghosts and spirits.

5-1-1 Communicating with the Dead in China

Through the tour *guanluoyin*, the shaman is able to meet dead people and communicate with them. Very often, the tour can be replaced by another ritual process known as *qianwang* 牽亡 (to invite the deceased), through which the spirits of the deceased are requested to enter into the body of the shaman and communicate with his/her living families. *Guanluoyin* and *qianwang* can be traced back as early as the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220). For example, in the Chapter *Lunsi* 論死 (On Dead) of his *Lunheng* 論衡 (Discussive Weighing), philosopher Wang Chong (80 CE) mentions this type of ritual when he denounces various popular superstitions regarding the souls of the dead interacting with the living:

Nowadays, living persons in a trance will sometimes speak as mediums for those who have died, and diviners, striking black chords, will call down the dead, whose souls then will talk through the diviner's mouth. All that is bragging and wild talk. (Wang 1907, 196)

The ritual *guanluoyin* in pre-modern southern China was recorded by various western missionaries and scholars. Several common qualities of the ritual are shared by the field notes of Justus Doolittle (an American missionary) in Fuzhou, Fujian (Doolittle 2002, 441-42), J.J.M. de Groot (a Dutch sinologist) in Southern Fujian and Amoy (De Groot 1982, 1323-41), and Henry Doré (Doré 1908, 147-50), a French Christian missionary. First, the ritual was conducted at the request of people who needed to communicate with their family members who had recently died. The communication often aimed to inquire about their situation and needs in the underworld. Hence, food, offerings and incense were prepared in the ritual space to respond to the needs of the spirit. Second, the ritual was conducted by a female shaman, very often an elderly woman of the village. In de Groot's notes, even the participants had to be women (de Groot 1982, 1332-33). Third, the ritual can be performed with or without the assistance of a deity. According to the notes of Doolittle and de Groot, the communication with the spirits was accomplished through trance of the shaman alone. She entered the trance, which was a sign of possession. She started trembling and mumbling with her eyes closed. Then the conversation between the possessing spirit and the families began (Doolittle 2002, 442 & de Groot 1982, 1333-34).

Guanluoyin also takes place in the Cantonese area, such as the New Territories in Hong Kong. In his research in the New Territories during 1961 to 1963, Jack M. Potter observed how the ritual was performed by female shamans (Potter 1974, 207-31). While the ritual is performed, the female shaman, called *mann seag phox* (old ladies who speak to spirits), is surrounded by villagers, especially those who are eager to communicate with the souls of their deceased families. After entering the trance with a piece of cloth covering her eyes, the soul of the female shaman travels to the supernatural world, known as the Heavenly Flower Gardens (Potter 1974, 208), with the assistance of her familiar spirits. On the way to the destination she would run into souls of the deceased people in the village. According to Potter, there are four types of souls who could be encountered, including people who died an unnatural death, children, women who died before getting married, and ancestors who died natural death. These souls speak through the mouth of the shaman expressing their emotions and needs. The first three categories, Potter claims, have a real grievance against their death and demand reasonable treatments of their families. The families respond by blaming, fearing, confessing and providing compensation. In addition to ritual offerings, the means of compensation include placing a spirit-tablet or a erecting a gravestone. What is noteworthy is that several discontented and greedy souls steal, or kidnap, the souls of

children in the village to make them sick, as a bargaining chip (Potter 1974, 208). The soul of the child can only be returned if the parents repent and make offerings. On the other hand, old family ghosts are normally benevolent. They give their families advice, urging them to maintain a peaceful and stable order within the family. Potter claims: “their message affirms the society’s normative structure. (Potter 1974, 211)” On the other hand, spirits of the deities who reside in a household could also emerge during the tour. A young couple who were fond of the modern lifestyle was told by the deities that their newly renovated house did not have any altars to worship them, which could result in their hunger and unhappiness (Potter 1974, 215). Threatened by the fierce message, the couple immediately started worshipping the deities in the house on a regular basis.

5-1-2 Guanluoyin in Taiwan

Guanluoyin was also widely practiced in Taiwan in the 19th and 20th century. Yeh Chuen-Jung’s archival research cites local gazetteers in Danshui, Miaoli, Xinzhu, Yuanli and Shuqilin, all of which referred to the ritual. Lian Heng’s General History of Taiwan (*Taiwan tongshi* 台灣通史) also mentions the ritual, categorizing it as a form of witchcraft (Yeh 2009). Similarly, Seiichirō Suzuki (Lingmu Qingyilang), a Japanese governmental officer who investigated customs and folk beliefs in Taiwan during the colonial period (1895-1945), described *guanluoyin* in detail:

During the ritual of *guanluoyin* the attendees were divided into the *zuoshuzhe* 作術者 (performers) and the *beishuzhe* 被術者 (subject, medium). The performers are mostly male priests... People who are suffering from misfortune, demons of sickness, or sadness of son loss, ask the priest to perform *guanluoyin*. The subject can either be the person who is suffering, or a third party they entrust. The third party should be a woman who can easily be *zhong* 中 (struck by gods) during the *guanluoyin* ritual. The priest asks the subject to sit on a chair, which is located in front of the statue of Prince Nezha 哪咤太子, who is worshipped by the priest. Then he covered the eyes of the subject with black cloth. He presents the incense, burns paper money, and prays. Meanwhile, he knocks on the table with a ruler or a bamboo pole, while he chants the incantation which guides the medium to the underworld. Soon the medium enters the state of trance without feeling any people or things. Obviously this is a kind of hypnosis. (Suzuki 1989, 68)

Seiichirō Suzuki also regards *guanluoyin* as a type of witchcraft. Similar to the observation of earlier western scholars and missionaries, he affirms: “This type of superstition is deeply rooted among women. (Suzuki 1989, 68)”

Emily Ahern examines the more recent practice of *guanluoyin* through her fieldwork in Ch’inan in Taiwan during the 1960’s to 1970’s (Ahern 1973). In the village, the underworld is called the *im* (*yin*) world, in contrast with the *iong* (*yang*) world where the living reside. The *yin* world is where the soul of the deceased goes after death, where he/she “must wait the allotted time for his reincarnation (Ahern 1973, 221)”. While staying in the underworld, the soul of the ancestor could be punished due to any wrong he committed in his life. None of the descendants would want their ancestors to suffer. Hence, through the guidance of a shaman, the delegated descendant could visit the underworld and offer assistance to the ancestor. During the ritual, several gods could be requested by the priest to possess the body of the medium and lead him/her to the underworld. The goal of the trip included donating money, housing the dead and renovating the building in order to improve his/her life quality in the underworld.

Emily Ahern affirms that the underworld, which allows for interaction and negotiation between the living and the dead, acts as a context where the communication between dead and the living are extended after the time of death (Ahern 1973, 242). However, according to her, the trip also serves to finalize the funeral. The villagers’ experiences showed that the ancestors in the underworld were not always accessible when the trip took place. In addition, even if they showed up, the ancestors were hesitant to respond to the participants. Hence, Ahern suggests that the communication with the dead reinforces “the division of the dead from the living (Ahern 1973, 245)”. She points out that the underworld serves as the “one other context besides the grave and the (ancestral) hall” in which the soul of the dead resides (Ahern 1973, 222). According to Chinese cosmology, both the grave and the ancestral tablets are inscribed sites where the soul of the dead person resides.

5-1-3 Guanluoyin in the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity

Both Seiichirō Suzuki and Emily Ahern’s studies reveal a notable difference between the ritual in recent Taiwan and what is recorded in earlier literature, namely the transformation of the medium’s role from a passive subject to an active performer. The ritual patron no longer audits the ritual as a passive onlooker. Instead, he/she replaces the priest and acts as the traveler to the underworld. The ritual observed in the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity further

demonstrates the initiative of the participant. The Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity is a private temple located in Taipei city, which is hosted by Teacher Su. The Hall is one of the few shrines that provide *guanluoyin* services in Taipei. The participants are required to go on to the tour by themselves with the assistance of Teacher Su and his staff. In addition, the tour to the underworld is guided by one of the various Taoist and Buddhist deities worshipped in the Hall. Thus, during the trip, any deity could be summoned to assist the traveler.

In addition to cultivating merit for an ancestor or deceased family member, the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity as well as several other religious institutions in Taiwan have recently popularized a new form of *guanluoyin*, called *tan yuanshengong* 探元神宮 (visiting the palace of the primordial soul). The participant can visit his/her own *yin* house in the underworld and take care of his/her house, which is called *tiaoli* 調理. By visiting and taking care of one's own building (*yin* house in Ahern's terms) in the underworld the participant could improve his or her life quality in the *Yang* world. According to Yeh Chuen-Rong's investigation, *guanluoyin* in Taiwan nowadays is performed mainly for the purpose of visiting the participant's palace of the primordial soul, in contrast to a reduced number of cases of communicating with the dead, compared to earlier practices (Yeh 2009, 197).

As for the fetus spirits, the Wu-Ji Charity Taoism Temple, which is located only several blocks away from the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity and shares the same rituals led by a *guanluoyin* master trained by Teacher Su, clearly indicates that visits to fetus spirits are not allowed in the temple. According to the master, in earlier *guanluoyin* practices, parents were not supposed to visit their children, because it was deemed as an act that violates the Confucian doctrine of filial piety. However, Teacher Su argues that because fetus spirits are still wandering in the underworld, there is a good possibility that the ritual participant would run into her/his fetus spirit in his/her palace of primordial soul. Hence, it is a good opportunity to appease the fetus spirit.

Currently it is not common to see *guanluoyin* being performed as a form of abortion ritual in Taiwan. Nonetheless, a couple of examples have been studied. In her research, Wu Yan-Chiou recounts how one of her informants appeased a fetus spirit through a *guanluoyin* ritual. The informant asked a medium for help due to her husband's health problems. Hence, the medium acted on her behalf and investigated the underworld. The medium told her that the health problems were caused by the abortion she (the informant) had, and she suggested that the informant should offer some clothes in order to let the fetus spirit "go to study. (Wu 2009, 214–5)" According to

Wu, the act of “letting the fetus spirit go to study” is intended to place the fetus spirit in a normative position (a child who studies like other children in Taiwan nowadays), thereby eliminating the cause of the (medical) disorder (Wu 2009, 215). The ritual observed as in the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity may differ from the case described by Wu; nonetheless, both serve good examples of how *guanluoyin* ritual has become an arena in which to explore, create, and respond to social change.

5-2 The Ritual Patron: Ms. Wang

Ms. Wang, 45 years old, has been working as a financial consultant and volunteering for the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity for several years. Ms. Wang had her first abortion when she was 19 years old, after she started living with her boyfriend. Without knowing any contraceptive methods, she became pregnant and, with her partner, began considering getting married and informing their parents. However, while consulting some classmates, the suggestion that they should refrain from telling their parents came about. If they got married and had children so soon, all the efforts their parents made to get them into university could be ruined. After considering these consequences, the couple decided to have an abortion. Ms. Wang still remembers her first abortion experience. Not only was there physical pain, but she was trembling from the fear.

Despite their preventative measures, four months later, she was pregnant again. Ms. Wang started wondering if the baby was given by the Lord of Heaven. Furthermore, she believed the baby would have genes. However, compared to the first pregnancy, she had a better vision of her life and understood that she could not give up her future halfway. So, without hesitation, she had another abortion. She said that she would never forget the second surgery, because she was determined and brave. Nonetheless, Ms. Wang said that after that experience, she no longer enjoyed sex with her boyfriend. She even felt disgusted when her boyfriend would ask for it. As a result, she would now tell girls who visit the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity: “You are in control of your body. Do not be obedient to your boyfriend all the time.”

Not long after graduation, Ms. Wang’s mother died of kidney disease. Her family wanted her to return home, but she decided to stay in Taipei and started working in the finance field. Ms. Wang started dating a new man who was attracted to her, but did not want to rush into marriage, since he had not settled down in his career yet. Just like in her previous relationships, she got

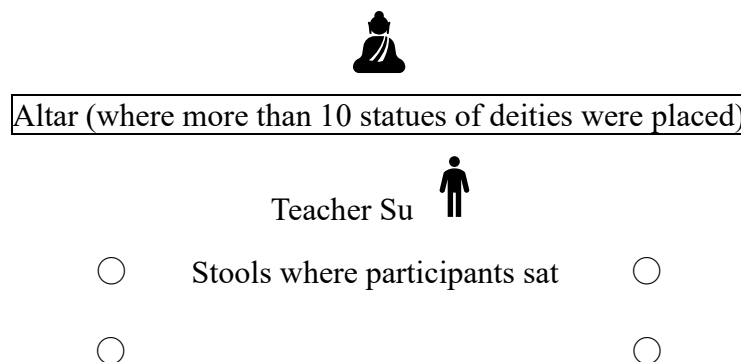
pregnant and she aborted the child, 10 years after the last one. This time, her partner was considerate and took care of her after the surgery, leading Ms. Wang to religion. He brought her to a temple and confessed to the deities there, admitting that the abortion was his fault and hoping that the gods could protect her and cure her.

Later, Ms. Wang found success through her investments in the stock market and foreign exchange. She broke up with the religious man and started dating another, also an accomplished consultant. However, he was reckless in terms of investing, putting all his capital into the mahogany furniture market of South-East Asia, and losing everything. He became dependent on her to repay all his debts. However, several years later, this man contracted oral cancer, and his health rapidly deteriorated. Since he could not work anymore, he stayed at home and continued to rely on Ms. Wang's financial support. Currently, Ms. Wang and the man are not together anymore and, though she remains concerned about him, her comments about this current situation is: "I don't know how to deal with him. I don't know how to deal with myself, either."

5-3 The Ritual at the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity, October 2009

The Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity performs *guanluoyin* twice a week, starting at 7:00 p.m. Each time it could gather 5–25 participants. Ms. Wang came to the Hall five years ago. The reason she attended *guanluoyin* was to see her mother. At the reception table she needed to inform the staff of the person she would like to visit in the underworld, or whether she merely wanted to visit her own *yin* house. Then she paid the admission fee, NT 200 (\$6.45). Only those who were able to travel to the underworld successfully will pay an additional NT 800 (\$25.80) after the ritual. After paying the admission everyone was asked to sit on a stool, with their eyes covered by a red cloth strip, on which a talisman was attached.

Figure 6. Ritual Space in the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity



Teacher Su hosted the ritual. He started chanting and singing the sutras. He summoned the deities who were in the heavens and the underworld to appear and facilitate the trip. Gradually, some of the participants responded and entered into a trance. Their heads and bodies were shaking. At this moment these participants could see spots of light, bright objects or the path to the underworld. Very often a deity appeared and agreed to guide the participant through the underworld. The participant who was able to see into (*guanru* 觀入) the supernatural world had to raise their hand, and one of the staff members would run to him/her with a tape recorder in hand. They asked questions and recorded the participant's answers.

"What can you see?"

"I saw Jigong 濟公 (a Chinese Buddhist figure) beside me." Ms. Wang answered.

"Have you seen the path?"

"Yes."

"Is the path clear? Any obstacles?"

"There are mountains and rivers. But the road is smooth. Jigong is guiding me."

...

"What can you see now?"

"A big city, and a lot of people." Ms. Wang answered.

"Have you seen your mother's house?"

"Yes, that's her house! It is a townhouse. It's clean and nice. I am so happy. Oh, I see my mother!"

She started to cry. She told her mother how much she had missed her and asked her if everything is alright with her. After a short break, she started asking questions about herself, requesting her mother's advice. Her mother told her that her boyfriend is a lonely man who is not close to his family, and he would die in a situation without any care and support. However, this man is well aware of Ms. Wang's care and love, so he would protect her after he dies.

Ms. Wang then confessed to her mother about her three abortions. She told her how they had happened. She asked if she needed to do anything for the three fetus spirits. Her mother gave her a positive answer. So Ms. Wang turned to Jigong:

"Can I visit the three children?"

“No, no!” the staff member of the Hall, who was recording Ms. Wang’s voice, anxiously interrupted her after hearing the question. “You are not supposed to visit your children. But you could ask Jigong to bring the children to you.”

Ms. Wang did so, and Jigong kindly agreed. She finally saw the three little babies with their sad facial expressions. Ms. Wang cried again. She promised to donate money and gifts to them, to let them know that their mother cares for them.

After the visit to her mother’s townhouse, Ms. Wang asked Jigong to bring her to her boyfriend’s *yin* house. Jigong agreed.

“I can see an empty detached house. There is a huge but dried pond in the yard.” Ms. Wang described.

The staff of the Hall explained that the style of the house represents the personality of the owner. For example, if a person owns an apartment it means he/she prefers lively city life or being surrounded by people. The detached house of Ms. Wang’s boyfriend showed he is a self-centered and unsocial person. Since the house was empty and in bad condition, it meant the man was not healthy. Nonetheless, to have a pond was unusual, which meant the man has the potential to make good money. Hence, Ms. Wang asked Jigong to help her by purchasing and placing furniture in the house, renovating the wall and adding water to the pond.

The trip took about two hours. After waking up from the trance, Ms. Wang said it felt like a long trip, and she was exhausted. The work in the underworld done by Jigong was repaid by Ms. Wang’s donation, used for paper money, incense, morality text printing and charity of the Hall. The staff gave her the tape as evidence of her trip to the underworld. Ms. Wang was deeply touched by the experience. Since then, she visited the Hall frequently, and eventually became one of the voluntary staff who answer questions for ritual participants. Women in the neighborhood often come to the Hall to chat, and she entertains them.

5-4 Analysis

This chapter asserts that the *guanluoyin* ritual has been evolving to be a means to respond to the agency. As shown in the review of literature, women, including shamans and mediums, have been regarded more capable of communicating with the dead. Their marginal status- closer to ghosts- within the social structure enable them to speak out through the supernatural voice. The women’s agency is realized via the communicative ability and provide them with the opportunity

to make a change to their social context.

5-4-1 To Lead or to Be Led?

Ms. Wang's visit to the underworld was full of emotion, happiness and sorrow. However, from the eyes of an outsider, this dramatic trip was just accomplished on a stool in the shrine within two hours. One cannot deny the possibility that Ms. Wang's tour was to some extent led and lured by the staff of the Hall. When she began the tour, the staff hinted that there might be obstacles on the road. When she requested to see the three fetus spirits, the staff suggested that she should talk to Jigong. Moreover, needless to say, many participants of *guanluoyin* have been exposed to the information about the tour represented by tabloids, internet and TV shows. Their preconceptions could shape their experiences of the tour.

Indeed, scholars have raised the possibility of “faking” of *guanluoyin* possession. As Jack M. Potter affirms, the old ladies who speak to spirits “act as intermediaries between the villagers and the supernatural worlds of heaven and hell (Potter 1974, 207.)”. The ritual participant's perception of the tour and the underworld is highly shaped by the intermediaries. Ku Shen-Che and Lin Meirong's research on possession of female shamans shows that shamans often give indirect answers to the questions raised by the participants. Moreover, they often give encouraging and caring advice, which can almost meet the situation of every participant (Ku & Lin 2010). Similarly, Yeh Chuen-Rong observes that when being asked difficult questions the shaman sometimes answers: “I forgot,” which strongly disappoints the families of the dead (Yeh 2009, 217). J.J.M. de Groot and Henry Doré both highlight the possibility of cheating during *guanluoyin*. De Groot claims that the shaman interrupts the conversation by giving advice, denouncement or blaming in order to avoid the questions which confused her (de Groot 1982, 1334–35). Doré even argued that the shaman's job is to take advantage of the popular myths among local people in order to manipulate the relationship between the dead and the living (Doré 1908, 147–8). He labels the ritual as merely “blind (Doré 1908, 148)”. Potter, too, recognizes that there is a possibility that the shaman benefits from this ritual. For example, she might warn the family that the spirit/ghost of the dead family might haunt the family and cause sickness and misfortune. In order to prevent it, the family should seek further help from her (Potter 1974, 210). Seiichirō Suzuki even reveals scandals that occurred in similar rituals. The ritual practitioners were mostly men. The subjects were often widows who were eager to know how their husbands were doing in the underworld. Several immoral priests sexually harassed the women while they were in the state of hypnosis.

Hence, upper class or educated families prohibited their female members from attending this kind of ritual (Suzuki 1989, 69).

The above examples show that in *guanluoyin* practices, the shaman often acted as a narrative creator and interpreter for the trip. He/she determines the messages conveyed to the family and the villagers. Furthermore, he/she is the ruler in the ritual space. In Ms. Wang's case, too, she relied on the incantation chanted by the priest as well as the assistance of the staff in order to go on the trip. Nonetheless, she acts as the person who goes on the trip, rather than being represented by a surrogate. To allow the person who is in need of communicating with the dead to act as the traveller appears to be more common since the Japanese colonial period, which was investigated by Suzuki. This switch of the role of the participant changes the power relationship between the performer (the priest) and the subject (the participant), in Suzuki's terms. It provides the participant the possibility of experiencing the tour and searching for answers by himself/herself. The performer-subject relationship could at least reach a mode of inter-subjective interaction. Between the *yin* world and the *yang* world, there might be a mimetic relationship established. However, the powerlessness of Ms. Wang was not reproduced during the tour. She met a deity (and she probably chose the deity she wanted to meet) and was guided by him. She entered a lively metropolitan space and found her mother's house. She requested to see the three fetus spirits. The tour was designed and carried out in accordance with her will and ambition. For Ms. Wang, the *guanluoyin* trip is a pilgrimage. She escaped from social reality through the tour and, at the end of her tour, she returns to the status of a daughter and a mother, in other words, her interrupted family relationship was able to be reconstructed. She is able to be loved and love. The goal of the tour was to serve her own needs, and thus, the missing segment of life she was longing for was regained.

5-4-2 To Remember or to Forget?

Scholars have examined the social function of the Chinese imagination of the underworld in order to discover the rationale of *guanluoyin*. In his research on *guanluoyin*, Yeh Chuen-Rong claims that in Taiwan, the ritual was used to serve as a mechanism which allowed the problems and conflicts within a patriarchal lineage to be solved according to the messages of the ancestors (Yeh 2009, 127). He employs Clifford Geertz's notion of religion to interpret *guanluoyin*, which assumes that the Han people's belief in everlasting souls is embedded in the symbolic construction of the ritual. According to Yeh's interviews, religious priests point out that the souls of wicked criminals, people who died an unnatural death and ordinary people all reside in the underworld in

segregated spaces. The ritual participants, too, believe that the underworld is a space similar to the world of the living. During the trip, they witnessed towns, streets, cinemas, stores and even brothels (Yeh 2009, 228). According to Yeh, this image of the underworld symbolizes the cosmological understanding in Taiwan. For Yeh, the underworld is a reproduction of the world of the living, allowing the souls of the dead to continue to live on after death.

On the other hand, the images of the ghosts and ancestors Jack M. Potter observed in the New Territories reveal the dual quality of the spirits of the dead, “which reflect the two aspects of their social world. (Potter 1974, 228)” If they were the successful in the phenomenal world, leading a good life and stable family, they become benevolent ancestors after death. If they were unsuccessful or unfortunate, they become malevolent ghosts. The benevolent ancestors shape the bright side of the supernatural world, and the malevolent ghosts the dark side. Potter’s assumption seems to correspond with Arthur P. Wolf’s categorization of gods, ghosts, and ancestors (A. P. Wolf, 1978). The social status of an individual determines his/her spiritual position after death. The hierarchical structure of the society is reproduced in the supernatural world. Furthermore, Potter stresses that “the most unsuccessful villager in life becomes the most powerful malevolent ghost after death (Potter 1974, 230)”, which forms a “mirror image” of the village (Potter 1974, 230). The benevolent ancestors’ advice stands in contrast with the ghosts’ threats. The message conveyed by the spirits from the underworld or the supernatural world is a further step in reinforcing the existing social order. As a result, the shaman, or the ritual, functions as a means to conform the order in the underworld to the world of living. As an intermediary who communicates and pacifies the ghosts, the shaman “contributes to village society by controlling the dark side of the supernatural world. (Potter 1974, 230)”

Since the underworld is the space where the fierce power of the ghosts arises and normative order is threatened, *guanluoyin* acts as the channel through which the living are able to be in touch with the rebellious and dangerous dark space of the dead. J.J.M. de Groot indicates that although the ritual mostly took place in the main hall of the household, it could take place in the “female private rooms (de Groot 1982, 1333)”. The participants removed all “classical books” and almanacs before the ritual started, since these orthodox books were regarded as conflicting with the non-orthodox witchcraft practices (de Groot 1982, 1333). Women, rather than men, were chosen to perform the “non-orthodox” ritual, as the knowledge obtained in the ritual differs from the orthodox classics. The boundary between the bright side and the dark side of the society, as

well as the orthodox and the heterodox, was clearly drawn. Indeed, according to Emily Ahern's observation, the *yin* world is often the source of misfortune, sickness and trouble of the *yang* world. She even claims "ancestors are the source of sickness and trouble of families. (Ahern 1973, 241)" By means of pacifying discontented spirits and offering ritual objects and assistance, the disorder in the *yin* world is erased, and order in the *yang* world is enhanced.

However, in spite of the continuity and similarity between the *yin* and the *yang* worlds, Emily Ahern warns that the quality of the underworld is by no means simple. Her assumption allows for complexity rather than simplistic binary:

The *iong* and *im* are not opposed to each other as order and chaos, but rather complement each other, the possibility of modifying the *im* world leading to the possibility of increasing the desired conditions in the *iong* world. (Ahern 1973, 241)

Emily Ahern highlights the emphasized distance between the living and the dead. First, *guanluoyin* essentially differs from a spirit medium being possessed by a deity, which transforms the medium into a deity acting on his/her behalf. The possession of a deity radically changes the identity of the spirit medium. During a *guanluoyin* tour, however, the participant constantly acts as himself/herself.

The tranced traveler retains his own identity. When someone wishes to visit a dead relative, to speak with him directly and observe him, he must himself cross the difficult border between the *iong* and *im* worlds. Because the dead cannot come directly to the living, possessing someone and speaking through him, the distance between the two worlds is emphasized. (Ahern 1973, 242)

Second, the personality of the dead could have changed. They can be indifferent and even hostile while meeting with their family (Ahern 1973, 233). According to Emily Ahern's interviews with the villagers, the deceased people are believed to be unwilling to return to the *yang* world. In addition, their personality changes after death:

These replies seem to reflect two ways of accommodating the loss of familiar, two-way interaction with relatives after death: the dead do still care for us but cannot show it because we would suffer; the dead change beyond recognition and no longer have the same personalities... the close, emotion-laden ties of dependence and support between kin can never be renewed. (Ahern 1973, 244)

The multi-layered figures of the underworld are revealed. On the one hand, the underworld has continuity with the living. It is a duplication of the phenomenal world. All the social hierarchy and class struggles are reproduced here. By means of worshipping gods, ghosts and ancestors the social order is reinforced. Furthermore, the threatening messages of the ghosts urge people to take action to maintain the existing social order. On the other hand, *guanluoyin* is the step to finalize a funeral. As Ian Kuijt claims: “ritual heirlooms served as a form of memorialization and erasure of identity within communities. (Kuijt 2008, 171.)” Funerals act as a piece of evidence which confirms the death of a family member, and creates the distance between the dead and the living. Indeed, very often a funeral aims to distance the living and the dead, allowing the identity of the deceased person to decline.

These scholars’ analysis of *guanluoyin* mainly focus on its social, lineal and familial aspects. Nonetheless, upon examining Ms. Wang’s tour, she has gained more than the family and lineage-oriented functions of *guanluoyin*. Losing her boyfriends, her pregnancies and her mother, Ms. Wang looks for reasons to understand these losses. Staying with a man who is severely sick, unable to refrain from helping him, Ms. Wang looks for reasons within all of the confusion. She was willing to do anything in order to make sure that everything was all right. While the answers people are longing for cannot be found in the phenomenal world, the underworld becomes a promised land that her mother and her three fetus spirits inhabit. The underworld becomes the land where secrets are discovered, and her own truth is revealed.

As shown in the review of Moskowitz’s research (2001), very often the fetus spirit is in fact a symbol representing all the unhappiness in the participant’s life. Several scholars claim that the discourse on abortion ritual is the creation of religious institutions. While analyzing the notion of collective memory, Roger Bastide admits that remembrance is made and selected by a society. Nonetheless, he argues that an individual contributes his/her memory and applies his/her agency to the commemoration process.¹⁷ Abortion ritual is a means to remember the fetus spirits. In her interview, Ms. Wang states that she did not attribute her misfortunes to her abortions. Nonetheless, during the *guanluoyin*, the abortions she had symbolize her longing for a life without grievance and regrets. Her mother and her fetus spirits were remembered. The reunion between the deceased

¹⁷ Roger Bastide states: “Collective memory can indeed be regarded as a group memory provided we add that it is a memory articulated among the members of the group” (Bastide 1960, 245). For more analysis, see “Problems of the Collective Memory,” 240–59.

family and the participant were meant to involve the dead in the world of the living. The participant did not want to say farewell. Rather, she was eager to reunite with her ancestor and to continue to benefit from the love and wisdom of her family. By means of consulting her mother and greeting the three fetus spirits, she reorganized her life and made her decisions. William LaFleur's research on abortion ritual in Japan led him to conclude that:

A woman is free to acknowledge any feelings of bonding that have developed within herself. Such feelings need not bar her from deciding to have an abortion. (LaFleur 1992, 213)

The deceased fetus is remembered and ransomed. By doing so, the living world is able to rearrange its structure of social statuses and continue.

The new form of the *guanluoyin* rite that took place in the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity appears to aim to appease the sad fetus spirits and to divide the living and the dead. However, the tour also presented Ms. Wang with a vivid image of the fetus spirits. They showed up in her vision. Their facial expressions revealed their feelings. They requested and responded to her. This image was not new to some participants of other forms of abortion rituals in Taiwan. In my interviews with various ritual participants, they said that they had fetus dreams, or they saw the fetus spirits beside them. The experiences could be called illusions or psychological effects. However, the presence of the fetus spirits is rather a reaction to the desire of the woman. She might feel sorry, and the image of the fetus spirit is transformed into a materiality for her to memorialize. By means of reversing the quality of the symbol from a threat (a haunting fetus spirit) to a support (a beloved baby), she was released from the memory. The transformation exemplifies Catherine Bell's idea in her investigation of ritual activities, which suggests that ritual "enables her to reassume control of her life (Bell 1992, 136)".

5-4-3 Aftermath: the Woman's Voice

Ms. Wang became enthusiastically involved in religious activity after the *guanluoyin*. This experience of transformation is shared by some women in Japan. Elizabeth G. Harrison's research on abortion ritual in Japan shows that one of the ritual participants, Kaba-san, became enthusiastically involved in religious activities after attending the ritual (Harrison & Igeta 1995, 86). Her empathy about the aborted fetus spirits enabled her to organize meetings with women who shared similar feelings and donated money in order to erect a Heart Sutra stupa and a statue of Kannon. These activities allowed her to go beyond the family and convey her thoughts to the

public. More interestingly, her husband was neither told of his wife's intention nor did he participate in the events. Harrison claims:

(Women like Kaba-san) have been openly subversive in establishing their own public forms of recognizing women's experience, justifying their need to do so in personal terms (dreams and feelings) that could easily be humored and dismissed by those in power. (Harrison & Igeta 1995, 91)

On the other hand, in their studies on female mediums, female devotees and volunteers, Ku Shen-Che and Lin Meirong contrast the way women involve themselves in religious activities in comparison to men. While the management board is mostly composed of men, who "treat the temple as a place where business can be done (Ku & Lin 2010, 51)", women demonstrate their belief by participating in rituals and contributing their labor (Ku & Lin 2010, 51)". Ku and Lin admit that women are the passive subjects in the temple organization in terms of "business" and "development". Nonetheless, through ritual activities women are able to connect with each other and establish a social network. In addition, their diligent involvement in ritual activities enables them to relate themselves to the goddess worshipped in the temple, which provides them with an "alternative" rulership in the domain of divinity and belief (Ku & Lin 2010, 46). On the other hand, while investigating the gendered charisma in the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation movement in Taiwan, Julia Huang described the religious engagement of the woman disciples: What lies at the center of their expectation of the extraordinary is the devotees' interpretive and narrative agency. (C. J. Huang 2008, 41)

Being situated in a subservient position within the social and gender hierarchy, women are able to create new realms of teaching and practice through religious activities. By means of storytelling, confession and consultation, the impact of *guanluoyin* on Ms. Wang goes beyond psychological therapy. After the ritual, she continued to take action. On the one hand, she kept on taking care of the man. That is probably what she wanted, but she needed the confirmation from the supernatural world. On the other hand, she was involved in the religious institution and became an active staff member. By serving the other ritual participants and the local community, she was able to convey her opinions and advice to the public. Thus, Ms. Wang herself was the person to write, interpret, and speak out her own narrative.

5-5 Conclusion

Guanluoyin, a ritual practiced in Chinese religion for a long period, has transformed along with the social changes throughout history. In earlier days, *guanluoyin* served as a mechanism to solve domestic arguments. It was in the charge of a shaman, most of the time a woman, who entered the tour on behalf of the participant. Nowadays *guanluoyin* gradually becomes a means for an individual to manage his/her health, career and fortune. The ritual fits the common quality of folk beliefs in Taiwan, which aim to pursue the happiness of one's present life. Furthermore, the participant experiences and interprets the tour by himself/herself. Scholars have observed that religious institutions can manipulate *guanluoyin* as a commercial product. Nonetheless, as this chapter has demonstrated, the ritual is also taken advantage of by people who are in need of healing treatment or means of changing destiny with his/her own power.

While abortion ritual has been gaining popularity in Taiwan, the *guanluoyin* offers the additional service of allowing the participant to visit the fetus spirit. This reform was mobilized by the needs of the woman and the appeal of religious institutions. Nonetheless, in earlier days children's funerals were performed in a low-profile manner. To visit the fetus spirit in the underworld seems to violate the traditional patriarchal idea of father-son hierarchy. The transformation in *guanluoyin* practice reveals the switch of parent-child relationship. The women's visit to their fetus spirits creates a new religious understanding. Moreover, during the tour, she illustrated the deity she met, the scene she saw, the person she wanted to meet. This process demonstrates the empowerment of the ritual.

During the *guanluoyin* the images of the fetus spirits were vividly represented. Indeed, the fetus spirits represented the woman's struggles over sexuality, pregnancy and childbirth. The decision of abortion is not necessarily a happy one. The emergence of the fetus spirits urged the woman to take action toward the memory, and the ransom given to the fetus spirit finalized the post-abortion feelings of pity and sorrow. The psychological healing aspect of abortion ritual raised by scholars was achieved in Ms. Wang's case. Furthermore, the intimacy between her mother and her, as well as her fetus spirits and her, were reconstructed through the ritual. *Guanluoyin* allows female shamans to gain power from their central role in the ritual and the dark side of the supernatural world is where the woman is able to seek help and comfort. The ritual assisted the participant in mapping out her strategies towards the past and the future. The participant in this world could use magic to alter the situation in the underworld; hence, she takes the initiative to

make changes. As Victor W. Turner highlights, the power of a ritual symbol results from its ability to communicate. Based on its meaning embedded in the cultural context, the object delivers a message to the ritual patron. In this case study, the ritual patron could exercise her agency and create narratives thanks to her experience during the ritual. The journey to the underworld created a space where her prior identity was able to be re-imagined

Chapter 6

Collective Ritual 1: the Dragon Lake Temple

This chapter focuses on a collective abortion ritual. Some types of rituals observed in this thesis, such as multifunctional/family ritual or supplementary ritual, serve for various purposes at the same time. In addition to appeasing the fetus spirit, they may attempt to heal sickness, to strengthen familial relationships, or to achieve peaceful quality of life of the community. However, the collective abortion ritual serves only for appeasing aborted fetuses. Very often the title of the ritual has “Fetus Spirit Appeasement (*Yingling chaodu* 嬰靈超渡)” in it, which clearly highlight that sole purpose. These ritual participants come to the ritual due to their shared attempts to appease the fetus spirits. Hence, very often they do not hesitate to tell their stories. The interactions among the participants construct a forum for the women. The space of abortion ritual transforms into the sphere where women exchange their thoughts and feelings freely with each other. The ritual space becomes an extraordinary space, where social and family relationships without being restricted by any pressures of social roles.

A good example of this type of collective ritual serving as a forum for women is the annual collective abortion ritual organized by the Dragon Lake Temple in spring and autumn. The Dragon Lake Temple, claiming to be “the first founder temple of abortion ritual in Taiwan (*Taiwan Yingling gongyang shizu miao* 台灣嬰靈供養始祖廟)¹⁸” is “by far the largest, best-known, and oldest temple to openly appease fetus ghosts (Moskowitz 2001, 103)” in Taiwan. As the temple performing abortion ritual for the largest number of fetus spirits in Taiwan, the Dragon Lake Temple in Miaoli county and its organized abortion ritual have a high visibility in mass media. It is one of the main field sites of Moskowitz’s research (Moskowitz 2001). According to Moskowitz’s note in 2001, there were approximately 16,400 fetus-ghost statues worshipped in the Temple, and there was an average of a little more than 5,400 new fetus ghosts worshipped each year. (Moskowitz 2001, 103)

6-1. Background Notes on Traditional Chinese Image of Women’s Bodies: Blood, Power, and Punishment

¹⁸ This slogan can be seen on the wall of the Dragong Lake Temple, its numerous morality texts and its webpage: <http://www.souls.org.tw/main-01.html>

Women's menstrual blood- a symbol of her fertility- is polluting and threatening (Ahern 1975). Blood is unclean but powerful. It hinders the contact between deities and people, since it offends the gods (Ahern 1975, 269-270). A woman's excessive menstrual blood is able to nourish a man's semen into a baby, and is able to expand, divide and terminate the ideal family in the patriarchal imagination (Ahern 1975, 276). As an outsider to the family, the power of the daughter-in-law threatens to break borders and create disorder. Hence, Emily Ahern argues, this blood represents the power of pregnancy and childbirth and is regarded as a challenge to male dominance in the patriarchal society (Ahern 1975, 278). It is powerful and dangerous, but meanwhile, it is necessary to patriarchal continuation. According to Ahern, blood symbolizes the woman's social role. She should act as a carrier of the offspring, but her reproductive power should be disciplined through rituals. The female body's interpretation described above is also shown in several sectors of Taiwanese Buddhism (Lhamo 2003). Although "Buddhist sutras do not portray female bodies as particularly polluted" (Lhamo 2003, 159), many Taiwanese Buddhists "discriminate (against) women on account of their embodiment" (Lhamo 2003, 158); for example, menstruating nuns could be prevented from entering ritual spaces, or pregnant women could be asked not to meditate (Lhamo 2003, 162). In Buddhism, the first Noble Truth recognizes that life is suffering, including birth, old age, sickness and death (Lhamo, 2003, 158). However, for women, they have additional sufferings which result in harsh labour: menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, having to wait upon a man and being subjected to in-laws (Kloppenburger 1995: 163, quoted by Lhamo, 2003, 158). In other words, the woman's body is a "source of suffering" (Lhamo 2003, 158). As a result, Yeshe Choekyi Lhamo argues, to blame a woman for giving birth is a "male projection" (Lhamo 2003, 158).

The ontological differences between men and women have been articulated and practiced in rituals. The demonic images of the mother and the miserable conditions of the following punishments form a crucial segment in popular Chinese religious and medical discourses. Some traditional religious texts imply that dying in childbirth (and thus failing to continue the patrilineage) could lead to terrible punishments in the underworld. The *Blood Tray Sutra* 血盆經 describes how women suffer in the hell of the Blood-Tray Lake (*xiehu diyu* 血湖地獄) after death. through the story of Mulian and his mother:

In the vast (blood) lake whose width was eighty-four thousand *Yojanas*, one hundred twenty kinds of punishment were inflicted on women. (Mulian) saw a

great many women with disheveled hair from the south continent of Jambudvīpa. Pilloried, handcuffed, and fastened to iron beams and iron poles with iron chains, they were punished in this hell. The warden, who was the king of demons in hell, made the sinners drink blood three times a day. The sinners resisted drinking it. As they were thrashed with an iron club by the warden, they moaned in pain. (Wang 2003, 291-292)

Multiple scholars' investigations show that the Blood Tray Sutra is not included in the Buddhist Tripitaka (*Dazangjing* 大藏經), but the Blood Lake Sutra (*Xiehujing* 血湖經) is incorporated in the Taoist Canon (*Daozang* 道藏) (Cheung 2014b, 288). In addition, the Blood Lake has been mentioned in various scriptures which highlights the debt of gratitude towards one's parents and the necessity to repay it (Cheung 2014b, 288). Furthermore, the Penitential Ritual for Salvation from *Xiehu* (Blood Lake) for deceased women has been widely performed in the *Zhongyuan Yulan Fahui* (中元盂蘭法會)¹⁹, combining Taoist and Buddhist origins and practices (Cheung 2014b, 291). In a ritual *Neky Tak-ching* Cheung observed in Hong Kong, deceased women were described as prisoners suffering in the Blood Lake, located in the Earth Prison at *Xiashi* (*Xiashi wujian diyu* 硤石無間地獄), underneath the boundless water quarters to the north of Fengdu 酆都 (Cheung 2014b, 287 and 302). Consulting Moskowitz's studies of the fetus ghost in Taiwan (2001), Cheung suggests that a fetus ghost engendered from an abortion or a miscarriage in a woman's past lives add another reason to her suffering during childbirth (Cheung 2014b, 305-306).

Thus, the Breaking Blood-Pond Rite (*Poxiehu* 破血湖, as Yoo-who Song observes in the Jiangsu Province) or Smashing the Wheel (*Po-lun* 破輪, as Kenneth Dean observes in the Hakka funeral in Zhaoan, Fujian) is performed at a woman's funeral (mainly married women or women died in childbirth) in order to rescue her from the suffering. This funeral also serves as an opportunity for the children to express their love and repay their mother. Dean describes, in a funeral in P'u-t'ien, Fujian, the son drank a bowl of red liquid showing his repayment of his mother's kindness (Dean 1989, 54). In her investigation of recent *Poxiehu* rite in Jiangsu Province,

¹⁹ Rituals which allow filial sons to rescue their mothers from the torturing blood lake in the underworld are highly related to Mulian's legend indicated in the *Yulan Vessel Sutra* (Song 2012, 64). For more analysis of the *Sutra*, please consult 11-1 Background information on Chinese Oedipal conflicts as seen in Buddhist texts.

Song also vividly describes the symbolic meaning of the paper boat which the sons and the daughters of the deceased women carry while walking around the altar: “The boat should be well equipped and in their imagination, sons and daughters of the dead woman, sailing across the terrible bloody pond where waves of dirty blood-water are rising like raging billows, should drink blood water on behalf of their mother” (Song 2012, 71).

In a funeral performed in P’u-t’ien, the chief priest impersonating Mulian guided the families, and a paper figurine representing the woman was passed up a winch from the underworld, the priest smashed the ten courts of the hell sequentially in the ritual space. When they returned to the Tower (the main gate of the hell), the chief priest walked around the Tower and delivered the paper figurine from the top to the son. Meanwhile, a fish had been placed in a basin at the bottom of the Tower. “The fish hopping out was supposed to represent the soul’s escape from the Blood Lake. (Dean 1989, 55)” The ritual vividly demonstrated the woman’s suffering in the underworld and, through the power of constant confessions and chanting, she was able to be delivered and reborn. During the ritual process, the woman's devotion to her child was acknowledged, which achieved therapeutic effects for the living. However, at the same time, it seemed that, since she inevitably produces pollution through her blood, her social status was still regarded as a less desirable one (Cheung 2014b, 309). Moreover, the ritual stresses even more on the harmony between families and between the heaven and humankind. Moral teaching is the prominent meaning of such rituals (Cheung 2014b, 306-309).

In addition, the duty to save the woman falls on the son (as in the *Yulan Vessel Sutra*, which is analyzed in the following section on Buddhism). Yoo-who Song asserts, as an outsider to the family, the woman is believed to be the source of disputes and division. She is “morally and intellectually less capable than men” and ought to be guided by the husband (Song 2012, 76). Furthermore, the rites rescuing her from the Blood Lake shows that she is dependent on the son because she is unable “to escape from such a destiny through her own effort” (Song 2012, 73-74). Song claims that the rite reproduces the woman’s subordinate status and functions as one of the mechanisms of social control, satisfying the need of lineal order of patriarchy since the Song Dynasty (Song 2012, 80).

Based on the above, the bodily differences between men and women are further emphasized in the interpretation of the structural symbolism of the male versus the female body. For example, in some cultures there is an opposition between women’s blood, flesh and hair (all

perishable, thus inferior) versus male ancestral bones and semen (supposedly eternal, hence superior) (Bloch 1982). Yet, at the same time, scholars such as Jessey J.C. Choo do agree that the Taoist ritual attempting to deliver the mother from the Blood Lake in fact “removed the father from the picture” (Choo 2016) by means of emphasizing the purity of the mother as well as the mother-son bond. By doing so, this process of salvation undermines “the patrilineal principle that was the linchpin of the ‘Confucian’ social order” (Choo 2016). With this ritual’s power, women first own an “unalienable right” to their children, and, eventually, their own space, where “they were the sole objects of devotion” (Choo 2016).

6-2 Dragon Lake Temple: the Founder Lin Jianyi and His Theory of *Lings* (Spirits)

The Dragon Lake Temple was founded by Teacher Lin Jianyi (Moskowitz 2001, 103). Teacher Lin’s wife died of lingering diseases, and he believes the poor health of his wife was related to the fetus spirit. According to Teacher Lin, he experienced various miracles performed by unknown spiritual powers since he was young. He was ill but he was cured by magical herbal medicine (J. Lin 1996, 123). His mother was extremely sick, but after he worshipped a statue of Xuantian Shangdi his mother recovered and lived another 12 years (J. Lin 1996, 124). Reflecting on his own life, Teacher Lin realized he has been a sinful person since his previous life and he decided to found a temple to redeem his sin (J. Lin 1996, 124). As a result, he founded the Dragon Lake Temple in Zaoqiao Township, Miaoli County in 1975. He inherited the patron statue of Xuantian Shangdi from an old temple in the neighborhood (Moskowitz 2001, 103). According to the temple, there are two lakes connecting with each other in the shapes of sun and moon, and there is a hill in the shape of a turtle between the two lakes. This geography is believed to be “a golden dragon holding a pearl (*jinglong gongzhu* 金龍拱珠)” in *fengshui* and it is the source of the temples’ name (“Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli” 2008, 1)²⁰. It is noteworthy that the Dragon Lake Temple is located in a remote area. As Moskowitz describes:

Dragon Lake Temple is situated in the country side on the outskirts of the city of Houlong in Miaoli County, just off the western coast of Taiwan between the cities of Taibei and Taizhong. The train, for reasons of its own peculiarities of time and space, inevitably takes longer to get from Taibei to Miaoli than to get to Taizhong,

²⁰ Moskowitz records a second version of the legend which says a taxi driver witnessed a dragon flying over the lake (Moskowitz 2001, 103).

which is geographically twice as far away. To get there one must drive roughly six kilometers from the nearest train station, past rice fields and open land. (Moskowitz 2001, 103)

In spite of its distance to major cities in Taiwan, the temple has been able to spread its teaching through media. For example, one of the informants I interviewed said that she knew about the Dragon Lake Temple through a talk show on TV. The host and the guests mentioned that a celebrity had appeased her *Yingling* with her mother's company in the temple (Interview with ritual participant Ms. Zhang, October 28, 2009). In addition, numerous morality texts by Teacher Lin have been published that introduce the origin, characters and effects of the "spiritual world" (Moskowitz 2001, 107). More specifically, the morality texts examine the idea of *Lings* 靈, including *Yingling*.

6-2-1 The Lings

Teacher Lin employs the Taoist concept of three heavenly souls and seven earthly souls (*Sanhun Qipo* 三魂七魄) to explain the idea of *Ling*.²¹ According to him, the *Huns* are souls which can exist without being attached to the body; on the contrary, *Pos* are the souls which cannot survive once they are away from the body ("Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli" 2008, 47). A *Ling* is a complete and firm unification of the three *Huns* and seven *Pos* ("Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli" 2008, 48). According to Teacher Lin, every creature has a *Ling*. "Ling exists as soon as conception" ("Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli" 2008, 38). Sometimes, to Teacher Lin, it seems that *Ling* and *Linghun* (a soul 靈魂) are interchangeable concepts: "After death the *Linghun* (靈魂) escapes from the body. The body diminishes but the *Linghun* does not ("Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli" 2008, 38)." The *Ling* or *Linghun* is the foundation by which a creature is able to live: "What does a human being rely in order to survive? In religions it is called a "*Linghun*," and it is called a "nerve (*shenjing* 神經)" in science or medical science ("Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli" 2008, 48)." Hence, Teacher Lin urges everyone to believe in the undeniable idea of *Ling* ("Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli" 2008, 48).

The *Yingling* 嬰靈

²¹ For more analysis of the concept *Sanhun Qipo*, please consult Chapter 4 : Individual Ritual: the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace.

Teacher Lin claims that the term “*Yingling*” was created by him in 1985: “Before 1985, the term “*Yingling*” did not exist. This term was not seen in the classics, either. There was only a term “*Taihun* (fetus spirit/soul 胎魂)” to describe [*Yingling*]. In order to familiarize people with the calamity of *Taihun* our temple managed to take the name “*Yingling*” (“Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli” 2008, 40)”. Teacher Lin claims that he created the term in order to facilitate the society to understand the harm of the fetus spirit (“Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli” 2008, 40). He further clarifies that the new term includes the spirit of the fetus, called *taihun* (胎魂) and the spirit of the child who dies very young *yaozher* (夭折兒) in earlier days (J. Lin 1996, 60-61). Here are the categories of *Yingling*: “aborted, miscarried, dies too young (*yaozhe* 夭折), intramarital, premarital, extramarital, siblings, and *Yingling* of ancestors (due to children dying young in earlier days)” (“Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli” 2008, 40). *Yingling* are suffering: “*Yingling* are pathetic. In their space there is no sun, no roof, they are soaked when it rains. They are frozen and all turn red in snow. Sometimes [mediums] see them holding each other to keep themselves warm. Normally... it takes fifty years for them to reincarnate. Suffering from hunger and coldness is more bitter than death” (J. Lin 1996, 72). Therefore, *Yingling* seek revenge: “*Yingling* turn into *Yuanling* (a resentful *Ling*) during suffering. Every day they champ with rage, and they are sad and angry. So of course they look for the people related to them in order to vent their anger” (J. Lin 1996, 72). According to Teacher Lin, these calamities include: failure in reproduction, early death of later children, children are not focused with unstable characters, and prone to become gangsters, failure in marriage, eruption in family, divorce, suicide, accidental death, poor quality of sleep, including a numb body or hearing children crying (“Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli” 2008, 44). Moreover, true stories of *Yingling* seeking revenge are compiled. For example, in “*Yingling shili* (examples of true stories of *Yingling*)”, the second chapter book *Yingling yu jia yun* 嬰靈與家運- nine examples are listed:

1st example: nightmares in which *Yingling* attacked fiercely (J. Lin 1996, 25-28).

2nd example: a midwife witnessing *Yingling* faces floating in the air in the operation room where abortions are performed (J. Lin 1996, 29-30).

3rd example: an OB/GYN has nocturia (because he performs abortions) (Lin 1996, 31-34).

4th example: a pregnant woman was seriously affected by gynecological issues due to her previous five abortions (J. Lin 1996, 35-38).

5th: a woman gave birth to a baby with poliomyelitis due to her numerous previous abortions (J. Lin 1996, 39-43).

6th example: a business man had numerous affairs and the women had fifteen abortions in total. His business was seriously affected and his daughter was behaving strange (J. Lin 1996, 44-47).

7th example: a popular Japanese singer witnessed unknown ghosts at home and in the hotel, which frightened her (J. Lin 1996, 48-49).

8th example: stubborn tinea, failure at work and bankruptcy caused by an abortion during an extramarital relationship (J. Lin 1996, 50-52).

9th example: a young mother gave birth to a deaf-mute girl with disability on the right part of the body due to her reckless eight abortions before and after getting married (J. Lin 1996, 53-58).

Based on the above, Teacher Lin warns: “[i]f you do not appease it (*Yingling*), it will cause worse and worse consequences as time goes by” (J. Lin 1996, 73). In addition to appeasement, it is crucial for the parents to confess and repent (J. Lin 1996, 46). Moreover, everyone, even he/she does not have an abortion, is encouraged to appease *Yingling* of their ancestors. According to the discourse, every household has *Yingling* of their great grandmothers or grandmothers, who died of miscarriages or died early. These “spirits do not have names (*youling wuming* 有靈無名)” (“Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli” 2008, 58) and they become wandering spirits before purification 淨遊靈 (*jingyouling*)²² and loaf about the ancestors’ tablets. They would form a clique with other *Lings* and cause harm to the descentents and the family’s fortunes (“Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli” 2008, 58).

Ancestors as the *Shouhuling* (guardian *Lings* 守護靈) and the *Xianzuye* (creditors 先祖業)

The guardian *Lings* refer to ancestors’ *Lings*: “The *Shouhulings* are virtuous and cultivated ancestors over generations. They will protect you which allow you to accomplish your mission in the present life. (“Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli” 2008, 41).” However, Teacher Lin reminds people, one’s fate is ultimately determined by his/her free will. Based on the law of causality, one’s good will calls all *Shouhulings* and their comrades to help. (“Miaoli

²² There is a term “浮遊靈 (*Fuyūrei*)” in Japanese which refer to those spirits who cannot comprehend their death and wander in the mundane world. Similarly, in Lin Jianyi’s text *Jingyouling* 淨遊靈 seems to refer to those *Lings* who are wandering around (*you dang* 遊蕩) and cannot be located properly due to the accidental death.

Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli” 2008, 41). On the other hand, ancestors’ bad deeds may cause calamities for their offspring. “[When the ancestors were still alive] they did not follow the laws of humans, cultivated the four anchors and eight virtues (*siwei bade* 四維八德), which will cause lingering karma and lead them to suffering in the underworld. (“Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli” 2008, 42)” The suffering ancestors seek help from the offspring and cause calamities, such as sickness or failures in families and work place (“Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli” 2008, 42) Therefore, it is important to participate in rituals in order to accumulate karmic merits for the ancestors.

6-2-2 The Lingjie 靈界(*Ling’s Regime*)

The *Lingjie* is the space where all Lings exist before conception. It seems like a parallel space to where we are. After conception, it may be very difficult for the *Lings* to return there.

Taking the *Yingling* as an example:

Yingling exist in the *Lingjie* before conception. They have no interactions with the human world. There is merely a pattern, which is a relationship of inter-application and inter-correspondence. [The two regimes] exist in different spaces. At conception the *Yingling* escape from their space and arrives at the starting point of human’s space. Hence, after abortion, they cannot reach any places. They cannot enter any space nor return to any space. They are isolated in another space. (J. Lin 1996, 72)

In addition to the distance between the two spaces, the *Ling*’s own intention hinders it from returning: “A lot of them (the *Lings*) are confused with the seven affections and six desires (*qiqing liuyu* 七情六慾). They stay to demand the repayment of the debt or take revenge (“Miaoli Longhugong Zaoqiaoxiang 2008 Nongminli” 2008, 46). Moreover, *Lingjie* is like a state, in which its citizens have a registered identity. Taking the *Yingling* as an example: “According to the law of the *Lingjie* (the *Yingling*) already has a *Lingge* (spiritual place/status 靈格)” (J. Lin 1996, 59). Based on the identity, the *Yingling* should be extricated and return to the *Lingjie*. Otherwise, they will become “unpurified (*weijinghua* 未淨化) *Lings*” and their grudge will never vanish (J. Lin 1996, 59).

Teacher Lin stresses that *Lingjie* is not a religious term. Instead, it is part of the Science of Spirituality (*xinling kexue* 心靈科學) (J. Lin 1996, 114). He analyzes two similar terms: karma

(*yezhang* 業障) and misfortunes caused by haunting *Lings* (*lingzhang* 靈障), which implies the misfortunes arise due to the obstacles brought by the haunting *Lings*. The former refers to the consequences resulting from bad deeds based on the law of causality. The latter: “[one] is possessed (*pingyi* 憑依) by an invisible evil *Ling*” (J. Lin 1996, 114). *Lings* of different types will cause calamities in different manners (J. Lin 1996, 114-115). In case of a *Yingling*, it will stay in the subconsciousness of the generation of youth. This eruptive subconsciousness cause teens to commit crimes and violence and suffer from drug addictions (J. Lin 1996, 134). Eventually these behaviours cause social turmoil (J. Lin 1996, 135)

6-2-3 Imported from Japan?

It is obvious that Teacher Jianyi Lin employs quite a few Japanese terms to illustrate the spiritual world, such as 心靈/心靈 (*shinrei* supernatural beings), 未淨化靈/未淨化靈 (*mijoukarei* unpurified spirits), 守護靈/守護靈 (*shyugorei* guardian spirits), 靈障/靈障 (*reishō* spiritual harms) and 憑依 (*hyoi* possessed). Moreover, Jianyi Lin often employs Japanese examples as the proof for the power of the fetus spirit and the necessity of abortion ritual. He demonstrates how abortion rituals were created and popularized in Japan. According to him, the ban of abortion in Christianity inspired the Japanese and convinced them that a fetus has a soul (J. Lin 1996, 64). Moreover, unwanted children resulted from intercourse between American soldiers and Japanese women as well as massive reckless abortions performed in during the post-WWII period caused misfortunes to the society (J. Lin 1996, 64-65).²³ Being pushed by the social reality (social turmoil) and its moral consciousness, the society accepted the idea of abortion ritual so the ritual has been flourishing in post-war Japan (J. Lin 1996, 65).

According to Hsuan-Yu Chen, Jianyi Lin’s discourses of the *Lings* were strongly influenced by publications of new religious movements (NRMs) in Japan (H-Y. Chen 2017, 149). In order to analyze the nature of the *Lings* in Jianyi Lin’s discourses, Chen consults Shimazono Susumu’s analysis (1992), which demonstrates the three key characteristics of NRMs in urban Japan:

²³ This theory sounds familiar to that of Great Prophet Yang’s Baby Palace narrated by Baiyun Shanren. Please consult Chapter 4: Individual Ritual: the Great Prophet Yang’s Baby Holy Palace. It seems that the Dragon Lake Temple and the Great Prophet Yang’s Baby Palace both borrowed Japanese teachings to shape their moral judgements on abortion and representation of the *Yingling*.

1. It is highlighted that there is an alternative world called “the spiritual regime” close to us. A power that is not ideal is believed to lead into spirits such as guardian deity, evil spirits (*jiarei* 邪靈) and ancestors, in contrast to the ideal images of a deity or the Buddha.
2. The effects of *Lings* are attributed to misfortunes as the key factors.
3. Magical rituals (such as possession) are popular. They are regarded as the tool to communicate with the *Lings*. Also, appeasement (*kuyō* 供養) is employed as the means to solve misfortunes in the present life. (H-Y. Chen 2017, 149)

There is a good possibility that Lin adopted teachings of Japanese abortion ritual and imported them to Taiwan. According to Hsuan-Yu Chen’s interview with the Dragon Lake Temple, Jianyi Lin was strongly interested in Japanese NRMs’ publications and he was highly influenced by them. Nonetheless, he does not officially belong to any NRM sect. Meanwhile, he also consulted Taiwanese mediums’ publications to construct his theory. In other words, Lin’s theory includes and introduces diverse sources flexibly (H-Y. Chen 2017, 149).

Teacher Jianyi Lin passed away several years ago. Ziyao Lin, the current chair of the committee of the temple, is the son of Teacher Lin (Jianyi Lin). In spite of the visibility of the abortion ritual provided by Dragon Lake Temple in Taiwan, according to Lin, the number of participants is decreasing (Interview with Ziyao Lin, Oct. 26, 2009). During the interview, Ziyao Lin sighed, and said: “Since Teacher Lin passed away, the temple no longer has a charismatic figure.” To him, the figure should be “intellectual, compassionate and patient”. In addition, nowadays there are many temples in Taiwan which perform abortion ritual. Patrons have tons of choices so they do not necessarily prefer the Dragon Lake Temple. In fact, he was so anxious that he prayed to the Xuantian Shangdi constantly, asking him to choose a person to inherit the Temple. (Interview with Lin Ziyao, Oct. 26, 2009).

6-3 The Ritual

The Temple has been organizing abortion rituals. “Teacher Lin saw a need for an organized form of fetus-ghost appeasement in Taiwan” (Moskowitz 2001, 103). The abortion rituals were performed in different forms at different times. The rituals include: *Fuluan* (扶鸞 spiritual

writing)²⁴, Buddhist ritual and Taoist ritual.

6-3-1 The Fuluan Ritual

The Dragon Lake Temple used to perform the *Fuluan* ritual (扶鸞 spiritual writing) as a form of abortion ritual for decades (Chen 2017, 145). *Fuluan* used to be the “prerequisite” of a more regular and bigger-scaled abortion ritual in the Dragon Lake Temple (Chen 2017, 147). When the Temple was newly founded Teacher Jianyi Lin invited Rongjin Zeng, a well-known priest in *Fuluan*, to join the work (Chen 2017, 142). In his *Fuluan* rituals, deities such as Xuantian Shangdi and Taibai Xianweng (太白仙翁, refers to the famous poet Li Bo, 701-762), as well as suffering souls in the underworld delivered various teachings and messages to the disciples through Zeng (Chen 2017, 145-146). These messages were presented in the form of poems (*luanshi* 鸞詩) and were compiled into the collection, the Golden Proverbs (*Puji Jinzhen* 普濟金箴) (Chen 2017, 145). The *Fuluan* ritual was discontinued after the death of Zeng Rongjin in 1999 (Chen 2017, 148).

Hsuan-Yu Chen divides the *Fuluan* ritual in the Dragon Lake Temple into two types: “educating and transforming (*jiaohua* 教化)”, as well as “inquiries about things (*wenshi* 問事)” (H-Y. Chen 2017, 145). For the former function, these messages urge people to behave righteously in order to prevent corruption in the society (H-Y. Chen 2017, 145). Focusing on the law of causality, these messages illustrate how righteous people reached Buddhahood by insisting doing good deeds in difficult trials, and how corrupt and cruel people suffer from punishment in the underworld after death (H-Y. Chen 2017, 146). Hsuan-Yu Chen reviews two examples of the *Fuluan* rituals including *luanshis* and rituals. For the latter, the priest focused on individual cases and provided answers (H-Y. Chen 2017, 146). Very often the disciples came to the temple and inquired about troublesome and worrisome situations, such as sickness and nightmares. According to the priest’s *luanshis*, the miserable situations resulted from *Yingling*, creditors, or other types of

²⁴ The *Fuluan* ritual is a type of “Chinese spirit-mediumship” (Clart, 2003). Philip Clart presents a detailed description of the ritual process:

The minimum requirements for the holding of a séance usually are the presence of a medium (the “principal phoenix disciple” [*zhengluansheng*] who “supports the planchette” [*fujī, fuluan*], a reader who reads and calls out the characters traced by the planchette on a sand-covered surface, and a scribe who records the revealed text on paper. In addition, a number of devotees and cult members may be present to observe the séance. The “planchette” in question is usually a Y-shaped wooden stick which is similar in function, but not in shape, to the planchette of Western spiritualism (Clart 2003).

According to David K. Jordan and Daniel L. Overmyer, the origin of the *Fuluan* or *Fuji* (“supporting the planchette”, 扶乩) ritual can be traced back to the Song dynasty (960-1279) (Jordan & Overmyer, 2014, 36). Clart observes that in Taiwan, the ritual has been performed by the Phoenix Hall (*luan-tang*) system and the I-Kuan Tao (Clart 1997, 9).

karma accumulated through many lives (H-Y. Chen 2017, 147). Appropriate rituals in the Temple were prescribed as the means to solve the problems and achieve reconciliation (*hejie* 和解) (Chen 2017,147).

6-3-2 Year-Round Ritual

Abortion ritual in the Temple is called “nourishment or appeasement (供養 *gongyang*)”, which could be a term acquired from Japanese abortion ritual, but different from most abortion rituals performed in Taiwan.²⁵ There are four types of abortion ritual offered by the Dragon Lake Temple:

- One-day *gongyang* (claimed by the Temple as an inefficient type since the resentment of the fetus spirit is not able to be dispelled within a short period of time)
- Three-month *gongyang* (still, not efficient enough)
- Three-year *gongyang* (also called Thousand-Day *gongyan* (*qianri gongyang* 千日供養))
- Permanent *gongyang*

Three-year *gongyang* is strongly recommended by the Temple. It costs \$3,000 NT (\$100). The tablets of the fetus spirits are worshipped in the Temple for three years, listening to sutra-chanting and regularly held *chaodu* 超渡 ritual.

Patrons who are interested in appeasing their aborted fetuses may visit the temple and talk with the staff in person. Or, they can find an online “Dragon Lake Temple *Gongyang Yingling* Application Form” on the Dragon Lake Temple’s webpage (“*Yingling gongyang shizu miao*”). In the form they should indicate the date of application, names, date of birth, address, telephone number, number of *Yingling*, and they should take names for the *Yingling*. They could request the Temple to offer appropriate offerings, such as cookies, to the *Yingling*. The payment may be transferred between banks.

If the patrons choose the Three-year *gongyang*, the Temple will place a statue of the *Yingling* for them.²⁶ Here is Moskowitz’s description of the statue and the space:

²⁵ For more detailed analysis of *gongyang*, please consult Chapter 4: Ritual in the Great Prophet Yang’s Baby Palace.

²⁶ For the analysis of the tablets and statues of the *Yingling*, please consult Chapter 4: Ritual in the Prophet Yang’s Baby Palace.

The main floor of the building is devoted to fetus ghosts and contains shelves filled with statues of them. There is a second room for fetus ghosts on the floor below... The fetus-ghost statues are approximately one foot high and quite heavy, consisting of solid metal. On the front of each statue, the staff writes the name of the fetus ghost, the name or names of those appeasing the ghost, and the date on which the appeasement process began... This floor and the one below it has hundreds of fetus-ghost statues lined up on shelves. (Moskowitz 2001, 106-107)

The fetus-ghost statues (tablets) or offerings are not supposed to be brought home by the participants. According to Moskowitz, there are three reasons for this. First, it is to prevent the “family affair” to be exposed to others. Second, offerings lead the ghosts away from home so that the Yin energy will not affect the family (citing Stevan C. Harrell 1986). Citing Steven P. Sangren (1993), Moskowitz explains: “Keeping memorial tables at temples provides a way of caring for the ghosts of societally anomalous relatives without placing them on domestic altars, which would risk offending the ghost of patrilineal ancestors” (Moskowitz 2001, p. 112).

In order to appease and educate the resentful *Yingling*, a priest and a team are invited to the temple to chant sutras every two weeks on Sunday (a Buddhist team before 2000s and a Taoist team after 2000s. Please see the analysis below). Parents are encouraged to attend the chanting. They are also encouraged to visit the Temple to greet the *Yingling*. Hence, we can often see worshippers in the Temple. Participants may bring offerings. Moskowitz lists the offerings he witnessed in the temple, which were mostly baby items such as bedding and pillows, clothing and shoes, milk and pacifiers, toys and stuffed toys, snacks and goods (Moskowitz 2001, 109). Nowadays, for environmental concerns the Temple encourages participants to bring food instead of toys or clothes. In his observation of the offerings, Moskowitz compares these “untraditional gifts” (Moskowitz 2001, 109) with offerings to the “unruly gods” (researched by Robert P. Weller), such as cigarettes for the Eighteen Lords (Weller 1996, 259). According to him, both “represent a new development in what is allowable in sacrifice” (Moskowitz 2001, 110). However, the latter attempts to entice the gods to serve worshippers’ material needs. In contrast, the latter helps an adult pacify a child, which is emotionally invested (Moskowitz 2001, 110).

Two grand rituals (Spring festival and Fall festivals) are held every year. The parents of the fetus spirits are strongly encouraged to attend. At the last festival the tablets due (for the three-year *gongyang*) will be burned and the fetus spirits are expected to return to reincarnation peacefully.

If the parents choose Permanent *gongyang*, which attempt to keep the fetus spirits stay with the deity as “baby apprentices of the Dharma” he/she can pay another \$7,000 NT and the tablet is worshipped in the Temple permanently.

Moskowitz calculated the revenue of the year-round abortion ritual based on the annual fee per fetus ghost, which is \$1,200 NT \times 5,400 NT new fetus-ghost statue per year, which comes to \$ 6,480,000 NT (Moskowitz 2001, 107). This amount shows that the Dragon Lake Temple is “financially successful” (Moskowitz 2001, 107). Nonetheless, Moskowitz stresses that it is not a high expense for an individual. Also, it is costly to run a temple at this scale, including its staff, daily business as well as the two grand rituals every year (Moskowitz 2001, 108).

6-3-3 Spring and Autumn Rituals

The Spring (March) and Autumn (October) rituals serve as the abortion ritual in a bigger scale and performed on regular basis at the Dragon Lake Temple. Each ritual takes three days. Before 2000, the rituals were performed in Buddhist form; this Buddhist type of ritual is analyzed in Moskowitz’s research published in 2001: “the semiannual ritual days themselves are three one-day events during which a Buddhist chanting group is hired to chant and play music” (Moskowitz 2001, 105). Nonetheless, the Buddhist ritual switched to a Taoist ritual in 2001 because the leader of the chanting group, Priest Li, was too old (Interview with Ziyao Lin, Oct. 26, 2009). Taking the Taoist Autumn Festival in 2009 as an example, the ritual process is as follows:

The Dragon Lake Temple Fall Ceremony of the Yellow Register Liturgy for the raising up and salvation through the (divine actions of the) Supreme Green Dark (Deity). (*Qiuji Chongjian Wushang Qingxuan Huanglu Badu Keyi* 秋祭崇建無上青玄黃籙拔度科儀)

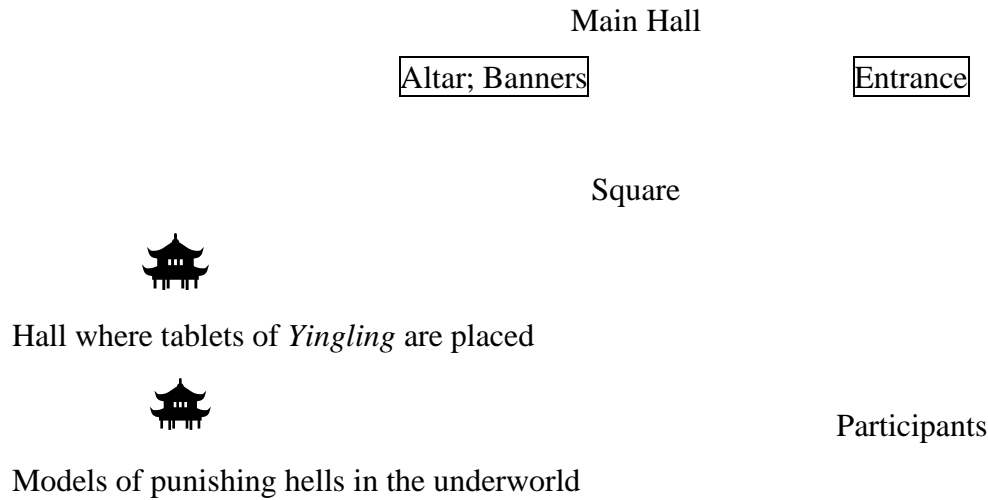
After beating the drums and firing the cannons, the priests reported and informed the founder teacher of the ritual. They also reported to the teacher who transmits the reports, and then proclaimed the memorial (explaining the purposes of the ritual and the names of the patrons) and released various notices, including the Manifesto to the Heavenly Lords, the *Three Purities Manifesto* (*Sanqingbiao* 三清表) to the Three Pure Ones including the Heavenly Venerable Jade Purity Lord of Premieval Commencement (*Yuqing Yuanshi Datianzun* 玉清元始大天尊), the Heavenly Venerable Supreme Purity Great Lord of the Numinous Treasure (*Shangqing Lingbao Datianzun* 上清靈寶大天尊) and the Heavenly Venerable Highest Purity Great Lord of the Dao

and its Virtue (*Taiqing Daode Datianzun* 太清道德大天尊), the *Eastern Pole Manifesto* (*Dongjibiao* 東極表) to the Great Emperor of the Green Darkness of the Eastern Bourne (*Dongji Qinghua Dadi* 東極青華大帝, Lord *Taiyi*), and the *Great Heaven Manifesto* (*Haotianbiao* 昊天表) to the Great Heaven Jade Emperor (*Haotian Yuhuang Dadi* 昊天玉皇上帝). Then the *Scripture of the Three Officials* (of Heaven, Earth and Water) (*Sanguan zhenjing* 三官真經) was recited. At the same time, in order to facilitate the ritual, notice texts were sent by burning to the earthly officials, including the Bureau of the Earth God (*Tudisi* 土地司), the Bureau of the City God (*Chenghuangsi* 城隍司), and the Bureau of the Prefectural Governor (*Shelingsi* 社令司). Memos (*diewen* 牒文) were sent to the Underworld agencies, including the Yellow Register Agency (*Huangluyuan* 黃籙院), the Mount. Tai Agency (*Taishanfu* 泰山府), the agency in charge of the dead (*Zhangwangrensi* 掌亡人司), and the archives in charge of the dead in the Underworld Water Palace (*Shuifu Zhangwangren'an* 水府掌亡人案). Rites of Hailing the Souls and Urging Those who are Hailed (*Shehun cuizhao yi* 攝魂催召儀) were performed. Notices were sent off to the Underworld officials requesting them to together grant pardons to all the passes (*qisheguan* 齊赦關). Moreover, officers and marshals (*guanjiang* 官將) from the Heaven and the Underworld were summoned to repress demons (*shemo* 攝魔) and eliminate defilement (*danghui* 盪穢) in order to guard the altar (*shoutan* 守壇). Following the entry ritual, priests respectfully recited scriptures for three days.

The god of the Green Darkness” refers to the Lord *Taiyi*.²⁷ The Yellow Register (*Huanglu* 黃籙) liturgy attempts to rescue and redeem the dead through merit (*gongde* 功德) (Lai 2013, 278). For this mortuary ritual, the priority is to repent and to confess. Moreover, in order to achieve the goal, the liturgy indicates how the ritual should be performed accurately and diligently (Lai 2013, 279). As Kenneth Dean observes, the priest acts as the commander who summons the military forces in heaven and earth in order to assist him/her in accomplishing the mission. In addition, he summons all the deities on his register (*lu*), on which names of gods and marshals are indicated that were granted to him/her when he/she was ordained. This group of gods provides him/her with the resources to convey information to even higher deities (Dean 1993, 182).

²⁷ For more detailed analysis of the deity Lord *Taiyi* and his function of saving the suffering, please consult Chapter 7: Collective Ritual 2.

Figure 7. Ritual Space in the Dragon Lake Temple



Day 1:

From the morning to the afternoon, scriptures were respectfully recited by the priests, including: the three volumes of the *Supreme Superior Compassionate Extinction of Offences Litanies* (*Taishang Cibei Miezu Baochan* 太上慈悲滅罪寶懺), the *Supreme Superior Scripture for the Solving of Injustice within the Three Ways of Life* (*Taishang Sansheng Jieyuan Jing* 太上三生解冤經), the *True Scripture of the Heavenly Venerable of Primordial Commencement for Salvation from the Lake of Blood* (*Yuanshi Tianzun Shuo Xiehu Zhenjing* 元始天尊說血湖真經), and the *Lord Tai Yi of Salvation Speaking the Blood Lake Litanies* (*Taiyi Jiuku Tianzun Shuo Xiehu Baochan* 太乙救苦天尊說血湖寶懺). During the intervals, various documents were presented and recited, including the (Lord of) *Green Darkness Relief and Salvation Manifesto* (*Qingxuan Jidubiao* 青玄濟度表), the *North Pole Institute of Exorcism Order* (*Beiji Quxie Yuanzhuang* 北極驅邪院狀) and the (Lord of) *Green Darkness Yellow Register Order to the Secondary Offices* (*Qingxuan Huanglu Zuofuzhuang* 青玄黃錄左府狀), the *Eastern Apex Blood Lake Form* (*Dongji Xiehubiao* 東極血湖表), the *Great Dao Blood Lake Form* (*Dadao Xiehubiao* 大道血湖表) and the *Heavenly Physician Form and Notice* (*Tianyi Biaodie* 天醫表牒). In addition, the *Complete Form Liturgy* (全形科儀) was worshipped. In the evening, after respectfully reciting the *Supreme Superior Dark Gateway Evening Lesson* (*Taishang Xuanmen Wanke* 太上玄門晚課) which launched the evening ritual, the *Nine Heavens Form* (*Jiutianbiao* 九天表) was presented. During the *Inviting the Sages and Inviting the Souls Liturgy* and the *Travelling through Hell* (*Qingsheng*

Yinhunyi Youyu 請聖引魂儀遊獄) and the *Breaking through the (Gates of) Hell Liturgy* (*Poyu Keyi* 破獄科儀), the priests attacked the representation of Hell (*poyu* 破獄) and travelled to the underworld in order to lead out the dead souls. They presented the *East Pole Attacking Hell Form* (*Dongji Poyubiao* 東極破獄表) and the *Jade Purity Attacking Hell True Talisman* (*Yuqing Poyu Zhenfu* 玉清破獄真符) to shatter the gates of hell so they could lead the suffering souls out of the underworld.

The Blood Lake is a hell in the infernal Mount *Fengdu* Underworld (Mollier 2008, 183) which specifically targets women who died in childbirth (Hsiao 2008, 39). These women are sinful due to the pollution caused by their unproductive reproductive blood. In fact, the *Marvelous Scripture of the Great Unity, the Savior from Suffering and Protector of Life* (*Taiyi jiuku hushen miaojing* 太一救苦護身妙經), which was the first full text recording Lord Taiyi's career in saving the suffering, does not mention a Blood Lake ceremony or liturgy (Mollier 2008, 183-184). However, one of the passages was blended into the *True Scripture of the Heavenly Venerable of Primordial Commencement for Salvation from the Lake of Blood* (*Yuanshi Tianzun Jidu Xiehu Zhenjing* 元始天尊濟度血湖真經, DZ72), which was a prominent Taoist scripture during the Song Dynasty (Mollier 2008, 184). This scripture lists those who shall go to the Blood Lake to suffer, including those who have had abortions. "Because [the women] takes poisonous medicine by mistake, the fetus is harmed and aborted (*sunzi duotai* 損子墮胎)" (*Yuanshi Tianzun Jidu Xiehu Zhenjing*). At the same time, the *Precious Ritual of Contrition for Deliverance from the Bloody Pond, Revealed by the Heavenly Venerable Savior from Suffering* (*Taiyi Jiuku Tianzun Shuo Badu Xiehu Baochan* 太一救苦天尊說拔度血湖寶懺, DZ538), has also been serving as a major scripture for the Blood Lake service in a Universal salvation (*pudu*) since the end of the Song Dynasty or the beginning of the Yuan dynasty (Mollier 2008, 183). In addition to illustrating the cruelty of the punishment in the Blood Lake, this scripture also includes those who have had abortions or miscarriages and states that they too should be tortured:

If one loses an embryo through miscarriage or abortion, the life will thereby be ended. Sometimes the mother survives while the child dies, or the mother dies but the child lives, or the mother and the embryo both die before one can distinguish male from female. Sometimes the pregnancy is complete but the infant is stillborn, sometimes (death comes from) an illness in the final months of pregnancy, and

sometimes one is pregnant but has a bad fall, or the medicine one takes mistakenly poisons one and leads to death, or one is afflicted by infections or dysentery and dies from weakness, or one hemorrhages to death, or one dies by a slow leaking of blood, or one goes through the pregnancy but cannot deliver the baby, or one gives birth but the infant dies within a month, or one dies of blood poisoning.... (*Taiyi Jiuku Tianzun Shuo Badu Xiehu Baochan*)

The scriptures above claims that women will suffer from these wrongdoings; however, they also promise that they can be saved through Lord Taiyi's power. The Precious Faced Perfected Religious Lord of the Blood Lake (*Xiehu Jiaozhu Baoxiang Zhenren* 血湖教主寶相真人) along with Lord Taiyi are in charge of attacking the Blood Lake Hell, while the Heavenly Venerable of the Ten Directions Who Saves the Suffering (*Shifang Jiuku Tianzun* 十方救苦天尊) along with Lord Taiyi are in charge of attacking the Nine Hells in the Darkness (*Jiuyouyu* 九幽獄) to deliver the majority of the dead (Hsiao 2008, 39).

Day 2

After launching the morning ritual, more scriptures were respectfully recited by the priests, including the *Precious Litany of the (Lord of the) Green Darkness for the Saving from Suffering* (*Qingxuan Jiuku Baochan* 青玄救苦寶懺), the *Precious Litany for the Removal of Sin by the Compassionate Venerable* (*Cizun Bazui Baochan* 慈尊拔罪寶懺) and the *Litany of the (Lord of the) Eastern Peak, Ruler of Great Life* (*Dongyue Dasheng Baochan* 東嶽大生寶懺). In addition, Volumes 1-8 of another major scripture, the *Supreme Superior Compassionate Litany for the Lifting from Sin of Those in the Nine Darknesses* (*Taishang Cibe Jiuyou Bazui Fachan* 太上慈悲九幽拔罪法懺) were respectfully recited until the afternoon. Before the evening, the souls were invited to bathe through *Respecting the Saints and Bathing (the Souls) Liturgy* (*Lisheng Muyu Keyi* 禮聖沐浴科儀). After the evening ritual was launched, the souls were led to escape the tortures of the three paths of fire, blood and knives and five sufferings of the mountains of knives, forests of swords, burning copper pillars, boiling cauldrons and drizzling coldness, through the *Peak Lantern Liturgy for Summoning the Holy and Inviting the Souls to Escape the Three Paths and Five Bitter Tortures* (請聖引魂出三塗五苦嶽燈儀).

According to Teng-Fu Hsiao's research, the *Lifting from Sin Those in the Nine Darknesses Litany* (*Taishang Cibe Jiuyou Bazui Fachan* 太上慈悲九幽拔罪法懺) has been available since

the late Six Dynasties (222-589) (Hsiao 2008, 15). This scripture indicates that Lord Taiyi resides in the Eastern land of Eternal Happiness (Hsiao 2008, 16) and through his power “pre-cultivation (*yuxiu* 預修, a funeral prior to death)” can be achieved (Hsiao 2008, 28). This liturgy along with several other liturgies related to Lord Taiyi allow the living in the terrestrial world to go through a vegetarian mortuary ritual before death so that they can “book” the opportunity to go to the celestial world in the future rather than descending to the underworld. It is stressed that the living people should cultivate merit diligently in order to compensate for their sins; and by doing so the pre-cultivation can succeed (Hsiao 2008, 28). This section of the ritual in the Dragon Lake Temple does not serve the *Yingling* and other types of souls. Instead, it is to assist the participants in cultivating for their own fate.

Day 3

Volumes 9 and 10 of the *Nine Darkness Litanies* (*Taishang Cibe Jiuyou Bazui Fachan* 太上慈悲九幽拔罪法懺) were respectfully recited. The priests presented notices to express gratitude for the heavenly mercy. The priests invited the souls of the dead to eat and drink by means of respectfully reciting and performing the *Prior Heaven Dipper Food Relief and Purification from Darkness Liturgy* (*Xiantian Hushi Jilian Youke* 先天斛食濟煉幽科). Finally, the souls were lifted up and they transcended into the Heavenly Halls. The priests sent off the holy deities, praising that the deities had delivered mercy and merit so that their auspicious light was shown upon the earth.

Here is the statement in the opening passage of the *Former Heaven Dipper Food Relief and Purification Darkness Liturgy* (*Lingbao Liandu Chaoyou Shishi* 靈寶煉度超幽施食) which clearly indicates the three major purposes of the liturgy: “Now, (we) humbly obey the edict of Tao, prudently follow the profound liturgy, decorate and set up the Numinous Treasure for purification and salvation, transcending the darkness, and offering food (*Lingbao Liandu Chaoyou Shishi*)”. According to Chi Tim Lai, the idea of transcending the darkness, *chaoyou* (超幽), may be similar to the Buddhist idea of *chaodu* 超度, which is to extinguish all offences done by the dead and achieve reconciliation between the dead and his/her creditors (Lai 2013, 280). This liturgy highly relies on the Yellow Register’s idea of absolving and relieving the dead (Lai 2013, 280). Chi Tim Lai claims that inner alchemical techniques have been integrated into the Yellow Register liturgy since the Song dynasty, which resulted in the fusion of offering food as well as purification and salvation (Lai 2013, 279). Through this ritual, the thirsty and hungry souls of the dead are relieved.

Through purification and salvation, the High Merit (*gaogong*) employs his/her cultivated nutritive essence (*jing* 精), vitality (*qi* 氣) and mind/god (*shen* 神) to open up the road to the Nine Darkness Hell so that the souls are able to be purified and revived (Lai 2013, 279). The priest takes advantage of hand seals, secret instructions, pacing of constellation and talismanic writing, and meanwhile, he/she visualizes the true light of the Primordial Commencement surrounding him/herself, illuminating the path to the Darkness and hailing the souls (Lai 2013, 279). This technique was not seen in texts earlier than the Tang dynasty, which shows that the ritual changes along with the evolution of self-cultivation techniques (Lai 2013, 279).²⁸

In the spacious square where the ritual took place outside of the hall of the temple, the altar and the banners were placed on the one side. The Taoist priest, Priest Chen, and his five apprentices, performed the ritual and paraded. On the other side of the square, along the wall there were at least ten tents, titled “the Underworlds”. They are the court of Chenghuang (the City God), the Agency of *Yin* and *Yang*, the Altar of Officers and Generals, the Pavilion of Guanyin, the Tablets of the spirits, the Blood Lake (represented by a tub of water), the Castle of those who Died through Injustice, the Bathrooms for Spirits of Men and Women, the Ten Courts of the Underworld. Inside of each tent the room was decorated with banners, tables, and paintings. In the Blood Lake (*xiehu* 血湖), there was a washbasin full of female and male paper dolls, representing the souls suffering from the blood. In the middle of the square there are long tables where the offerings were placed, and long benches where the participants can take a break.

As mentioned above, the ritual in the Dragon Lake Temple switched from Buddhist style to Taoist style in 2001. However, in spite of the differences in Buddhist and Taoist rituals, the ritual participants in fact go through a very similar ritual process:

Participants receive a “red contract” (Moskowitz 2001, p. 104),²⁹ which is the “Transcending *Yingling* and Siblings’ *Lings* Settling Injustice Unraveling Enmity Red Text (*Chaoba Yingling Gurouling Heyuan Shijie Hongwen* 超拔嬰靈骨肉靈和冤釋結紅文)”. Moskowitz summaries the content as follows:

The red contract is a large piece of paper that contains what is essentially a legal

²⁸ These powers to refine the souls dead within the body of the Daoist priest are related to his other powers. Kenneth Dean analyzes: “The priest is also able to summon the gods of his body out of the microcosm to merge with their counterparts in the macrocosm. He knows how to become a god and use divine power (Dean 1993, 182)”

²⁹ Moskowitz also provides a full translation to this text in his book (Moskowitz 2001, 171-173).

petition to the gods and fetus ghosts. This includes a standardized worshiper's appeal to the gods with an admission of guilt, an apology, and an agreement to appease the fetus ghost for three years. In exchange for this the gods are asked to mediate with the fetus ghost on the appeaser's behalf. (Moskowitz 2001, p. 104)

The participants read the text in the red contract in front of the *Yingling* tablets and the deities' statues. In order to do so, they need to go to the hall where the tablets are placed and return to the main hall. The tablets of the fetus spirits who have been staying in the Temple for three years are placed in the hall. Understandably the participants spend a long time searching the tablets to make sure the statues of their appeased fetus spirits are there.

On the other hand, the ritual was performed by six Taoist priests in the square for three days. The participants most of the time stay beside and watch. But time to time they are invited to stand up, join the priests walking around the square with burning incense in hands. The last day of the ritual is the liveliest day among the three. Piles of offerings are placed on tables. People in the neighborhood gather. As Moskowitz describes: "On the afternoon of the last day of the ceremony, prayers are also made to wandering spirits, and locals from the surrounding area come to give food to the gods. The ceremony ends with the temple donating large bags of rice to poor people from the surrounding area" (Moskowitz 2001, 105). At the end of the ritual the priests threw offerings such as candy or cookies to the audience, and children ran to the stage to pick them up. The Dragon Lake Temple has a close relationship with local communities. Moreover, according to Moskowitz, its location in the rural area allows the Temple to attract communal support through "gifts to the fire department and schools" (Moskowitz 2001, 113).

6-4 The Atmosphere: Conversations among the Women

During the grand rituals thousands of participants arrive at the Temple from far away, north and south of Taiwan. Since the temple is located in a remote area, surrounded by mountains and rivers, going to the temple means a high expense of time and money for the participants. Most participants are women who come alone - 70% according to Moskowitz's estimate (Moskowitz 2001, 110). One of the informants complained that although her boyfriend accompanied her in the first year, he soon became tired of the long trip and would not join her anymore. Some fortunate participants were accompanied by their partners. The husband of one of the informants was waiting very patiently while his wife gave the interview. Meanwhile, an informant told me that her

boyfriend refused to enter the temple, despite the fact that he drove a long way here, because “he does not like the *yin* atmosphere of the temple.”

During the ritual, the participants can stay anywhere in the temple, the garden, or the path by the lake. While they stay beside the square they easily chat with each other. Conducting interviews during the festivals is much easier than doing it at other temples, probably because the participants share similar experiences (abortion and miscarriage) and it is not a stigmatized issue to talk about anymore. However, there is no firm “sisterhood” among the women because these women come and leave the Temple separately. They only exchange their opinions and experiences for a very short period of time. Nonetheless, the long trip can still be seen as a personal pilgrimage. Several interviews are particularly interesting because they show the nature of how abortion ritual allows the women to “deviate” from their routine social life and guide them to a “temporary utopia”.³⁰

During the three days of the Autumn Festival in 2009, I stayed in the temple observing the ritual process as well as interviewing the participants. Very soon I realized this occasion allowed me to access the informants much more easily, compared to other types of rituals I had attended before. The women coming to the ritual shared the common interest in the ritual and the wellbeing of the fetus spirit, so they were not isolated from each other. The atmosphere was friendly and intimate. My conversations with the informants were often conducted in a comfortable and relaxing way. The leading staff members who received and took care of the participants was Ms. Zuo, an extremely kind and enthusiastic lady. In addition, despite the fact that the ritual was conducted in a Taoist manner, a Buddhist nun, Teacher Shih Yanxin, has been residing in the temple acting as a consultant for the participants. Very often Ms. Zuo, Teacher Yanxin, other staff, and the participants chatted beside the long tables.

I joined them from time to time during the ritual or the dining. “What brought you here?” or “How many abortions have you had?” In this space women asked each other this question not long after starting chatting. For example, I was sitting beside a young girl at lunch on the first day of the Festival. She told us she had two abortions because the husband and his parents prefer sons to daughters so she had to abort the female fetuses. She was calm while talking about this story.

³⁰ Luis D. León employs this term to describe the state of *communitas* achieved by believers from Mexico City, East Los Angeles and parts of the American Southwest during the pilgrimages to Guadalupe, Mexico (León 2004, 16). This thesis also consults Victor W. Turner’s theoretical analysis of the pilgrim experiences to Guadalupe. Please see 7-4-2: A pilgrimage for women.

The audience, including Teacher Yanxin and several mid-aged women eating at the same table, were asking questions and listening. Nobody made judgmental comments.

On the third day of the Festival, I encountered a middle-aged lady, Ms. Tang, on a bench in the square. There were worry and unhappiness on her face, and she was not very willing to talk in the beginning. However, she gradually talked more and more, and soon another lady, Ms. Gong, joined our conversation. Ms. Tang and Ms. Gong did not know each other, but the conversation flowed smoothly.

Ms. Tang has never had an abortion before. This is why she did not pay any attention to the service of abortion ritual of the Dragon Lake Temple reported by a magazine she read more than ten years ago. However, once a medium in a temple told her: “the fetus spirit of your elder sister is following you.” Furthermore, “Your elder sister has merit. The unborn fetus helps to relieve the world. Now she is following you because she is trying to assist you.” She recalls her mother indeed lost three children. One is her elder brother, who died at the age of 6. The second is her elder sister, who died very early, too. The third is a boy who was lost due to miscarriage. She decided to take over the responsibility and do something for the three siblings. The news article in the magazine reminded her, so she came to the Dragon Lake Temple on Nov. 25, 2008. She had the tablets settled for the elder sister and the younger brother in the Temple. As for the elder brother, since he was more than 3 years old when he died, Ms. Tang sponsored and participated the ritual of Breaking the Incense Smoke (*duanxiangyan* 斷香煙) for her elder brother. This ritual, provided specially by the Dragon Lake Temple, aims to worship those who do not have descendants.

Ms. Tang told me when she was in the temple last time (the Spring Festival), she suddenly turned sad and started tearing up. She guessed it was probably because the two siblings “were there,” too, and they could feel the bond between them. Ms. Tang spent 10,600 NT (353 CAD) in the temple. When talking about the issue of money, Ms. Tang appeared to be quite unhappy. Ms. Gong asked if anyone is sharing the expense with her. Ms. Tang said she does have two sisters, but “they don’t believe this kind of thing. But I am here to worship the spirits with my own money and I do not need their permission.” Ms. Tang reports that her two sisters have been having difficult lives; the big sister has a son but economic hardship, while the second sister’s twin babies died immediately after birth.

Ms. Gong turned to Ms. Tang: “the fetus spirit follows people who are willing to help them.” But Ms. Tang answered: “but why should I carry all of these?” Ms. Tang said things about

jobs and health have not been going smoothly with her. She has been working for a Japanese battery company for many years and was planning to retire in three years and receive pension from the company. However, her health went bad (sore joints, headache and dizziness) so she had no choice but quitting three months ago. She is not sure if it is the influence of the fetus spirit. However, she has been telling herself that in any kind of situation, she has to take the responsibility and does her best. Ms. Gong told her: “This world is like this: kind people take more responsibilities. Meanwhile, it could be also because you are more capable than your sisters.”

Ms. Tang agreed with Ms. Gong. She believes that the fetus spirit of her dead elder sister follows her rather than the other two sisters because she is more religious and often frequents shrines and temples. She has been attending religious ceremonies and meditations for twenty years. She told us she is not knowledgeable enough to perform any rituals for the spirits. However, she wants to keep cultivating herself and improving her ability in order to work with the fetus spirit to do good deeds after the three-year period in the Dragon Lake Temple. Ms. Tang also worshipped the two fetus spirits in other temples and Buddhist assemblies. She invited the spirits to come through prayers, to listen to the Buddhist lessons and scriptures. Nonetheless, she still thinks it is better for the two spirits to stay in the Dragon Lake Temple for three years to learn the Buddhist doctrines from listening to the chanting without wandering outside. She does not know if the ritual of the Dragon Lake Temple works better, but she admitted that at least mentally she feels much more comfortable.

When I asked about the increasing rate of abortion, both Ms. Tang and Ms. Gong agreed that the values of today’s young girls have changed rapidly. Ms. Tang was even more critical. She claims “open ideas about sexuality have ruined society and collapsed morality.” Young people should not cause any tragedy only because they pursued a temporary pleasure. Abortion is not a means of contraception. Ms. Tang said: “[t]hese people should visit Hell and see what the eighteen levels of Hell look like.” Meanwhile, people should try to avoid premarital sex. People should cultivate their understanding and practices of morality, and the senses of propriety, justice, honesty and honor should be awakened. Even if he/she does not care about morality he/she has to take the consequences.

6-5 Analysis

The rituals taking place in the Dragon Lake Temple serve as a healing process for the

participants. As Moskowitz (2001) observes, abortion rituals have been employed as the means for medical and spiritual treatments for physical illness (117-118), behavioral problems (118-122), mental illness (122-123) and familial tensions (129). The participants are not only physically or mentally ill, they are also socially ill. Ms. Tang came to the temple due to a common reason with a lot of worshippers of abortion ritual: difficulties occurring in life. Religion, as well as the governmental policy on family planning, socio-economical changes, and new forms of medical discourses and practices, all are forces in the making of abortion in modern Taiwan. When her difficult situation was so hard to explain from her understanding of the reality, like Ms. Tang's worsening health before her retirement, religious explanation and means could come in and serve as a solution.

6-5-1 The Yingling: a Modern Disease

To Teacher Jianyi Lin, abortion is regarded as a sin of the modern society. In his publications he highlights how the life style of modern society triggered the popularity of abortions: men and women indulge in premarital and extramarital sex, women's reckless decisions over abortions due to all kinds of excuses, or even the post-war turmoil. He stresses: "Along with the change in times, there are more and more modern plagues. Though some are psychologically invisible and impalpable discomfort, which is the *Yingling*. (J. Lin 1996, 88)" To Teacher Lin, abortion is a modern disease which reveals the collapse of morality, and abortion ritual is the necessary act to react to modernity. Teacher Lin's narratives present a complete process of diagnosis, prescription and treatment. During this process numerous professionals are involved and function differently. In addition to the theorist and priests, as Moskowitz points out, the Dragon Lake Temple goers are often "referred" by mediums or fortune-tellers (Moskowitz 2001, 108). Or, they may visit the temple based on other goers' recommendation (Moskowitz 2001, 108). Or, they choose the temple instead of a doctor's clinic through "self-diagnosis" (Moskowitz 2001, 108). In any way, the misfortunes are believed to be a disease and need to be treated. As Chapter 1 (Introduction) reviews, according to the discourses surrounding abortion ritual in Taiwan, abortion is regarded as a sinful and immoral conduct, and *Yingling* are regarded as a fierce revenging power. There is a good possibility that temples and shrines follow Teacher Jianyi Lin's teachings. Effects of reproduction of the gendered morality can be expected.

The abortion ritual is regarded as a means of healing and compensation. It is rather simple -- "fairly quick, easy, and relatively inexpensive redemption" (Moskowitz 2001, 114).

Nonetheless, the ritual's ultimate goal - to revive morality - can be difficult to achieve. The Temple's teachings are delivered as a narrative of morality and there is a strict sense of discipline within the text, i.e., one should behave so that the "spiritual harm (*linghai* 靈害)" (J. Lin 1996, 80) caused by a haunting fetus will not follow. Although the abortion ritual is assigned as the means to cure, the participant's "self-help" is believed to be the fundamental treatment, i.e., "people take responsibility for their actions, both in their admission of guilt and in making amends for their wrongdoings" (Moskowitz 2001, 114). To Teacher Lin, morality is the core of the ritual.

Taking the ritual *Fuluan* as an example, morality serves as the purpose of the spiritual teaching. The ritual satisfies the nostalgia for old morality, namely "central traditions of Chinese culture (Jordan & Overmyer 2014, 10)". Philip Clart's research shows morality is so highly valued in the ritualistic practices- a "moral universe" - that the mediums should act as a moral model so that the duty can be exercised in an appropriate and responsible manner (Clart 2003). Meanwhile, David K. Jordan and Daniel L. Overmyer claim that the ritual is embedded in "individual religiosity" (Jordan & Overmyer 2014, 267) instead of a collective-such as familial or communal - popular religion. "The individual is the unit of consideration" (Jordan & Overmyer 2014, 8). The ritual attempts to enlighten self-consciousness and is "concerned with individual cultivation of virtue and the fate of individual soul" (Jordan & Overmyer, 8). Nonetheless, the ritual is able to be modified. The strict moral teaching can be eased to accommodate individuals' situation, but "labels" and "symbols" should remain (Jordan & Overmyer 2014, 10). Hence, the loose membership allows for a possibility of "democratization of religious merit" (Jordan & Overmyer 2014, 279). As a result, *Fuluan* is a ritual which blends the sense of "primordality" (traditions) and newness (innovation by individuals) (Jordan & Overmyer 2014, 10). *Fuluan* "provides satisfactory self-esteem by redefining traditionalism as superior to modernity" (Jordan & Overmyer 2014, 276). Jordan and Overmyer assert that the popularity of spirit writing in both the West and the East results from dramatic social changes in which traditional values and practices decline, such as industrialization, scientific progresses, as well as transnational conflicts (Jordan & Overmyer 2014, 288). Due to the revival of morality through the ritual, "the human mind will go to reassure itself that the world still makes sense" (Jordan & Overmyer 2014, 288)."

Meanwhile, the gender roles observed in the ritual space (men as healers/authority and women as patients/subjects) should be paid attention to, which could indicate a more traditional gender role. In his research on women's moral society in Manchukuo, Prasenjit Duara claims that

women's roles in China and Japan during the 1930s represented "tradition within modernity" (Duara 2004, 131 & 149). Family is a metaphor of the State, and women are encouraged to act as a carrier of morality in the developing process. Moral societies were created in big cities, involving numerous women preaching and working on charity. Hence, Duara claims: "During the conflicts between materialism (West) and spirituality (East), women's bodies are the arena to display the inner domain of sovereignty of nationalist ideology" (Duara 2004, 135). For Duara, the moral societies strived to reinforce the traditional role of women in families in order to create the supportive energy of families to the state. "Women's associations were melded into the frame of governmentality" (Duara 2004, 151).

6-5-2 *A Pilgrimage for Women*

Pilgrimage has become an implicit critique of the life-style characteristic of the encompassing social structure. Its emphasis on transcendental, rather than mundane, ends and means; its generation of communitas; its search for the roots of ancient, almost vanishing virtues as the underpinning of social life, even in its structured expressions-- all have contributed to the dramatic resurgence of pilgrimage (Turner & Turner 2011, 39).

For its remote location, it is surprising that the Dragon Lake Temple attracts a large number of worshippers all over Taiwan. Nonetheless, Moskowitz suggests that the temple's location might be the reason for its popularity: "for appeasers can go there without announcing to their friends and neighbors that they have had abortions" (Moskowitz 2001, 103). Indeed, a communal temple close to her circle might not be the best choice for a woman to sponsor an abortion ritual. In addition, Moskowitz stresses that the growing urbanization in Taiwan shapes a "loosely organized group of strangers" in contrast to "communities of neighbors" (Moskowitz 2001, 114). Moreover, religious specialization (specialized practitioners, specialized narratives and specialized rituals) attracts women patrons who have imminent customized needs (Moskowitz 2001, 113). Although this journey would not necessarily be called as a pilgrimage by the patrons, some key qualities of the Spring and Autumn rituals allow this ritual to be analyzed by Victor W. Turner and Edith L.B. Turner's approach to examine pilgrimages.

The Journey

The journey to the Dragon Lake Temple requires the women to set off and leave their home. Victor W. Turner and Edith L.B. Turner describe a (Christian) pilgrimage as: "a pilgrimage to a

sacred site or holy shrine located at some distance away from the pilgrim's place of residence and daily labor (Turner & Turner 2011, 4)". The most important quality of a pilgrimage is: "to get out, go forth, to a far holy place approve by all (Turner & Turner 2011, 7)". While being situated within a social structure, struggles between the self and the group rise constantly, which are "occasions of sin" (Turner & Turner 2011, 7). These hardships accumulate until they result in a significant conflict. When the individual cannot handle this conflict anymore, he/she needs to set forth on a journey (Turner & Turner 2011, 7). Victor W. Turner observes that very often pilgrimage shrines are located away from the centre of cities or towns; they are "on their (cities or towns') peripheries or perimeters" (Turner 1973, 211) or even far away. During the journey, there is a sense of dramatic change in time and space embedded in a pilgrimage. The "peripherality" of the sacred destinations and the "temporal structure of the pilgrimage process" shapes a three-stage process of departure (leaving a "Familiar Place"), travel (moving to a "Far Place"), return (in a "changed" state of spirituality), and finally homecoming (Turner 1973, 213).

Individual

The journey to the Dragon Lake Temple serves as a bodily experience of the individual. Victor W. Turner and Edith L.B. Turner stress that, in a pilgrimage, "the moral unit is the individual (Turner & Turner 2011, 8)." The pilgrims behave differently but they are self-conscious (Turner 1973, 217). For example, they may encounter dangers and need to strive for survival (Turner 1973, 204-205; Turner & Turner 2011, 7). Susan Naquin observes that, during a pilgrimage in Beijing, the more suffering the bodily experiences are, the stronger sense of happiness can be achieved (Naquin 1992). Turner claims that, in spite of the fact that a pilgrimage is perceived as an obligation in many cultures, this travelling experience in fact allows for "higher level of freedom, choice, volition, structurelessness" (Turner 1973, 200). The pilgrims cut across political boundaries (Turner 1973, 202; 2011, 6). Within such a "liminoid phenomenon," a pilgrim loses his/her social status and obtains a new identity (Turner & Turner 2011, 1-39).

Community

Moskowitz demonstrates that, when being with numerous women who share similar experiences, the worshippers "gain comfort" and reduce "their feelings of being more sinful than others" (Moskowitz 2001, 39). He further asserts that this forum of women achieves a sense of solidarity (Moskowitz 2001, 39). Moreover, during the visit, there might be some collective activities, such as rituals and conversations, that help achieve a sense of community among the

patrons. Victor W. Turner reports that, during a pilgrimage, “the mere demographic and geographical facts of large numbers of people coming at set times and considerable distance between the pilgrim’s home and sacred site themselves compel a certain amount of organization and discipline” (1973, 195). At the same time, a pilgrimage is a “structure of thoughts and feeling” (Turner & Turner 2011, 10). As Victor W. Turner observes, “seeking oneness is... to eliminate divisiveness, to realize nonduality” (Turner 1973, 217). Pilgrims may make new friends. They may find themselves members of a solitary *communitas*, which consists of supernatural beings, religious leaders and spiritual teachers, and themselves (Turner 1973, 217). As the ritual analyzed in this chapter shows, a forum of women in the form of *communitas* emerged in the ritual space. The women came to the temple for similar purposes. They communicated their experiences and expressed their critiques of their families and society. These activities are effective healing measures. Victor Turner highlights that any activity done through the stage of *communitas*, such as a conversation or travelling together to the sacred origin, is a “source of healing and renewal” (Turner 1973, 217).

Pilgrimage as Liminoid

A pilgrimage share some qualities with liminality. Victor W. Turner claims that pilgrimage is a liminal phase, as the pilgrims are detached from the habituated social order (such as family or kinship) that they lived in (Turner 1973, 213). They shall and need to act based on the “affirmation of another order of things” (Turner 1973, 214). The pilgrims escape from daily duties (such as paying a bill or rent) and turn their focus to the spiritual missions and the interactions with scripts, landscapes and other pilgrims (Turner 1973, 199-200). When being away, a sense of liminality is made possible:

[R]elease from mundane structure; homogenization of status; simplicity of dress and behaviour; *communitas*; ordeal; reflection on the meaning of basic religious and cultural values; ritualized enactment of correspondence between religious paradigms and shared human experience; emergence of the integral person from multiple *personae*; movement from the mundane centre to a sacred periphery which suddenly, transiently, becomes central for the individual, an *axi mundi* of his faith; movement itself, a symbol of *communitas*, which change with time, as against stasis, which represents structure; individuality posed against the institutionalized milieu. (Turner & Turner 2011, 34)

Yet, a pilgrimage is less like liminality, an idea Arnold van Gennep proposed, which describe a

ritual as “obligatory social mechanism to mark the transition of an individual or a group from a state or status to another within a mundane sphere (Turner & Turner 2011, 35)”. Turner & Turner employs the concept “liminoid (quasi-limina)” to characterize a pilgrimage: “open, optional, not conceptualized as religious routine (2011, 231)”. Pilgrimage takes place in “in simpler societies”, triggered by “voluntary activity of individuals during their free time” based on “individual choice” and its goal is to achieve “[s]alvation of individuals (Turner & Turner 2011, 231-232). A pilgrimage is “exteriorized mysticism” (Turner & Turner 2011, 7) because a pilgrim is pursuing an extraordinary and miraculous experience beyond his/her place of residence (Turner & Turner 2011, 6). Through the journey, a pilgrim seeks “salvation,” “release from the sins or evils” of the social structure (Turner & Turner 2011, 8). Moreover, it is not obligatory to reinforce the relationship with other pilgrims after the ritual. Moskowitz highlights that the membership of this solitary community in the Spring and Autumn rituals in the Dragon Lake Temple is anonymous and temporary (Moskowitz 2001, 39). It is not a friendship since the women do not know each other personally. It is not an association since the women will not contact each other after leaving the temple due to the shared difficult experiences in abortions. Hence, Moskowitz affirms that the community in the ritual space is “an anonymous solidarity” (Moskowitz 2001, 39).

Social Critique

According to the observation of Victor W. Turner and Edith L.B. Turner, in modern life, work and leisure are regarded as two separate entities served by professionalism, and religion is regarded as leisure. The division makes religion “less serious” but “more solemn” at the same time (Turner & Turner 2011, 36). Due to social change, religion has become “specialized to establish ethical standards and behavior in a social milieu characterized by multiple options, continuous change, and large-scale secularization (Turner & Turner 2011, 36)”. In addition to pilgrimages in the traditional sense, Turner observes a new type of pilgrimage, which arose in the 19th-20th Centuries in the West, which is “characterized by a highly devotional tone and the fervent personal piety of their adherents,” and play a key role as “apologetics deployed against the advancing secularization of the post-Darwinian world” (Turner & Turner 2011, 18). In other words, a pilgrimage provides the pilgrims with an opportunity to express their thoughts to social changes. A pilgrimage attempts to “recollect, and even to presage, an alternative mode of social being, a world where *communitas*, rather than a bureaucratic social structure, is preeminent (Turner & Turner 2011, 39).

The fact that Dragon Lake Temple serves as the very place for a significant number of women to express their experiences and feelings is important. The abortion ritual has been denounced as a ritual reproducing the patriarchal order.³¹ However, at the same time, only in this ritual are women able to speak out against the bitterness brought on by the patriarchal order. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that this pilgrimage repeats on regular basis. At this specific space and time what is concealed in daily life is continuously revisited and the dark side of the memory is exposed through the ritual. As Victor W. Turner and Edith L. B. Turner point out, the display of the Virgin of Guadalupe, or the women's pilgrimage, "reveals unrecognized and unlegitimated social values, even a kind of social, if not "collective," unconscious, which persists in culturally transmitted, though unexplained, symbols" (Turner & Turner 2011, 101).

Minority Power

Pilgrimage is a ritual that heals, strengthens and transforms. As a liminal stage, a pilgrimage achieves transition and potentiality at the same time (Turner & Turner 2011, 3). In his analysis of the pilgrimages for the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico, Turner claims that the image of the Virgin serves as a symbol which displays the power of the minority (such as women or those who are colonized) within the androcentric society. The Mexicanized Virgin allows the image of the colonized people and the colonized women to stand in the chancel. The pilgrimage also serves as an opportunity for transformation (Turner 1974, 152-153). The constant pilgrimages to the Dragon Lake Temple are accomplished through constant crossings of boundaries and constant switches of identity. This dynamic process allows the individual and the community to change.

The journey to the Spring and Autumn rituals in the Dragon Lake Temple allowed the women to leave the social and familial contexts they are familiar with and enter an environment where the sole purpose is to appease the *yínglíng*. The Dragon Lake Temple is a newly developed sacred site, but there is a sense of nostalgia embedded in the experiences like other types of pilgrimage (purified moral values). The ritual attempts to appease ghosts instead of worshipping a supernatural being, but it attempts to prevent the participants from harm caused by not behaving morally. The social values are revisited and refreshed during the ritual processes and the conversations that occurred during the pilgrimage amongst the pilgrims, the officiants and the supernatural.

³¹ For feminist perspective of the abortion ritual, please consult Chapter 1: Introduction and Chapter 3: A Discourse analysis of debates over abortion and abortion ritual in Taiwan.

6-6 Conclusion

This chapter analyzes the different forms of abortion ritual performed at the Dragon Lake Temple. The ritual forms ranged from individual consultation to collective elaborate ceremony, which allowed the participants to choose a comfortable option to appease the *Yingling*. Through the examination of the teaching of Teacher Jianyi Lin — founder of the temple — it is clear that, to the temple, abortion is regarded as an example of an immoral conduct resulting from the chaotic modern social order. On the one hand, it is obvious that Teacher Lin's theory was highly influenced by Japanese *mizuko kuyō*. On the other hand, the ritual style was localized into Taoist fashion. The ritual process of the Autumn Festival observed in this chapter attempts to rescue the *Yingling* and the participants through merit accumulation at the same time. It is essential to note that, due to the fact that the participants shared the similar experience — abortion —, the ritual space was transformed in to an arena where the women freely interchanged their thoughts and feelings. The ritual served as a pilgrimage during which the participants leave their home (social structure) and enter a sacred journey and relationship (*communitas*). The division of the old social structure was replaced by renewed intimate emotions. This journey did not only heal, but also revealed the inconvenient truth which cannot be expressed in an ordinary space. The women gained their power to speak in such a location of peripherality, which might be missing in their familiar place. This journey healed them and revealed the inconvenient truth that cannot be expressed in ordinary space.

Chapter 7

Collective Ritual 2: Temple of Zhao Gongming, the God of Wealth

Nezha was the son of General Li Jing. His mother had been ominously pregnant for three years before giving birth to a ball of flesh. Considering it monstrous, the alarmed father hacked the ball with his sword, whereupon a tiny child, armed with a magic ring and wrapped in a red sash, emerged from within. Shortly thereafter, the Daoist Immortal Taiyi arrived on the scene, naming the newborn Nezha.

When he was seven years old (and six feet tall) the child went bathing in a river. Laundering his girdle, he caused the water to boil all the way to the underwater palace of the dragon king, who dispatched his son to check the cause of the disturbance. In the ensuing fray, the infant killed the awesome heir of the dragon king, making a belt from its sinews.

Playing in the garden, Nezha came upon a bow that no one but the mythic Yellow Emperor of old had been able to bend. The child effortlessly drew the bowstring, shooting an arrow that killed the acolyte of the ogress Lady Rock (Shiji Niangniang). The harpy pursued the boy, who was narrowly rescued by the Immortal Taiyi.

The enraged dragon king threatened to annihilate Li Jing's family if he were not compensated for his lost offspring. The general blamed his wife for bearing him a monster and his son for bringing a disaster upon him. A murderous conflict between Nezha and his father ensued, at the height of which the child committed suicide, returning to his parents the body he had owed them. Satisfied that his son's murderer had paid for his crime, the dragon king (and his brothers who had gathered to his cause) returned to their oceanic abode.

Nezha's disembodied soul sought help from his master Taiyi, who recommended that a temple be built for him. The incense offerings, he explained, would bring the child back to life. Nezha appeared in his mother's dream, demanding that she build him one. Consenting to her son's request, Lady Yin established a Nezha Temple, which attracted pilgrims far and wide. Fearful of her husband, she did not inform him of it.

Discovering the teeming Nezha Temple, Li Jing was infuriated. He ordered the crowds dispersed, whipped the hateful image of his son, and burned the temple to ashes. Seeking revenge, the enraged Nezha was incarnated on earth. Equipped with a lotus body fashioned for him by the Immortal Taiyi, he confronted his dad, whom he no longer addressed as such: "Li Jing" he vowed,

“I will not be satisfied until I kill you.”

The invincible child pursued his helpless father, who begged the gods for mercy. An immortal appeared on the scene, bestowing upon Li Jing a magic stupa that enabled him to control his son. An uneasy compromise—but no sincere truce—was established between Nezha and his father. (Shahar 2015, 1-2)

This chapter articulates the ritual process of one form of abortion ritual, collective ritual, which took place in the Eight Paths Temple of Zhao Gongming, the god of wealth, in Xinwu Township, Taoyuan County on a Sunday in September 2008. This chapter also outlines an interview with one participant, Ms. Liao. It suggests that the abortion ritual serves as a space which reveals how a woman has been located within a specific cultural and social context and, moreover, the struggles within these contexts. Nonetheless, these struggles were able to be soothed and transformed through a divinely constructed parent-child relationship. This relationship is intimate, comforting and supportive. Moreover, this relationship generates an alternative reality for the ritual participant by which the participant understands her reality in a new way.

7-1 The Temple

The Temple of God of Wealth was founded in 1990 by Zeng Chunrong. This temple is located in the countryside surrounded by fields. The temple is like the Harry Potter Hogwarts castle in red bricks, and in the front is a three-storey high rostrum. Below the rostrum is a huge gate guarded by two dinosaurs. The castle wall is painted white, on which an eye-catching slogan is written in red: “Make a fortune as soon as you worship. [We] wait for you to come and make a fortune (*yibai jiu facai dengnin laifa* 一拜就發財等您來發)” Inside the walls is a spacious courtyard. Although the main god of the temple is the god of wealth, around the enormous courtyard, eleven other gods and goddesses are worshipped at the same time, including Mazu, Han Xin (who is believed to be a god of windfall fortune), Bao Qingtian, Zhu Bajie from Journey to the West, the Old Man under the Moon (月下老人), the Lord of the Big Dipper (北斗星君), the Lord of the Small Dipper (南斗星君), the Ksitigarbha Dizang Bodhisattva, Lord Taiyi and Nezha the Prince. These statues are brightly coloured and they are big, bigger than a person even. In the corner of the temple, there is a tunnel called “Tunnel to Make a Wish (*Xuyuan suidao* 許願隧道)” in which worshippers hang their wishing plaques.

In addition to rituals related to the God of Wealth, this temple has been involved in organizing an abortion ritual every two to three months for years and attained widespread visibility in the Taiwan media. The founder of the temple, Zeng Chunrong, is an active Youtuber and Facebook user, who often posts his ideas on *Yingling* and the necessity of the abortion ritual on social media.³² According to the message delivered through these platforms, a fetus is an unshaped baby and becomes a fetus spirit once it loses its life, due to abortion or miscarriage. Since it does not complete its life's journey (ideally 60 years), it has no choice but to wander the human world. The fetus is a "child," and it does not have the courage to stay far away from its parents; as a result, it haunts them (Xingwu balu caishen miao 2017). These children are in miserable situations: cold, hungry and lonely. They are longing for care and compassion (Xingwu balu caishen miao 2018b). Moreover, the fetus spirit has a *Yin* essence, which harms the *Yang* essence of the parents and hence is causal vis-à-vis their misfortune. The parents' energy and luck will decline and, moreover, their health, careers and wealth will be constantly influenced (Xingwu balu caishen miao 2018c). Furthermore, due to the karma resulting from abortion, both the parents will be punished in the Blood Lake Hell after death (Xingwu balu caishen miao 2018b). In order to save the fetus spirit and the parents at the same time, the temple advocates that an abortion ritual (*yindu* 引渡, leading and deliverance) is the parents' duty and should be practiced. To the Xinwu Eight Paths God of Wealth Temple, the fetus' spirit should be purportedly brought to heavenly Buddhist or Taoist teachers, or to be reborn through reincarnation from the "sea of bitterness" (Xingwu balu caishen miao 2018a).

According to Mr. Zhang, a middle-aged staff member, fetus spirits would not transform into fierce ghosts, who take revenge on their own parents, as many movies have depicted. They are merely attached to their parents and, at times, even disturb them, just as other kids do (Interview with Mr. Zhang, Sep. 1, 2008). He mentioned that one of the staff members, who lived in the guesthouse behind the temple, has seen some children running and playing in the temple at midnight. These children, he notes, are fetus spirits. Mr. Zhang added that it is understandable that these wandering fetus spirits like to stay at the temple, since there are many visitors who make the space lively and happy (*renao*, 熱鬧); in addition, the gods and goddesses residing in the temple

³² Please consult the Xinwu Eight Paths God of Wealth Temple's Youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9nOkAPAYgJ_fYswmxLUzXg and their Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/BaluMoneyGod/?hc_ref=ARTJ3mqRnTmOCMjohg3vmI4r3cJLukB9UakJC6ZxlZHFwRtHVad-UZ5Am7MqAMa-RtQ&fref=nf&__tn__=kC-R.

can protect them. Mr. Zhang said the temple used to organize the ritual more often; however, given the economy's recent decline, people are not as willing to pay for rituals as readily as before. At a ritual charge of 3,000 NT (approximately CAD 111) per fetus, Mr. Zhang indicated: "we cannot make any money at this rate. It is to help people accomplish a wish. They should neither indulge in the loss nor remain indifferent to the loss" (Interview with Mr. Zhang, Sep. 1, 2008).

7-2 The Ritual

On the day of the ritual, a total of sixty-three fetus spirit tablets are placed on the table. Per the ritual, the fetuses' names (some are provided by their parents, while others are referred to as "*Yingling*") are written on the tablets, and above the pile of the paper spirit money (which is designed by the temple and has various images of children, toys, clothes, food and lotus flowers printed thereon) is a quantity of incense. Moreover, snacks are placed on the exterior table and offered to the fetus spirits. More than one hour before the ritual took place, the temple was setting off firecrackers and fake golden ingots were dropped from a box on the top of the temple, which inspired visitors to pick them up. Mr. Zhang made announcements to visitors over a loudspeaker. He told me that they normally set off more firecrackers on Sunday mornings to welcome worshippers of the god of wealth, who come from other cities. However, since an abortion ritual was going to take place and the associated fetus spirits would be scared of the noise of the firecrackers, they did not set off too many.

Lord Taiyi and Nezha were the hosting deities of abortion ritual in the Temple of God of Wealth. Their statues were placed right next to each other. On the top of their statues there was a sign: Lord Taiyi, the Third Prince (Nezha): the protecting deities of *Yingling* (嬰靈守護神)". Lord Taiyi, a Taoist deity, revived a child with an extraordinary supernatural power named Nezha, from death by suicide. The temple website explains: "Nezha' is the embodiment (*huashen* 化身) of *Yingling*, and he is also the protectors of *Yingling*. Lord Taiyi is able to restore Nezha's dismembered and disemboweled body. Nezha's body was transformed into lotus by Lord Taiyi's infinite power" (Xinwu Balu Caishen Miao 2019).

Three Taoist priests from the Spirit Trueness Altar (*lingzhentan* 靈真壇) in Hsinchu County, were hired to host the ritual.³³ One of the priests, Mr. Cai, told me that abortion ritual has

³³ Hsuan-Yu Chen informed me through a personal email (May 16, 2018) that the Xinwu Eight Paths God of Wealth Temple has hired a new crew from Hsinchu. It seems that the Temple of God of Wealth has been hiring outside Taoist

been practiced by Taoism and Buddhism for thousands of years. According to him, most of the time, the negative consequences of abortion falls on the mother, because the fetus was expelled from the mother's body. The fetus is by nature attached to the mother and unintentionally blocks fortune from coming to her.

First, all the participants followed the priests in doing the rounds throughout the temple and the courtyard in order to greet the Incense Burner of the Heavens and all the gods and goddesses. Then they returned to the altar of Lord Taiyi and Nezha and sat down. They bowed to the two deities at the same time as the priests did. Three priests chanted the *Most High Three-Primordials' Blessing on Life Sacred Liturgy* (*Taishang Sanyuan Zhusheng Keyi* 太上三元祝聖科儀), while inviting and sending off the deities. Then they informed the underworld officials of their intentions and summoned the fetus spirits to the altar. During the ritual, all three volumes of "The Most High Compassionate Land of the Dao Three Primordials' Elimination of Sins Watery (Realm) Precious Litany (*Taishang Cibe Daochang Sanyuan Miezui Shui/Bao Chan* 太上慈悲道場三元滅罪水 (寶) 懺)" were chanted and flower dance steps (*huabu* 花步) and supreme ultimate steps (*taijibu* 太極步) were danced. During this ritual process, Lord Taiyi and Nezha were requested to bring the fetus spirits away from the suffering in the underworld.

Figure 8. Ritual space in the Temple of Zhao Gongming

Statue of Zhao Gongming on a Black Tiger



○Tablets

○Tablets



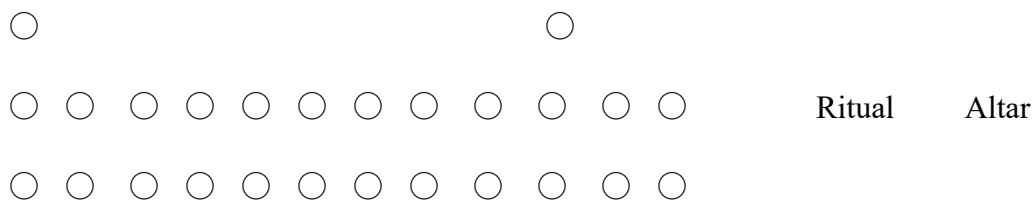
Statues of deities including



Lord Taiyi and Nezha



priests to perform rituals. This is quite common among the Taoist temples analyzed in this thesis, including the Prophet Yang's *Yingling* Palace (Chapter 4), the Dragon Lake Temple (Chapter 6) and Supplemental ritual in the Spirit Holy Palace (Chapter 9).



Stools where ritual participants sat

Nineteen participants attended the 3-hour ritual. “If people are too busy to come, the ritual can still be done, but, if the parents are here, the fetus spirit will feel more secure,” said Mr. Zhang. Among the participants were seven women, each accompanied by a man. The other five women were by themselves. I attempted to interview one of the couples, but was refused; at the same time I saw another girl weeping beside the man accompanying her, and thus realized it would be better not to bother these participants. There was a one-hour lunch break during the ritual, and the temple served the participants noodles and soup. Mr. Zhang invited the participants to stay in the audience: “Eat with the children. Those of you who have not had abortions are welcome to stay here, too. This is a meritorious work (*gongde* 功德).” While everyone was eating, he reminded them that if, within three days following the ritual, their foreheads turn golden and bright it is a good sign; on the contrary, if they dream of the child nude without any clothes on, then they should come back to the temple and practice the ritual again. Furthermore, Mr. Zhang reminded the participants that the fetus was determined to follow his/her parents during the pregnancy, but felt upset after the abortion; thus, the spirit has been following them since then. Indeed, he noted: “the fetus spirit has been suffering bitterly, and so have you. If someone is haunted by a fetus spirit, he/she can become rather moody even if nothing has happened, just like a weight on the mind.”

At the end of the ritual, the three priests cast wooden divination blocks to see if the fetus spirits had gone to the ten-directional world (*shifang shijie* 十方世界) with Lord Taiyi and Nezha.³⁴ The first result was “laughing blocks,” and Mr. Zhang informed me this was because the fetus spirits were happy that they could finally leave. The subsequent two results were “sacred blocks”, which means the request was approved. Since the ritual had to be completed properly, the participants started burning the tablets and paper money. Mr. Zhang asked people to help those participants who were absent in doing so. Mr. Zhang told me that sometimes the fetus spirits do

³⁴ For more detailed analysis of casting the divine blocks, please consult Chapter 4: Individual Ritual: the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace.

not feel like leaving, in spite of the fact that an abortion ritual has been practiced, because: 1) they would like to stay with their parents, or 2) they are too slow to catch up with the team; or 3) they are afraid that those wandering ghosts outside of the temple could harm them. In this case, Nezha is of assistance to Lord Taiyi in guiding and gathering the wandering fetus spirits, since he is also a child.

7-3 The Ritual Patron: Ms. Liao

Mr. Zhang recommended I interview Ms. Liao: “she comes to this temple quite often and should be able to answer your questions.” Ms. Liao is a small, pale woman, thirty-three years of age. She did not finish her high school education and was looking for a job at the time I interviewed her. She was previously married and has one daughter. She got divorced four years ago and has been living with her natal family since then, but is still able to visit the child now. The reason for her divorce was that she spent too much money shopping and buying clothes with her husband’s credit card, which upset her husband. When she was still with her ex-husband he had asked her not to work and to stay at home as a housewife. Ms. Liao told me she is not very strong and healthy, and that her ex-husband had spent much money on her seeing a doctor. “He was very nice to me,” she indicates that her ex-husband gave her whatever she wanted.

Ms. Liao had had one abortion at the age of twenty-three, during her marriage. During that pregnancy, she caught a bad cold and hence had an X-ray examination and took some pills, but then she suddenly realized that what she has done could deform the fetus. After checking numerous books talking about the possible consequences, she considered abortion and her husband and their families all agreed with her. She finally had an abortion during the 4th month of pregnancy. Ms. Liao told me that if the deformed child had been born, a lot of lingering pain would follow. However, now she believes that if she had endured the cold without having taken the X-ray and pills, then the pain would have only lasted for ten months (the duration of pregnancy in Chinese terms.) Ms. Liao said if she gets pregnant again she will not hurt the fetus’ life. Now she feels sorry and remorseful.

Following that period of her life, OB/GYN doctors have told her that her ovaries do not function very well (she cannot ovulate properly) and it will be hard for her to get pregnant again. At that point, which was six years ago, she has been visiting temples to ask the gods and goddesses to give her children. She went to the Dragon Mountain Temple in Taipei to ask Zhusheng

Niangniang (one of the goddesses in charge of pregnancy and childbirth) to give her a child and she got pregnant after the visit. She repaid Zhusheng Niangniang by doing good deeds to accumulate spiritual merits.

After her divorce, she has dated a couple of men. Ms. Liao told me that the man who gave her the ride to the Temple of God of Wealth on the day of our interview was actually one of them. He is a 26-year-old man, whose home is quite close to Ms. Liao's. Ms. Liao told me that they loved each other very much, and they even prayed to the Moon Old Man (the god in charge of romance and marriage) together, asking for a good relationship. He is always very nice to her, but his parents are opposed to their relationship, as she is a divorced woman. He even left home, due to his parents' opposition. Before he did so, he approached Ms. Liao to ask her if she will still choose to be with him (in case he loses everything); she said yes and he subsequently left his parents. However, later on he returned back home, because his father had suffered an occupational injury and wanted to see him. Their relationship ended thereafter.

After all of this has happened to her, Ms. Liao indicated: "I'm scared of men." She asked the Moon Old Man if she would still have a future love relationship (*youtou yuanfen* 有否緣分). She prayed for sacred blocks on the first attempt, and she got a positive response. Next she asked if there would not be another love affair, and sacred blocks showed up again on the first attempt. These contradictory results provided by the Moon Old Man confused her.

Ms. Liao has worked as an insurance agent, in multi-level marketing sales, as a quality control manager (at that time she had a car accident and was injured, thus losing her job), and as a manager of a convenience store. She is good at working in the service industry. However, thus far, most potential employers who have replied to her are in the insurance industry, and her father does not allow her to accept such offers, since she will need to go out to visit clients quite often if she were to become an agent.

Ms. Liao thinks she always has bad luck and she hopes that the abortion ritual can help get rid of the misfortunes in her life. She believes all the bad fortune, including losing her jobs and breaking up with her ex-boyfriend have been brought on by the fetus spirit. She told me abortion could result in: first, difficulties in conception; and second, harm to the relationship between a husband and a wife, possibility thereby ending in divorce. In other words, what she has suffered, results from causal relationships in the present life (*xianshibao* 現世報). Ms. Liao learned about the Temple of God of Wealth on television ten years ago, which mentioned that this temple

organizes abortion rituals and she has since visited this temple many times. During the past three years, she has participated in abortion rituals thrice in the Temple of God of Wealth, and the day of the interview was the first time she had worshipped the fetus spirit that year. Not long ago she cast divine wooden blocks in front of Lord Taiyi, asking him if the child who was unable to realize its fated journey as her offspring in this lifetime was still following her, and sacred blocks showed up right away, which was a yes. During the interview she told me she had asked Lord Taiyi if the fetus spirit had been taken away, and there were two laughing blocks and one sacred (positive) block. Teacher Zeng (Zeng Chunrong) told her that after the abortion ritual she should feel relieved right away and not carry on worrying anymore. She had investigated relevant information on the Internet, hoping that her future days would be getting better.

Other than participating in abortion rituals, Ms. Liao also pursues an alternative family tie with gods and goddesses, as another form of protection. In the Temple of God of Wealth, she has asked the god of wealth, Mazu/Queen of Heaven and the Earth God if they could adopt her as an adopted daughter (*gannuer* 乾女兒).³⁵ They at first did not agree, but eventually approved it. Earlier than that, she had been an adopted daughter of Ksitigarbha (Dizangwang) of the Dizangwang Temple in Taipei (close to the Dragon Mountain Temple). She requested this status by means of reading and burning a celestial petition:

“Here is the faithful woman ***;

birthday: year, month, and date;

address;

could you accept me to be your adopted daughter?” (quoted by Ms. Liao)

The sacred blocks showed up the first time she cast the divination blocks. The manager of the Ksitigarbha (Dizangwang) Temple is the husband of one of her friends, and hence she was introduced to the temple. During her visit, she worshipped the fetus spirit and inquired of the salvation of the fetus spirit by Ksitigarbha (Dizangwang).

Ms. Liao seems to be a religious person, because she explains many events in her life in supernatural terms. She told me she once dreamed of a newborn baby, and then she checked books

³⁵ Both Kataoka Iwao’s research in Taiwan of the beginning of the twentieth Century and David Jordan’s research in Taiwan during the 1960s describe the custom of godly-adoption of children in Taiwan (Kataoka 1990, 195-196; Jordan 1972, 168-169). For example, in case a family had an unhealthy child who was hard to raise, this type of adoption could be conducted. The parents would request an adoption by the god/goddess and once the request had been approved by the god/goddess, a contractual relationship would be formulated. The child is put under the protection of the “patron saint” and is expected to have a better chance of survival (Jordan 1972, 168).

which analyze dreams and realized it symbolized a forthcoming fortune of wealth. Just as the book predicted, several days later her ex-husband (who was a truck driver) received income by transporting a large shipment of goods. Another incident occurred while she was married, too. In a small lane, she observed a white shadow, which was apparently a supernatural creature. As soon as she arrived at home she felt a pain in her left foot and could not even stand up, although now everything is fine. Ms. Liao described that she has a “sensitive body quality.” She often falls ill, catches colds, suffers sore throats and coughs; she also feels disgusted and nauseated easily in “unclean places” (i.e., places haunted by ghosts, in Taiwanese terms). During the interview, people kept coming to the temple to pray to the gods/goddesses surrounding the courtyard. Ms. Liao told me that she had just passed the hall of Dizangwang, and subsequently felt cold, since there are many tablets of deceased people housed there. However, while arriving in the hall of the God of Astrology, she felt better immediately.

Ms. Liao has recently started becoming a full vegetarian (meaning no ginger, onion, and garlic, which may increase bodily desires and lusts, as well as no egg, milk, or meats) on certain days in order to get closer to the Buddha. She usually chants Buddhist scriptures and, in addition, she copies the *Sutra of the Heart of Prajnaparamita*. Her mind shifts from anger to peace after she copies the entire scripture. Similarly, her health has been getting better since she registered for the abortion ritual in the seventh lunar month in the Temple of God of Wealth. During the interview, the chanting of Buddhist scriptures was being broadcast from the CD player at the counter, and Ms. Liao asked me if I knew where to buy that kind of CD, because the music pacifies her. Ms. Liao believes in the good deeds of religion, but she told me she is aware that she has to try her best in her real life rather than being superstitious.

I asked Ms. Liao about her opinions towards OB/GYN doctors who perform abortions. She said that this career is not very good since OB/GYN doctors are murderers as well. She still remembers the clinic where she had her abortion, describing the atmosphere in the space as weird, which cannot be described concretely. After the operation she felt depressed. Her ex-father-in-law told her that she looked ill, and she insisted in going back to her biological family to have a good rest.

7-4 Analysis

This chapter demonstrates the convergence between Buddhist and Taoist mortuary rites by

means of scrutinizing the images and functions of Lord Taiyi and Nezha. In addition, this chapter examines parent-child relationship constructed within the legend of Lord Taiyi and Nezha in relation to Ms. Liao's attempt to pursue the reconciliation between her and the *Yingling*.

7-4-1 *The Compassionate Father Lord Taiyi and the Rash Boy-God Nezha*

This section analyzes the religious and familial constructions of the deities Lord Taiyi and Nezha.

Lord Taiyi

Lord Taiyi (*Taiyi Zhenren* 太乙真人), or the Heavenly Venerable Saviour from Suffering (*Jiuku Tianzun* 救苦天尊), is also called the Green/Blue Superior Emperor (*Qingxuan Shangdi* 青玄上帝) (Lai 2016, p. 73). The Green/Blue Profanity Palace (*Qingxuanfu* 青玄府) is where Lord Taiyi resides (Hsiao 2008, 16). The initial emergence of this personality can be traced back to deities including Eastern Emperor Taiyi (*Donghuang Taiyi* 東皇太一) in the Warring States (475-221 BCE), one of the Three Ones (*Sanyi* 三一), including the Heavenly One (*Tianyi* 天一), the Earthly One (*Diyi* 地一) and the Supreme One (*Taiyi* 太一) during the rule of the First Emperor of Qin from 247 to 210 BCE. Emperor Wu of Han worshipped Taiyi from 141 to 87 BCE (Hsiao 2008, 14).

A liturgical emergence of mortuary rites that focused on Lord Taiyi's role as a saviour of the suffering can be traced back as early as the Six Dynasties (222-589 AD) (Hsiao 2008, 15). The Marvelous Scripture of the Great Unity, the Saviour from Suffering and Protector of Life (*Taiyi jiuku hushen miaojing* 太一救苦護身妙經, DZ351), compiled in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), describes the legend of Lord Taiyi when he was young: "Jiuku Tianzun now appears on the front stage, facing the divine audience. He is a boy (*tongzi* 童子) walking on lotus flowers" (Mollier 2008, 181). He is the embodiment of the nine Yangs' nutritive essence transformed from the Heavenly Venerable of Primordial Commencement (Hsiao 2008, 21; Mollier 2008, 182 & 185). His number is nine, "Escorted by a pair of nine-headed lions and surrounded by a halo of nine colors, he descends to earth on the third and ninth days of each month" (Mollier 2008, 185). Hence, he is a genuine (*xiantian* 先天) deity who is not deified after cultivation and achievement (*xiuzheng* 修證) (Hsiao 2008, 21). Furthermore, he is often said to be the "compassionate father (*cifu* 慈父)" or the "great compassionate and merciful father (*Daci dabei fu* 大慈大悲父)" in contrast with the

feminine figure of Guanyin (Mollier 2008, 186). The Scripture of the Saviour from Suffering was the first full-text recording of Lord Taiyi's career in saving the suffering (Mollier 2008, 179). According to the Scripture, Lord Taiyi exists in three realms. He is the Taiyi Merit God (*Taiyi Fushen* 太一福神) in the Eastern Pure Land of Happiness, the Sun Shine Emperor (*Riyao Dijun* 日耀帝君) in the underworld who rescues and uplifts the punished and the Great Compassion Beneficence (*Daci Renzhe* 大慈仁者) in the terrestrial world who responds to the calls of the suffering (*xunsheng jiuku* 尋聲救苦) (Hsiao 2008, 13 & 21; Mollier 2008, 181-82).

Scholars agree that the functions and iconographies of Lord Taiyi are highly related to the Mahayana Buddhist configuration of “compassion,” “universal salvation,” “redemption,” and the “transfer of merit,” which were widely employed by the Numinous Treasure (*Lingbao* 靈寶) Taoist tradition (Mollier 2008, 178). According to Christine Mollier, the creation of Lord Taiyi was triggered by the earlier image of the Guanyin Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva, who was not in an image of either gender or sometimes a prince (Mollier 2008, 177). Moreover, the *Scripture of the Savior from Suffering* “emphasizes his [Lord Taiyi's] charismatic and iconographic proximity to Guanyin” (Mollier 2008, 179). Along with the Lingbao Scripture of Karmic Retribution, Lord Taiyi is depicted as an “everyday protector” (Mollier 2008, 178) through his power of performing magic and “transforming his body” (Mollier 2008, 180). Furthermore, according to the scripture, people are encouraged to recite Lord Taiyi's name when they are sick or suffer in the underworld after death (Hsiao 2008, 21-22). Similar examples can be found in Chapter 25, “Universal Gateway of Guanshiyin” (*Guanshiyin Pumen Pin* 觀世音普門品), of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, *Miaofa Lianhua Jing* 妙法蓮華經, T262) (Hsiao 2008, 20; Mollier 2008, 174), which highlights the power of reciting Guanyin's name (Hsiao 2008, 20; Mollier 2008, 180). Lord Taiyi's Great Benevolence (*Daci* 大慈) is embedded in Guanyin (Mollier 2008, 179). Being called the Ten Directional Heavenly Venerables Saving the Suffering (*Shifang Jiuku Tianzun* 十方救苦天尊), he is believed to be able to save those in need in the ‘ten directions’ (*shifang* 十方) of the universe (Mollier 2008, 179). This ability to travel across borders may have been inspired by the Buddhist story of Mulian 目蓮 (Mollier 2008, 179). Based on these similar characteristics, Mollier claims that the creation and inclusion of Lord Taiyi into the pantheon resulted from the Taoist intention to respond to Buddhist charisma (Mollier 2008, 179). Lord Taiyi may be regarded as a “male version of the Guanyin Bodhisattvas” (Mollier 2008, 177). The

difference is that Guanyin saves people from suffering in the mundane world. However, Lord Taiyi plays the Buddha's role, who receives and leads (*jieyin* 接引) and that of Dizang, who relieves the dead in the underworld (Hsiao 2008, 20). Hence, Teng-Fu Hsiao claims that the image of Lord Taiyi was shaped under the influence of Buddhism. He is the 'hybrid' of the Buddha (in the Pure Land), Guanyin (in the mundane world), and Dizang in the underworld (Hsiao 2008, 22).

Liturgies attached to Lord Taiyi can be generally divided into two groups: the "pre-cultivation (*yuxiu* 預修)" rite during the Six dynasties and mortuary rituals after the Tang and Song dynasties (Hsiao 2008, 26). The former allows the living to accumulate merits for his or her death. These liturgies include the Supreme Superiority Compassion Nine Darkness Lifting from Sin Litany (*Taishang Cibei Jiuyou Bazui Chan* 太上慈悲九幽拔罪懺) and the Supreme Superiority Mystery Grotto Toward Life-Saving the Suffering Wonderful Scripture (*Taishang Dongxuan Lingbao Wangsheng Jiuku Miaojing* 太上洞玄靈寶往生救苦妙經) (Hsiao 2008, 28).

On the other hand, based on Lord Taiyi's welfare and relief characteristics, mortuary rituals such as funerals adhered to Lord Taiyi were created in the Sui Dynasty (Mollier 2008, 178). They became popular in the Tang and the Five Dynasties (Mollier 2008, 177). Liturgies include the Supreme Superiority Compassion Nine Darkness Lifting from Sin Litany (*Taishang Cibei Jiuyou Bazui Chan* 太上慈悲九幽拔罪懺) along with other scriptures, such as the Supreme Superiority Mystery Grotto Numinous Treasure Three Paths Five Suffering Salvation Life and Death Wonderful Scripture (*Taishang Dongxuan Lingbao Santu Wuku Badu Shengsi Miaojing* 太上洞玄靈寶三途五苦拔度生死妙經) (Hsiao 2008, 26).

During the Han dynasty, the God of Mount Tai was the major figure associated with the underworld. This idea was employed by Taoism and resulted in the construction of the Eastern Peak Emperor, who is one of the various deities in charge of the underworld (Liang 2016, 72). During the Six Dynasties, Taoist Buddhist influence further enriched the Hells' images (Liang 2016, 72). Based on the model of the Nine Palaces (*Jiugong* 九宮), the Nine Darkness Hells (*Jiuyouyu* 九幽獄) were visualized (Liang 2016, 72). These hells included: Wind and Thunder (Fenglei 風雷 East), Fiery Screen (*Huoyi* 火翳 South), Golden Diamond (*Jingang* 金剛 West), Drizzling Coldness (*Mingling* 溟冷 North), Universal Plunder (*Pulue* 普掠 Centre), Copper Pillar (*Tongzhu* 銅柱 South-East), Dismemberment by Sawing (*Tuge* 屠割 South-West), Fiery Car

(*Huochē* 火車 North-West) and Boiling Cauldron (*Huotāng* 鑊湯 North-East) (Liang 2016, 72). In “Repentance on the Nine Darkness (*Chān Jiūyǒupīn* 懺九幽品),” Chapter 8 of the Supreme Superiority Compassion Land Extinction of Calamities Nine Darkness Litany (*Taishang Cībēi Daochāng Xiāozāi Jiūyǒu Chān* 太上慈悲道場消災九幽懺), the Nine Hells are vividly illustrated (Liang 2016, 72). Nonetheless, in the last chapter of the Laozi Image and Name Scripture (*Lǎozǐ Xiāngmíng jīng* 老子像名經), the Universal Plunder in the Centre is divided into Fiery Pit (*Huokēng* 火坑 Above) and Excrement Filth (*Fēnhuī* 糞穢 Underneath), which end as Ten-Direction Hells (*Shífāngyǔ* 十方獄) (Liang 2016, 72).

Since the Tang dynasty and Song dynasty (960-1279), the ten Buddhist kings of the underworld portrayed in the Buddha Speaking the Ten Kings Sutra (*Fóshuō Shíwáng jīng* 佛說十王經) have been integrated into Taoist discourses, and some scriptures even combine the Buddhist kings and Taoist Heavenly Venerables into one (Hsiao 2008, 36-37). Since the Tang and Song dynasties, the liturgy on the Blood Lake Hell was also included (Hsiao 2008, 30). Liturgies became more complicated and complex, with the inclusion of techniques in the use of talismanic commands (*fú mìng* 符命), purification and salvation (*liàn dù* 煉度), healing, and transcending to the heaven (*shēng tiān* 升天) (Hsiao 2008, 31). The key stage of a mortuary ritual — attacking the hell (*pò yǔ* 破獄) — was introduced and has matured since the Tang and Song dynasties (Hsiao 2008, 31-32). In the liturgical practices since the Tang dynasty (618-907), Lord Taiyi attacks Nine Darkness Hells with the assistance of various associated subordinate deities (Hsiao 2008, 34). Currently, the two major mortuary rituals in Taiwan patronized by the family of the deceased — the pudu and private salvation ritual (*dù wáng* 度亡) ceremonies — are either hosted by Lord Taiyi or the Three Purities (Hsiao 2008, 47).

Nezha

Nezha is widely regarded as a protector deity (Sheng 2013, 392), a “territorial-cult God (Sangren 2017, 27)” or a “Guardian of Altars”; he is called the Third Prince (Santāizi 三太子), since he has two older brothers named Jinzha and Muzha, Lord Prince (Taiziye 太子爺) or the marshal of the Central Altar (*Zhōngtān Yuánshuāi* 中壇元帥), which became his official title when he was canonized (Sheng 2013, 392; Sangren 2017, 20). Nezha received his title in the well-known fiction the *Investiture of the Gods* (*Fēngshēn Yányì*) during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 AD)

(Sheng 2013:93; Shahar 2015, 3). In addition, Nezha, like the “Great Sage Equal to Heaven (Sun Wukong)” are both deities who possess mediums during rituals. He is also one of the most frequent figures who possesses mediums (Sangren 2017, 32; Shahar 2015, 104). They are both rebellious against authority; they are both deviant to family and the heavenly administration (Shahar 2015, 104). “[G]ods make themselves available through their mediums (*tangki*)” (Sangren 2017, 95). In other words, Nezha is one of the most accessible and visible gods to the worshippers.

The creation of the personage Nezha can be traced back to before the mid-thirteenth century (Shahar 2015, 174). Nonetheless, Meir Shahar’s research discovers that the initial formation of Nezha’s legend were highly influenced by the esoteric tradition of Buddhism as early as the Tang dynasty. In the Hindu legend, Nalakūbara was a “semidivine semidemonic yakṣa spirit” whose father is the great yakṣa king Vaiśravaṇa (Shahar 2015, X). Nalakūbara was in constant sexual competition with his elders. For example, his lover was raped by his uncle (Shahar 2015, X). He is also regarded as a “baby-god Kṛṣṇa” (Shahar 2015, X). Nalakūbara’s story was brought to China along with his father Vaiśravaṇa and a big number of other Hindu deities by Tantric masters during the Tang dynasty (618–907 AD) (Shahar 2015, 152). His name in Sanskrit was modified into Nezha (Shahar 2015, X) and his more solid image and personality appeared in ritual scriptures for the first time around the same time (Shahar 2015, 152). These ritual scriptures were compiled based on the tantric/esoteric sect, which focuses on tools and techniques such as summoning, mantra (short spells), dhāraṇī (long spells),³⁶ the mudrās (finger gestures), and the maṇḍala (“a mystical map of the divine realm”) (Shahar 2015, 152). At this time, Nezha appeared in the scriptures as “spells for summoning him” (Shahar 2015, 153). On the other hand, Nalakūbara’s father Vaiśravaṇa was described as wealthy, powerful (Shahar 2015, 153) and militarily accomplished (Shahar 2015, 154). He was the Heavenly King of the North, one of the 4 world rulers (Shahar 2015, 153), the guardian of the gods’ treasures and State protector (Shahar 2015, 154). The image that he carried a stupa (pagoda) in his left hand can be found in the Tang dynasty (Shahar 2015, 147 & 155), which surely connects with the image of Nezha’s father Li Jing.

According to Paul Steven Sangren, many people learn about the Nezha legend through the *Investiture of the Gods* and the fiction seems to serve as a reliable source for historical knowledge

³⁶ According to Meir Shahar, since the spells are powerful the Tantric scholars transliterated/transcribed rather than translated the spell (Shahar 2015, 153). For more detailed analysis of mantras and dhāraṇīs, please consult Chapter 11: Buddhist Ritual 2.

for some temples (Sangren 2017, 41). In fact, the *Investiture of the Gods* is sometimes employed by temples for “rival rhetorical purposes” and challenges orthodox discourses (Sangren 2017, 43). Scholars’ reviews of the portrayals of Nezha in pop culture and media show that he is “multivocal, carrying a variety of meanings” (Sangren 2017, 13). These images very often contradict each other. Indeed, Nezha’s story illustrates a “complex” and even “contradictory” image of the boy (Sheng 2013, 394). He is rebellious, but he is attached to his parents at the same time. Yet, he harms his body, which is not filial according to Confucian doctrines. It seems that in some versions of his story he “even fights his father after his rebirth” (Sheng 2013, 394). The popularity of Nezha as a boy-god in Chinese society partly results from the explicit conflicts between him and his biological father Li Jing. “Subversion of authority” (Shahar 2015, 5) is the main theme of Nezha’s legend, and his rashness “gives to rebelliousness in the face of patriarchal authority” (Sangren 2017, 37). According to Sangren, Nezha’s mischievous power that irritates familial and social order all come from his “family drama” (Sangren 2017, 30).

Nezha’s legend exemplifies the universal Oedipus complex. He is a competitor against his father by power. Paul Steven Sangren employs Lacanian analysis of this myth in order to discuss the formation of Chinese masculinity. Sangren claims: “some sons come to resent patriarchal authority and that some fathers come to view their son’s maturation as a sign of their own imminently diminishing powers if not as a harbinger of their own deaths” (Sangren 1996, 159). Meir Shahar reviews Sheng Fan’s study (Fan 1996, 59-60) which demonstrates a sexualized interpretation of Nezha’s story. For example, the Nezha temple represents his mother’s organ to be entered by his golden statue. The whip Li Jing used to chastise his son represents his male organ (Shahar 2015, 40). On the other hand, however, Nezha is determined to surrender to ethics. He has to be disciplined. For Li Jing, the stupa — an urn in which Śakyamuni’s hair or ashes are stored — empowers him as a father to regulate his son (Shahar 2015, 147&155). Moreover, Nezha disembowels and dismembers his flesh and bones, which is his unique way to be filial. Meir Shahar states that parents’ authority in China is represented by their children’s sacrifice through offering their flesh, which he calls “Cannibalism” (Shahar 2015, 8 & 13). To him, it is an effort to “disguise the familial discord under the veneer of the Confucian ethics” (Shahar 2015, 8).

There is also a competition between two fathers: the mundane father Li Jing and the divine father Lord Taiyi, which Paul Steven Sangren describes as “the splitting of fatherly personae” (Sangren 2017, 136). Li Jing is violent and controlling, whom Nezha challenges and destroys

(Sangren 2015, 150). On the other hand, Lord Taiyi was caring and protective, and he was the one who revived Nezha (Shahar 2015, 141). That is a second birth, and since then Nezha lost his piety toward his biological father. Lord Taiyi is a “substitute father” (Shahar 2015, 141), a “spiritual father” (Shahar 2015, 143), and an “alter father figure” (Sangren 2017, 150). For Meir Shahar, this split refers to the contention between “paternal authority” and “individual salvation” (Shahar 2015, 148). For Paul Steven Sangren, this split reveals the dual qualities of filial piety in China. On the one hand, the norm generates the son’s adoration of fatherhood so that he conforms himself to the social order. On the other hand, the father’s powerful figure provokes the son’s ego so that he wants to emulate him (Sangren 2017, 136-138). Therefore, the split is shown in the conflicts between the “tensions intrinsic to Chinese father-son relations” and an “archetypal fantasy of radical autonomy” (Sangren 2017, 153).

Nezha is a “cultural symbol” (Sangren 2017, 13). He is vividly represented through films and literature; he is a popular deity among younger generation in Taiwan and is seen as a symbol of Taiwanese identity (Sheng 2013, 391). For example, a college student travelled the world in Nezha costume wanting to “represent Taiwan to the world” (Sheng 2013, 391). “Techno Nezha” was performed for athletes from all over the world in the opening ceremony of the 2009 World Games in Kaohsiung (Sheng 2013, 392). He is a “pop icon” (Sheng 2013, 392) and he appeared in children’s books, games, toys, literature, cinema, TV shows and fine art (Sheng 2013, 392; Sangren 2017, 29). Nezha is also a boy-god; Meir Shahar describes how he “is addicted to candy” (Shahar 2015, 123). He compares Nezha with Harry Potter who was “raised by the ‘muggle’ Dursley family even though he belongs to the wizards’ realm” (Shahar 2015, 178). He has been a charismatic but at the same time cute figure in pop culture.

Nezha stands out as a cultural symbol to represent Taiwanese-ness for solid reasons. First, he is accessible to everyone. He is one of the most accessible deities in rituals; for example, through medium possession. He can be seen and heard by the people. He is a deity belonging to the grassroots. Second, he challenges authority; he is a child who does not want to stay at home. The playfulness and sense of adventure evokes resonance among the youth. Moreover, this characteristic is significant to Taiwan as an island dealing with shifting national identities as well as an uncertain relationship with China. Third, Nezha has a complex personality: a young body full of intense emotions. He is the embodiment of Taiwan who experienced a good variety of cultural influences through emigration and colonialism. Fourth, he symbolizes an alternative

epistemology; people learn about him through fiction — *The Investiture of the Gods* — instead of from an orthodox source.

Yingling are ghosts with childlike characteristics. It is worthy to note the ritualistic creativity beyond canonical disciplines in the abortion ritual of the Xinwu Temple of God of Wealth. As mentioned, this temple looked like a Harry Potter castle and its features made it look like an amusement park. Indeed, the protagonists of the ritual space were children/youth. According to the temple, the spirit does not have the courage to stray far away from its parents. He/she is afraid of the noise of fire crackers. He/she likes to run and play around and needs the guidance of big brother (Nezha). He/she likes the company of parents while eating meals. These visualizations have been materialized and objectified by the displayed offerings. The quantity of incense was the means to convey the messages from the profane humans to the fetus spirits. The printing of food on paper money was intended to nourish the fetus spirits (although they were in fact unshaped foetuses and not capable of eating), the toys were to please the fetus spirits, the clothes were to keep the fetus spirits warm, and the lotus flowers were a “carrier” for the fetus spirits. All of these offerings must be burned after the ritual, as they belong to the fetus spirits, rather than to the profane humans. At the end of the ritual, similarly, the fetus spirits expressed their emotion through the divine blocks. Lord Taiyi and Nezha both have distinctive personalities in Chinese religious tradition and pop culture. These personalities were thoroughly represented in the ritual. Lord Taiyi was a loving and caring spiritual father who guides the *Yingling* to the Land of Eternal Happiness, and thanks to the assistance of the big brother Nezha, the parents can trust the children will be well taken care of.

7-4-2 A Divinely Constructed Parent-Child Relationship

Ms. Liao’s choice of abortion based on her worries about a deformed child shows that a woman’s choice of pregnancy, abortion or childbirth are often shaped by the underlying social and economic contexts in which she is situated. Through cross-cultural studies, anthropologists have shown how a woman’s reproductive ability has been located within specific social and cultural contexts and how her choices are often shaped by these contexts. Ms. Liao decided to have an abortion because she was worried that the fetus had been deformed by the medicine she took when she caught a cold and she worried that taking care of an unhealthy child would be a source of lingering pain. We can, to some extent, infer that she was referring to the cost of caring for and the mental pressure and stigma associated with raising an unhealthy child. Economic and cultural

factors often drive a woman to choose whether or not to carry a deformed fetus and then give birth. Moreover, fertility and infertility are seen in many cultures as the responsibility and the duty of women. Various analogies to Ms. Liao's case have been discovered in different cultures.

A woman's reproductive ability is often commoditized into the means to achieve a healthy number of children within a family or disciplined into the means to reduce unhealthy or excessive national populations. Margaret Lock analyzes how reproductive technologies have been used in order to assist a woman and her family members to achieve the imagined picture of a perfect society in Japan (Lock 1998). Her fieldwork shows how a woman who has a unborn child with Down's syndrome fears family pressures represented in language such as "shameful," "deficient," or "poor genes" (Lock 1998, 210), and is thus prompted to pursue abortion or genetic selection. Following her historical review, Lock observes that so-called "nature" (Lock 1998, 216) shapes the model for the planned family in Japan, which assumes that getting married and giving birth to a reasonable number of healthy children are the women's responsibility. However, in spite of the Japanese quality of this concept of "nature," Japanese women are both pushed by family members and overwhelmed by Western knowledge and its approach to successful reproduction. Hence, personal desire and rights have been compromised within this discursive structure (Lock 1998, 221-225).

It is not implausible to raise the possibility that the abortion ritual was employed by Ms. Liao as a counter-measure to her life's difficulties, including: her car accident, weak health, divorce and relationship with her ex-boyfriend's family. In other words, life difficulties (rather than her abortion or religious beliefs) are the driving force which had brought her to an abortion ritual. During the ritual, the participants' emotion is expressed all the time, ritualistically. Crying, mourning, and meditating, this is a process of confession of their past wrongs and the expression of vows to do better in the future. Her life condition is highly determined by her relationship within various patrilineal structures — her family and her love partner's families — but, at the same time, she has been a faithful disciple to the Temple of Zhao Gongming, rather than a casual patron. Hence, her life experiences vis-à-vis her close interactions with the temple and the gods manifests how religious discourse has formed a new cosmology for the ritual participant and transforms her understanding of herself and her life. An abortion ritual transforms a woman's understanding of her material condition and her relationship with her partners and future family; furthermore, the ritual locates her in a harmonious interaction with her past (i.e., the context surrounding her

abortion).

Ms. Liao was required to be a housewife during her marriage. Having lost her own career, she relied on her husband's income and used her husband's credit card. She ended up being divorced by her husband, because she spent too much money on shopping purchases. On the one hand, her husband was nice to her and took care of her health; on the other hand, she was not allowed to have her own career and income. Jordan indicates how divorce was possible in traditional law in a Chinese lineage; the "seven outs (*qichu* 七出)" are the seven circumstances in which a husband was able to divorce his wife, including: disobedience, failure to bear a son, jealousy, adultery, serious illness, talkativeness, and thievery (Jordan 1972, 156). Although the seven outs are no longer found in the Civil Law of contemporary Taiwan, Ms. Liao was still divorced due to her "thievery". After her divorce, Ms. Liao fell in love with a young man. However, she was rejected by the young man's parents because she was divorced. Her divorce has brought a stigma onto her: she was not a good wife and was divorced by her ex-husband and, therefore, she will not be a good wife of another man, potentially leading to another failed marriage. She was not a welcomed member of another family, and she was excluded from their kinship and their lineage.

Ms. Liao eventually went back to her natal family, and she still does not have full freedom in choosing a job. Although she is quite good at customer service, her father does not want her to be an insurance agent because she will need to travel frequently with the job. The natal family is the shelter of a woman in traditional Chinese lineage society. Another similar case was found in Margery Wolf's case study of Mrs. Tan, a married woman who resided in a suburb of Taipei in the 1960s (Wolf, 1992). She eventually returned to her natal family after her abnormal behaviour and speech became the subject of gossip in the whole village; however, her claims of possession by a god (as an explanation for this behaviour) were declared to be unfounded by a local religious specialist. In traditional Chinese (mainland and Taiwan) societies, an adult daughter eventually would need to be married out, but she does not have a choice but to return to her natal family if she is not accepted by her husband's lineage and community. A woman's natal family provides her with another form of protection and, at the same time, places another form of authority over her.

Ms. Liao was situated within and confronted with three families' authority and values: her natal family, her ex-husband's family, and her ex-boyfriend's family. Within these families, the men, including her father and her husband, act as sources of power, and her position is relegated to being a wife or a daughter; Ms. Liao has had to passively accept all the decisions made by these

men. Wolf describes how Mrs. Tan's mother went to the village to help her daughter: "the presence of her father and his brothers would have helped even more" (Wolf 1992, 111). Confronted with overwhelming male authority, where can Ms. Liao discover her own autonomy and power? The only possibility for her to go beyond the purview of her "earthly" families is to seek solutions by means of inquiring into being adopted by gods/goddesses and practicing the abortion ritual.

As mentioned above, the custom of godly-adoption of children have been practiced in Taiwan. Nonetheless, Ms. Liao's case was not usual: she inquired about an adoption by gods/goddesses as an adult woman. She went beyond the typical practice of adoption and initiated the adoption all by herself. Her frequent visits to temples and shrines showed that she attempted to construct a direct and intimate relationship with a divine authority on her own. Similarly, she sponsored and carried out the abortion ritual based on her own decision, hoping that a harmonious parent-children relationship between her and the fetus could be constructed. She expressed her remorse as if the fetus were there as a child. The supernatural father or supernatural mother, along with the appeased supernatural child, form a "supernatural family". Women may have both been "alienated" (in Paul Steven Sangren's term, Sangren 2000) from the Chinese social and cultural structure. However, Ms. Liao was able to engage in a new familial relationship based on her choice. A protected daughter (by the gods/goddesses) and a confessing mother become Ms. Liao's new identity. The "supernatural family" has been formed by Ms. Liao and is one in which Ms. Liao has the authority to enrol herself. The "supernatural family" insures a safe position for her, without any possibility of dismissal (by the supernatural family) and promises her a safer future. Although Ms. Liao has been again located within another discursive regime (religious discourse and institutions), this can be the space where she can finally act as a decision-maker. She chooses which gods/goddesses to follow and she can communicate with the fetus spirit anytime by casting divine blocks, without the "earthly" restrictions associated with child custody.

Just like Harry Potter, a wizard who was raised by muggles, the *Yingling* are not conceived at the space and time best for them. He/she is, on the one hand, an abandoned member of the family and, on the other hand, a threatening force to the family. These dual qualities result in the double goals of the abortion ritual: the fetus spirit is in urgent need of protection and, moreover, needs to be relocated back into the normative social order. The normative social order involves ideal Confucian family values balancing the parents' loving care and the children's filial piety. Here, the abortion ritual can be seen as a means for the society to avoid uncertainty, danger or destruction.

However, it is noteworthy that, for some women, who like Ms. Liao have little support or security within the traditional lineage, the abortion ritual is a means to maintain a relationship with the fetus spirit and repeated abortion rituals only serve to perpetuate this relationship.

7-5 Conclusion

The analysis of this chapter primarily focuses on the convergence of Buddhist and Taoist elements in Chinese mortuary rituals. In addition, the family relationships constructed through the rituals were examined. The *Yingling* were imagined as timid and lonely children in need of love by the temple. Indeed, the ritual space seemed to be a colourful playground for children and the fetus spirit was vividly portrayed during the ritual process. The ritual aimed at the reconciliation between the parent and child, through which Ms. Liao, the informant, sought to establish a desirable family, involving godly parents and divine children. Her strategy can be related to Nezha's legend, in which Lord Taiyi acted as his compassionate father in contrast to the fierce biological father Li Jing. The Oedipus Complex in Chinese characteristics was realized in the tension between parents and children, for Nezha and Li Jing as well as for *Yingling* and their parents. The deities' personalities, particularly Nezha's, are re-interpreted for the needs of abortion ritual. Accordingly, the symbolic meaning of ritual objects (such as tablets and firecrackers) are explored. Based on the renewed symbolic meaning, the ritual patron was able to achieve the goal for which she was hoping.

Chapter 8

Family/Multifunctional Ritual: the Lady Linshui Temple

I visited the Temple of Linshui Furen (Lady Linshui) on December 20, 2008; I had the opportunity to observe a ritual that included the various elements of abortion ritual, and to interview both the presiding priest and one of the participants. This cult ritual of Linshui Furen is a metaphorical process of bodily movements, and the participants are not merely passive subjects. In other words, the ritual goes beyond the presumed function, of “rescuing” the haunting fetus spirit, to achieve a renewed sense of unity in the family relationship, especially between parents and children. This experience is articulated in this chapter to serve as a sample case as a means to examine abortion ritual in Taiwan.

This chapter first reviews and discusses the legend and the cult of Lady Linshui. Second, this chapter outlines the interview with one of the participants, Ms. Chen, in order to reveal the supply and demand nature of the relationship between the ritual and the participant. Third, this chapter articulates the ritual process behind one form of abortion ritual, analyzes how a sense of sacredness is created, and then considers how it impacts the family ties of both the religious practitioners and the participants. As Victor Turner claims, ritual as a transformative process leads to reassembling social relationships and reframing social structures. Nonetheless, at the same time, there could be struggles and conflicts during the identity formations of women and children within such a religious context, as Brigitte Baptandier-Berthier’s anthropological research shows (1994, 1996 & 2008).

8-1 The Legend of Lady Linshui, Chen Jinggu

Lady Linshui (*Linshui Furen*, or the Lady at the Edge of the Water), originally named Chen Jinggu, has been worshipped by people in the north of the Province of Fujian (particularly in the region of Gutian) and now throughout Taiwan as well, as a result of emigration during the eighteenth Century (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 523). She has been honored as the protector of women and children since the twelfth Century (Baptandier 2008, 1). The cult can be traced back to the 11th Century (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 109). Lady Linshui’s legend has been presented in operas, dramas and novels in the Fujian region since the Ming Dynasty. Her stories can be seen in folklore such as the *History of the Pacification of the Demons of Linshui* (*Linshui Pingyao Zhuan*

臨水平妖傳) (Feng 1957) and the *Biography of the Lady in the Luantan Puppet Theatre of Shanghang* (*Fujian Shanghang Luantan Kuileixi Furenzhuan* 福建上杭亂彈傀儡戲夫人傳) (Ye & Yuan 1996).

The legend of Chen Jinggu entails the symbolic and entangled life journeys of Chen Jinggu and the white Serpent. According to the legend of the cult, the Guanyin bodhisattva showed up in order to help the prefecture to build a bridge between Jinjiang and Huian. She disappeared immediately after she collected sufficient money for the Prefect. Afterwards, a woman, named Lady Ge, swallowed the blood of Guanyin by the river and subsequently became pregnant. The girl she gave birth to was Chen Jinggu. Chen Jinggu was a gifted girl; she could predict the future, and she had the ability to give life to paper dolls, and she could communicate with animals and command them. Her supernatural abilities allowed her to perform a large number of miracles and gradually motivated her to become a shaman (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 527). On the other hand, the hair of Guanyin which was touched by Liu Qi, a vegetable merchant who was eager to marry the beauty Guanyin transformed herself into, became a white serpent (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 109). The brutal and greedy White Serpent was one of the most harmful calamities of the kingdom by virtue of its killing people and seizing of fortunes.

Later Chen Jinggu married Liu Qi and got pregnant. Although being pregnant, she was still asked to perform a rain ritual in order to rescue the Min kingdom from a drought. She had to abort the fetus, *Tuotai*, while acting as a shaman in order to perform the ritual (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 110). She took the fetus out of her womb and hid it in her mother's house. Eventually, while dancing on the river waters, the white serpent found Chen Jinggu's house and swallowed the fetus in order to "nourishing its life (養生 *yangsheng*)" (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 110). This caused Chen Jinggu to hemorrhage. She killed the serpent using all the strength she had left in her. She rode on the serpent's head, and flew to the Gutian Linshui temple. They have been represented together in the temple, and people say that Chen Jinggu's body was mummified, and that the serpent is kept in a visible small cave under her seat (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 110). After her death, Chen Jinggu turned to Lushan, located at the end of the River of Min but inaccessible by mortal beings, to learn the secrets of pregnancy (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 110). Furthermore, she has been revered as one of the mistresses of *Sannai*, which is a local Lushan tradition worshipping three goddesses (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 526). Afterwards, she performed a ritual, and won back the soul of her child. She transformed the soul into a child-god named San Sheren, the Third

Secretary, or Qilin Sansheren, the Third Secretary Who Rides the Unicorn (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 110).

In his introduction to and annotation of the earliest story about Chen Jinggu, *Memoir of the Journey to the Sea* (*Haiyouji* 海遊記), scholar Ye Mingsheng claims Chen Jinggu's legend reveals how Buddhism and Taoism have been blended in the shamanic tradition in the Fujian region. Although shamanism was regarded as vulgar and heterodox by the ruling literati in China, Chen Jinggu's story attempted to promote shamanism by means of validating the authority of Buddhism before attempting to attach her rite to the Buddhist system (Ye 2000, 21, 31). Indeed, Chen Jinggu was born of Guanyin, and she hails Buddhist deities while performing magic. On the other hand, in addition to various Taoist deities showing up in the legend, Chen Jinggu's magic methods are often similar to those practiced at Taoist altars in northern Fujian (Ye 2000, 22). Her cult fuses Taoist and shamanic rites and gradually forms the Pure and Perspicacious Tradition of the Three Ladies of Mount Lu (*Jingming Lushan Sannai Pai*) (Baptandier 2008, 1). Ye also affirms that as a legend featuring a woman, Chen Jinggu's story demonstrates the tendency of "socialization of subject matters about women" and "the recognition of women's social status" at the end of the Ming dynasty (Ye 2000, 49). The heroine was able to leave her home and learned magic on Mount Lu; moreover, she acted as the guardian of the Kingdom and protected the people. Her legend elaborates a theme of "ethnic character (*minzuxing* 民族性)" in Chinese society: the righteous eventually triumph over evil (Ye 2000, 51). Through her legend, people's desire for a peaceful social order is achievable (Ye 2000, 52).

Similarly, Brigitte Baptandier-Berthier analyzes the interaction between Chen Jinggu and the Min Kingdom within the context of Chinese society, or the patrilineal, Confucian society, using her terms. She points out three essential characteristics in the past and in the present have been attached to the cult of Lady Linshui: first, she is linked to the history and territory of the State of the Min Kingdom; secondly, she represents the tradition of local shamanism and protects the ritual tradition of the State; third, she acts as a female deity in the territory (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 105; 1994, 529). Hence Chen Jinggu is located at the nexus of woman and the State, and thus her legend shows what the State expects a woman to do and how a woman is to react to the expectation. Moreover, during the fights between Chen Jinggu and the White Serpent, Baptandier-Berthier assumes that Chen Jinggu represents marriage, a required status of woman, whereas the serpent, the hair touched by the man, represents the desire of men. Therefore, the battle between Chen

Jinggu and the White Serpent represents the conflict between marriage and desire (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 109-110). Eventually Chen Jinggu's victory shows that the expectations of Chinese society for a woman take precedence. Meanwhile, Chen Jinggu paid with her life for the victory, which reveals that a woman's destiny should be pursued at any cost. In addition, Baptandier-Berthier claims that Chen Jinggu and the White Serpent together can resemble the pregnant, maternal body, which was sacrificed in order to rebuild the order of the cosmos and of human society (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 131). This double sacrifice represents the double nature of a woman: Chen Jinggu as the protector of motherhood, and the White Serpent as the menacing and uncontrollable desires of femininity (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 131).

In addition to acting as a shaman protecting the State, the need for fertility of the State can be seen again in the ritual for rain, for rain is always necessary for the cultivation and the harvest of the land in order to "bring fertility to the country" (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 130). Chen Jinggu was forced to abort her fetus in order to dance as a shaman on the river. For Brigitte Baptandier-Berthier, the house of Chen Jinggu's mother represents the maternal body; in other words, the fetus has never been exteriorized from his mother's womb, for Chen Jinggu was ready to conceive it after the ritual and continue her motherhood (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 130). The reason is "having a son is always indispensable for patrilineages" (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 132).

However, it is also important to bear in mind that, resulting from Chen Jinggu's achievement in rescuing her fetus (by turning him into a child-god), Chen Jinggu has been regarded as a goddess protector of pregnant women and children who are younger than 16 years old. Baptandier asserts that Chen Jinggu plays two key roles in a child's life: she acts as the Goddess of the Bridge of a Hundred Flowers and Lady of the Birth Register (*Zhusheng Niangniang*) (Baptandier 2008, 171). With the approval and arrangement of Lady of the Birth Register, a soul crosses the Bridge in order to be reborn. A child's fate, before and after conception, is closely connected to Chen Jinggu (Baptandier 2008, 197). The Linshui Furen Temple performs various rituals for women and children, especially the *Kaiguan* Ritual (opening the passes), which attempts to get rid of misfortune and bring better fortune to the child. Another ritual that is performed is called Cultivating the Flowers (*zaihua* 栽花), which fertilizes a woman by means of "planting an embryo" (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 533). Similarly, through appropriate rituals the mother can request the sex of the infant to Lady Linshui (Baptandier 2008, 174).

8-2 Further Background on the Unpredictability of the Fetus

Traditional texts and religious practices on childbirth in China and Taiwan affirm that pregnancy is an unstable stage for the woman due to the surrounding godly and ghostly powers, as well as the vulnerable quality of the fetus. For example, the *Heart Methods of Fetus and Childbirth* (*Taichan Xinfā*, 胎產心法), written by medical practitioner Yan Chunxi in 1730, demonstrates how the unstable qualities of a pregnant woman and the fetus in her uterus can be protected by both appropriately prescribed “stabilizing the fetus (*antai* 安胎)” medication (Yan 2004, 191-199) and rituals (Yan 2004, 304-305) at the same time. This text indicates that a woman’s blood allows her to “bear the fetus” by means of nurturing the fetus in the womb (Yan 2004, 171-172) and feeding the infant after transforming into breast milk (Yan 2004, 465). The fetus is a “materialized form of physiological *qi* energy” (Bray 1997, 344). The mother’s blood, however, has an uncontrollable quality, which could fluctuate if the *qi* of the woman is too strong or too weak (Furth 1999, 152-153). Moreover, it is believed that *qi* is the link connecting kinsmen as well as ancestors and descendants (Bray 1997, 344). The “natural kinship” (Bray 1997, 344) is a bond through *qi*. However, it is also emphasized that nurturing is crucial since it is the means to transform a son to a proper son (Bray 1997, 345). During the fetus’ development in the uterus, the pregnant woman’s diet, lifestyle, thoughts and behaviours should be disciplined, which is called the fetal education (*taijiao* 胎教). Compared to the father, the mother is even more regarded as a crucial educator to make this transformation possible (Bray 1997, 347). “Men loved their mothers for having nursed them through sickness as well as for teaching them to distinguish right from wrong” (Bray 1997, 345). The ultimate goal is to educate a son who is morally and intellectually capable of achieving success in a male society (Bray 1997, 349). The father surprisingly “played little direct role” (Bray 1997, 348).

The uncertain and developing nature of the fetus also explains why its sex is able to be reversed through several techniques. Based on the preference for sons, “arts of the bedchamber” since the early Qin times (221—206 BCE) until the sixth century allowed cosmological factors to be mobilized during intercourse to determine the fetus’ gender. Appropriate times and spaces should be employed to determine the fetus’ sex (J. Lee 1997, 292). Similarly, Charlotte Furth cites Sun Simiao’s Tang dynasty work suggesting that, in medical knowledge, the sex of the fetus is not determined until the 3rd month of the pregnancy. As a result, medicine can be prescribed to determine gender preference (Furth 1999, 210). After its conception, the fetus’ sex (or the *yin* and

the *yang* forces) can still be influenced through the mother's behaviour. The characteristics of the objects that she touches can shape the fetus' characteristics (for example, a bow for a boy and a jewel for a girl; beautiful objects for a beautiful child and classics for a wise child) (King 2014, 24). Meanwhile, the fetus' gender can, in turn, shape the mother's behaviour. "The (mother's) head turns to protect her heavier side", which is the side where the child is conceived (King 2014, 24).

In addition, in order to have a safe pregnancy, medical and religious practitioners urged avoiding offending the "fetus weakening" (*taisha*, 胎殺) points in the household and the "wandering gods" in the room (Yan 2004, 305). The research of Jin-shiu Jessie Sung (Sung 2000) shows that the wandering God of the placenta or the God of the pregnant womb (胎神 *Taishen*) is a fierce power who was believed to occupy several locations within a woman's house from the moment she conceived. *Taishen* is closely related to the pregnant woman's reproductive blood and "functions as a type of soul for the child" (Bell 1997, 165) who deserves careful treatment. *Taishen* is believed to still stay until a certain child's age (Bell 1997, 166). *Taishen* rotates among various positions within the household, such as the door, the bed, the window and the wall, according to the designated time of the circle of the Ten Heavenly Stems and the Twelve Earthly Branches (*tiangan dizhi* 天干地支) (Sung 2000, 145). Sung claims that this kind of belief in the dangerous positional *Taishen* were the prominent taboo system dominating a woman's pregnancy. This system is outlined in the *Six ten-day calendrical method for determining the position of the Fetus spirit for each day and month* (*Liujia taishen yueri guanzhan fangwei dingju* 六甲胎神月日關占方位定局) (Sung 2000, 128). If the woman or her family "moves" the god by an inappropriate actions to the site that the fetus god occupies at a specific moment, for example by hitting a nail on the wall, it is offended and hence could harm the fetus. In order to maintain the pregnancy, the fetus god needs to be worshipped properly, then pacified and restrained by specific talismans (Sung 2000, 128-129). Sung claims that the representation of the fetus gods reveals their coexisting docile and aggressive qualities. Moreover, once a woman is pregnant, she is relocated in the cosmological order which involves various supernatural powers, including the fetus god, the earth god/goddess, the patrolling gods from the underworld (*riyou* 日遊), gods of the years (*taisui* 太歲), and the demon/evil spirit of the blood (*liuxia* 流霞)³⁷. These deities are propitiated during the ritual of

³⁷ With a similar pronunciation *liuxia*, the flowing sunset glow (流霞) and the flowing shrimp (流蝦) are often

stabilizing the fetus. Sung claims that these deities are categorized as killer vectors *sha* (煞), which are threatening powers related to a woman's reproductive ability and inferior status. She suggests that *sha* stand beyond the traditional categories of gods, ghosts and ancestors, as the "fourth realm" (Sung 2000, 117).³⁸ Emily Ahern observes that the fetus/placenta god is the reason why the birth fluids of the woman are extremely polluting and dangerous, since it is believed to be present in the fluids (Ahern 1975, 197). She further claims that the fetus god is regarded as the child's soul (Ahern 1975, 196). Similarly, Marjorie Topley translates taishen/t'oi-shan (in Cantonese) into "fetal soul" (1974, 237). According to her anthropological research, the womb is an unstable and even poisonous environment. Wind is triggered due to the confrontation between the bodies of the pregnant woman (cold, since she is losing blood) (Topley 1974, 237), and the fetus (hot until 7 years old) (Topley 1974, 239). Hence, the fetal soul stays outside the mother's body to remain safe. Physically and cosmologically, the mother and the child are both "polarized", "strange", and "queer" and ought to go through a process of adjustment with the assistance of medication and ritual after childbirth (Topley 1974, 234).

interchangeable in this context. The sunset glow and cooked shrimp are both red in colour. Some women are believed to carry *liuxia* in their lives, and if their eyes are in touch with red objects while being pregnant, constant bleeding occurs, which is called "the rise of the flowing shrimp (*qiliuxia* 起流蝦)". In order to stop the bleeding to protect the woman and the fetus, Taoist priests are invited to the home to perform a ritual called "sending off the *liuxia* (送流霞/蝦)" or "subduing the *liuxia* (*zhiliuxia* 制流霞/蝦)". During the ritual, goddesses who are believed to protect pregnancy and childbirth, such as the Lady of the Birth Register (*Zhusheng Niangniang* 註生娘娘), the Three Ladies (*Sannai Furen* 三奶夫人) or the Lady of Linshui (*Linshui Furen* 臨水夫人), are summoned, and offerings are placed on a table. In addition, live shrimp and the pregnant woman's clothes are placed together in a basin on the table. After the ritual, the pregnant woman puts on the clothes and the shrimps are grilled in charcoal oven until they turn red, symbolizing that the *liuxia* demon is subdued. Or, after the ritual, the pregnant woman straddles over the oven, and paper money called *liuxia* is burned, symbolizing that the *liuxia* is sent off. (*Dictionary of Taiwan Art Folk Artifacts*). These rituals can be performed in temples, too. For example, in the Temple of Lady Linshui in Tainan, several days in a month are scheduled to perform the rituals. (Fieldwork of this dissertation, 2008 and 2009) In her studies of the Lady of Linshui (Baptandier 2008), Brigitte Baptandier closely describes how a child's fate is determined by its eight birth characters (*bazi* 八字) but that those destined disorders hidden within can also be erased or reversed through appropriate rituals. This belief explains why some women carry *liuxia* and are in need of the rituals during the pregnancy. Baptandier's analysis is further reviewed and examined in the following section and Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

³⁸ Fong-Mao Lee's analysis also shows that *sha* is a force, a power or even a situation, rather than a clearly identified spiritual being. Lee reviews earlier sources and suggests that the character *sha* implies a force which is hard to be seen or heard but can be sensed. The conceptualization of *sha* can be realized through a ritual process and a ritual practitioner. The tactic to subdue a *sha* is to know its name and its nature (belonging to a space or time). After the *sha* is identified, the priest performs a ritual accordingly. During the ritual, the priest is under the protection of divine power. Others should duck since they do not have such an ability. The priest calls the name of the *sha* so that it yields. On the contrary, lay people have a much less structured understanding of *sha*. The idea of *sha* emerges in their mind due to their fear of unknown powers. They then intuitively and perceptually demonstrate their understanding of the unknown powers through myths of *sha*. These fears and experiences continue and accumulate, and result in a model of solution (such as a ritual or a custom). Lee further applies his model of "normal and abnormal (*chang yu feichang* 常與非常)" to this grass-roots understanding of *sha*. According to him, *sha* arises in abnormal circumstances, such as an abnormal death or a death without an appropriate funeral (F. Lee 1990).

The Chinese religious context recognizes that the development of a human life starts at the moment of conception; nonetheless, they are considered “incomplete creatures” until they turn sixteen years old (Baptandier-Berthier 2008, 196). The incomplete quality of the fetus/child determines the unstable parent-child relationship. Marcel Granet raises the idea of “great distance” (Granet 1958, 321) between the father and son during childhood, when he analyzes the family history of the Zhou Dynasty. According to Granet, the man and the pregnant woman would be separated before the delivery of the child, and that the infant was by no means born to be the son of the father. The baby would be placed on the ground for three days without any food or water provided, and only when it survived could it be asserted that “by contract with Mother Earth that life can be confirmed in him” (Granet 1958, 322). The mother owned the intimacy with the infant at this stage; however, after the successor qualities of the infant were approved, the mother-son tie would be broken up. Once the son was given a name, the mother-son connection is then replaced with a surname and name belonging to the ancestral link (Granet 1958, 323).

As shown above, the fetus, or the child, is by no means obedient to and automatically enrolled in the patrilineage. Brigitte Baptandier-Berthier argues that patrilineage identifies children as good or bad by means of the eight birth characters (*bazi* 八字) (Baptandier-Berthier 2008, 212). The kinship system fears the cleavage between the ego and the predetermined destiny of the child, because it is potentially harmful to the lineage line. This sort of unity of the family could be articulated by her observation that: “from the most ancient times down to the present, in patrilineal fathers and sons were considered to be one and the same body” (Baptandier-Berthier 2008, 172). In reality, a son can only be regarded as a complete adult when he marries and has the first son, “who will guarantee the continuity of the cult of the ancestors (Baptandier 2008, 196-197)”. A daughter can only be regarded as a complete adult when she marries into another lineage (Baptandier-Berthier 2008, 197). According to Baptandier-Berthier’s review, Confucian canons such as the *Classic of Rites* often advance the patrilineal notion that “the father’s word, his command, made the mother of a child” (Baptandier-Berthier 2008, 172). As a result, childhood (including the period in utero) is a process which witnesses the transition of power over the infant from unknown supernatural powers to the mother, and, eventually, to the father. To terminate the life of such a being is to offend the authority of the supernatural world.

8-3 The Temple

The Linshui Temple in Tainan was built in 1736, and has been the principal temple of the cult of Sannai in Taiwan (Baptandier 2008, 31). Those worshipped in the Temple include: the Big Mistress (*Dama* 大媽), Lady Linshui herself; the Second Mistress (*Erma* 二媽) and the Third Mistress (*Sanma* 三媽), both of whom were junior associates of Lady Linshui while she was learning magic on Mount Lu; and Guanyin, the divine origin of Lady Linshui. Moreover, the statues of 36 ladies (*pojies*) were placed in the Inner Altar. According to Brigitte Baptandier-Berthier, these *Pojies* were the thirty-six celestial stars (*gang*) who assisted Chen Jinggu in her duties: protecting children, women and the Kingdom of Min (Baptandier 2008, 138). *Pojies* serve as initiators who plant flowers, caregivers who supervise the embryonic growth, guides who lead the baby crossing the bridge and travelling to the mother's womb, and protectors who prevent the child from being harmed by the demonic power of *guans* (passes) (Baptandier 2008, 139).

Abortion ritual has also been performed in the Linshui Furen Temple. The staff member at the front desk, Ms. Zhang, told me that the Linshui Furen Temple suggests that fetus spirits include the spirits of the newborn, unborn, aborted and miscarried babies/fetuses (Interview with Ms. Zhang, Jun. 19, 2008). She often recommends a simple ritual to disciples, if they need it. First, the participant burns the incense and asks Lady Linshui to take care of the matter and arrange a "good way" for the fetus; normally, this is to send the fetus back to experience reincarnation. Second, the participant confesses to Lady Linshui, admitting that abortion is a sin to be forgiven, and promising that he/she will never commit the crime again. Third, the participant casts the divine blocks to obtain Lady Linshui's answer to her supplications, agree or disagree. Finally, the participant burns paper money as an offering to Lady Linshui and compensation to the fetus. One package of paper money costs 400 NT (Taiwanese currency, approximating 13.3 CAD in value), and the participant can burn more packages if he or she prefers. In addition, the participant can also donate any amount of "oil and incense" money (*youxiangqian* 油香錢) to the temple, based on his/her own will and financial means, in order to demonstrate their appreciation to Lady Linshui (Interview with Ms. Zhang, Jun. 19, 2008).

According to Ms. Zhang, there is a participant every one to two months on average, of any age group, coming to the temple to practice this type of simple ritual. They sometimes come because things are not going smoothly in their lives and hence they find themselves wondering if the fetus spirit is haunting them, or they sometimes come because a medium has told the woman concerned that a fetus spirit is following her. According to her, abortion ritual was not this popular

until one decade ago, and she estimates the Lady Linshui Temple has received numerous such requests by women in need of this service; hence, the Temple created a variety of simple ritual. She told me that many women found the ritual really efficacious and that they feel their requests and wishes have been responded to (*youganying* 有感應), and so they have returned to the temple with flowers and fruits to express their gratitude to Lady Linshui (Interview with Ms. Zhang, Jun. 19, 2008).

Nonetheless, not all disciples are satisfied with this type of simple ritual. At the participant's insistence, a "red head" master (Hongtou fashi 紅頭法師, a priest of the Mount Lu Sect) carries out an elaborate ritual in the square behind the temple, where another altar of Lady Linshui (and other deities) is located. The length of the ritual depends on the amount of money the participants pay, ranging from a few thousand NT³⁹ to 10 000-20 000 NT, or even more. Accordingly, the ritual could take a few hours, half of a day or one whole day. Priest Lin, the red head priest often performing such rituals in the Linshui Furen Temple, kindly gave me the opportunity to observe one of the *Kaiguan* rituals he performed; the experience involved observing the elements of the abortion ritual, as well as the opportunity to interview the participant.

8-4 The Rites

Based on the achievements of Chen Jinggu - killing the serpent and protecting her fetus - the rites under the name of Chen Jinggu are mainly for curing and for exorcism. *Shoujing*, the subduing fright ritual, is designed for comforting frightened children by calling and reassuring their souls (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 533). *Quiyu*, a ritual for the rain, is one of the most important rites; not only for the necessity of irrigation, but also for the cosmic harmony that Linshui Furen herself used to perform. *Xietu* are rites of the exorcism of terrestrial evils, pacifying the gods of the years taisui and the start of threatening white tiger. In addition, there are rites for women and children such as *caihua*, *huantai* and *kaiguan* (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 533). *Jinxiang* (pilgrimage) and *fenxiang* (sharing of incense), stabilize the identity of a community but at the same time reinforce the relationship between communities; meanwhile, it functions as a renewal of the chiefs of the temple community. Rites for specific communities such as families and medium communities are offered as well (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 533). There are also rites for seasonal

³⁹ 1 NT= 0.342 CAD

transition and new-year periods. Furthermore, although theoretically the Sannai tradition does not perform rituals for deaths, certain funeral rituals, *chaodu*, appealing to Chen Jinggu have been carried out, for her son died after she had abortion and his soul was won back by her completing of the ritual *liandu* (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 533-534).

Brigitte Baptandier-Berthier observes that the rite (*fashi* 法事) of the *Sannai* tradition has been created according to the paintings, ritual texts, talismans, exorcist and protector, which have been preserved for generations. She defines these treasures as “scripture rituals” (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 534). Scriptures provide the rituals with the basis of myth, while rituals reinforce the orthodox of the myth of Chen Jinggu, and at the same time remain the holiness of the scriptures. The masters of Lushan are respected for their effective magic power and thus reinforce people’s belief in the scriptures (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 534). Baptandier-Berthier reports that these rituals are presented in the atmosphere of “body theatre” (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 534). The shamans, composed of men, show up at the head of the celestial troops, the soldiers of the five camps. In order to rebuild the scene of Chen Jinggu’s story and to display her miracles, these male shamans must wear the clothing - including the skirt - of Chen Jinggu (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 534). During the ritual, under the eyes of the crowd, these shamans perform the ritual by dressing, acting and dancing as women. Although more and more drama and TV shows perform the ritual nowadays, shamans and priests insist that “the play, the true one, is an efficacious ritual. It is impossible to perform it if you do not wish to enact what she does” (Baptandier-Berthier 1996, 108). The red head master plays a key role in rituals of the Mount Lu sect. As Baptandier highlights: “[t]he Mount Lu tradition intimately combines meditation, visualization practices, and liturgical dramatizations watched by the patient” (Baptandier 2008, 223).

Priest Lin, the priest at the Linshui Furen Temple in Tainan, is a man in his fifties. He is active in both religious and academic fields in Taiwan, due to his knowledge of the cult of Linshui Furen. While performing a ritual, he has all his family helping him in the temple. His wife is a patient and outgoing woman. She is the receptionist and accommodator; she talks with the participants and listens to their stories, helps to take care of their babies and children if there is a *Kaiguan* ritual, and she reminds them of important steps during the ritual. Priest Lin and his wife have two sons, a twenty-one year old and the other eighteen years of age. The eldest son has been learning the skills and knowledge of performing the ritual from Priest Lin, ever since he was a child. He is actually taking over some duties from his father, and performs some simple rituals at

the temple. The ritual Ms. Chen paid for was a “big one,” and was therefore hosted by Priest Lin. However, the eldest son was still in charge of arranging the offerings, including food, wine, paper money, the manuscripts, as well as the musical and other instruments in the hall. Finally, Priest Lin has an elder brother who was there as well. He has not been trained to be a priest, but he was an enthusiastic assistant during the ritual. He carried all the heavy objects, including the bench and the musical instruments. When I sat aside looking at the ritual, he kindly explained the process to me.

8-5 The Ritual Patrons: Ms. Chen and Her Family

Ms. Chen came to the Linshui Furen Temple with her family, including her husband and her four children. They live in Nan'an, a suburb of Tainan city. Ms. Chen has three boys and one girl: the eldest son is twenty-eight years old and works in direct marketing sales; the second son, twenty-two years old, is an apprentice; and the other two children are still students. Ms. Chen is an extremely friendly woman, and was willing to answer my questions. Ms. Chen postponed the ritual once because her family was too busy, but then her second son had a car accident and was injured. Priest Lin concluded: “You postponed the service, and so the fetus spirits were not happy.” Ms. Chen has had three abortions: one between the eldest child and the second; one between the second and the third; and another between the third and the fourth. The reason she and her husband chose to have the abortions was because of economic hardship; she and her husband's income had not been enough to raise an additional child at those given times. She does not think abortion is a good way to solve the problem, but she and her husband did not know of any means of contraception.

When being asked why Ms. Chen decided to pay for an abortion ritual after so many years, she replied: “I'm worried about my son,” said she. She told of how her second son is “rebellious.” He refuses to study at school and is working in a factory as a trainee. However, he does not really focus on his work. He makes bad friends outside of work, and goes out with gangsters to have fun at night. Ms. Chen believes the aborted fetus spirits are haunting and influencing him, making him unhappy and defiant. According to popular discourses regarding fetus spirits in Taiwan, aborted fetuses can be jealous or resentful, and seek revenge by means of affecting the mind and body of those children who were lucky enough to be born by the parents. It is clear Ms. Chen is strongly concerned about her children. She even inquired with me as to how she could learn English, and

where it would be best to buy good English textbooks, as her daughter was taking English courses at high school at the time. Her children were quiet and obedient during the ritual, simply following the priest and doing whatever they needed to do. The second son finally arrived in the temple at nightfall; he was also quiet and obedient when interacting with the priest.

Ms. Chen previously practiced an abortion ritual in a small temple in the countryside two years prior, as a result of an introduction provided by her father-in-law. However, the ritual was too simple to her, and she felt she had not yet done her best. She wants a big, solemn ritual in order to show her sincerity and efforts. I asked her if she needed the approval of the elders in the family to practice the ritual, to which she answered: “If I have money to do it, then I can do it.” Based on her own choice, she then turned to the Linshui Furen Temple. This was not because she is aware of the efficacy (*lingyan* 靈驗) of Lady Linshui, but because within the region of Tainan, children from 0 to 16 years old are under the charge of Lady Linshui. She communicated to me that if she had been unaware of the existence of abortion ritual she would not be practicing it, but that since she in fact knows about it, she should patronize it.

Whenever Ms. Chen goes out, she prays and worships (*baibai* 拜拜) in the temples, including both Taoist and Buddhist ones. There is an ancestral hall in her neighbourhood, which serves as a border, separating it from other lineages. In addition, there is a Temple of the Great Emperor of Life Protection (*Baosheng Dadi* 保生大帝) in her neighbourhood, where she often visits and *Baibai*. Recently she has also been involved in the Tzu-Chi Compassion Relief Foundation. To her, the Buddhist charity foundation has a straightforward philosophy and conservative values. She found the way the TV shows produced by the Foundation represent human nature to be closer to the mentality of the oriental people (*Dongfangren* 東方人). I asked her what she thinks about the society these days, and she answered: “This society is full of all kinds of provocations, and so society should be responsible for children’s education, as well.”

8-6 The Ritual Process

The ritual Ms. Chen and her husband paid for takes approximately one afternoon, and she paid approximately 10,000 NT (333 CAD). An official notice (*qiyuan shuwen* 祈願疏文) of invoking and wish-making was already placed at the altar, which indicates: the participants’ names (Ms. Chen and all of her family in this case); dates of birth; address; and the participants’ concern:

By all the family who are praying for peace:

[We] request Lady Linshui to be in charge of this matter, to eliminate calamity and remove hardship; to maintain safety and plant good fortune. [We are] afraid we have offended the passes, including *Sangmen* 喪門, *Dijie* 地解, *Disang* 地喪, *Shichaguan* 十剎關 and *Guanfu* 官符. We have also offended Jupiter (*Taisui* 太歲). Please disperse the passes, and by doing so, we request: good fortune to bring our sons' marriage (*yinyuan* 姻緣); precious people (*guiren* 貴人) to help us. We invoke you to recall malevolent stars (*xiongxing esha* 凶星惡煞).

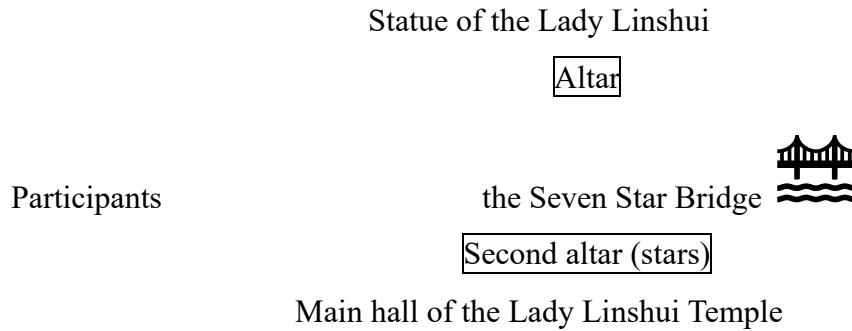
We have three fetus spirits. We now donate the four million dollars of paper money to the underworld account (*Kuqian* 庫錢) and forty nine Gold and Silver (*Jiujinyin* 九金銀) to be spent by the deceased ones. We sincerely ask [you] to bring the spirit back to reincarnate, and to be reborn into a rich family. We confess and promise we will not commit the sin again. However, a mere verbal statement is no guarantee.

Hence, this official notice is the proof of our sincerity.

The official notice above clearly addresses the purposes of the ritual, mainly for the sake of the family. It attempts to remove obstacles and harms to them, and meanwhile to effect the achievement of happiness of the family members, including the fetus spirits.

Ms. Chen's second son did not show up on time, but according to Priest Lin, the first stages of the ritual can start without the presence of every participant. The ritual begins with the creating of a ritual space. Demons are commanded to yield, and a palace is built in order to accommodate the deities invited to operate the participants' terrestrial systems within the cosmic order. Once the palace had been built, Priest Lin invited the deities by calling their names and offering wine. The deities included: the main character of the ritual, Lady Linshui; the four Taoist heavenly masters including Zhang Daoling (張道陵), Xu Xun (許遜), Ge Hong (葛洪) and Sa Shoujian (薩守堅), the Taoist deities who are in charge of the world of the deceased; and the deities Priest Lin worships at his home altar. The deities arrived in the ritual place behaving as the persons in charge, and via Priest Lin, expressed their answers and requests. Priest Lin read the official notice loudly, including the paragraph about the three fetus spirits. Then he danced and chanted in front of the altar, while his two sons sat on both sides playing the musical instruments (the elder was in charge of the drum, and the younger was in charge of the cymbals).

Figure 9. Ritual space in the Lady Linshui Temple



After Priest Lin confirmed the arrival of the deities by means of casting divine blocks, he then turned to the second altar, which worships the stars. He requested all the malevolent stars, including the Earth Dog (*Tiangou* 天狗), the White Tiger (*Baihu* 白虎) and the Five Ghosts (*Wugui* 五鬼) to leave. In addition, there are six paper castles inscribed with the *shas* of each family member, which corresponds to each family member's identity, on the altar. He read aloud the two records: the astrological destiny, which is mastered by *Wangmu*, the Imperial Lady; as well as the human register of birth, which is taken care of by Linshui Furen (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 550 & 552).

Afterwards, Priest Lin turned to the bridge. A long bench arranged by Priest Lin's eldest son and brother was located in the hall, with seven candles burning below and a magical white rope (*fasuo* 法索) above, representing the river and the Seven Star Bridge (*Qixingqiao* 七星橋). These are established, and represent the route of the participants' bad destiny. At this point, to the accompaniment of the eldest son's drum, Priest Lin led the father, the mother, and the four children of the family to repeatedly get on, walk along, and get off the bench again. Concurrently, he sang:

Humans build a bridge with flagstones;

I, the master, build a bridge with benches.

In total the bridge crossing occurred twelve times, representing the participants crossing all the *guans*, including the twelve zodiac signs. Baptandier-Berthier notes that the ritual illustrates an imaginary and metaphoric process, which transforms a child with a corrupted destiny into a newly reborn child with a purified life. Shamans go along this metaphorical journey and perform the ritual in various speculative celestial territories (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 549-551). Here, *sha* is both caught and disappears, and the participants' souls thus return purified. They finally have gone across all the obstacles caused by *guan*, and return to ordinary life (Baptandier-Berthier 1994, 564

& 565).

At this point, the process of the ritual was interrupted for two hours due to the absence of Ms. Chen's second son. She kept calling her son to urge him to come as soon as possible, and at the same time apologizing to the priest. When he finally showed up at nightfall, Priest Lin asked all the family members to sit at one edge of the bench, one by one; he, then, asked each participant to cut a white knotted cord, which he held in his hands, representative of the cutting off all karma attached to a person, by means of disentangling the knots (*jiejie* 解結). Afterwards, Priest Lin brought each of them the paper castle, asking them to tread upon it and break it up with force, representing the destruction of the old misfortune. When it was the turn of the second son, Priest Lin preached to him:

Your families are all very worried about you, especially your mother. You are young, and could be reckless and careless outside. You should remind yourself of the right way. I am speaking to you as the priest in this temple. Can you remember what I am telling you now?

The young man was quiet, but nodded. He treaded upon his paper castle accordingly and went back to his family, waiting for Priest Lin's next instruction.

During the ritual the deities agreed to do the two requests by Ms. Chen's family. Eventually, they were sent back and compensated with the wine and offerings. This was the end of the ritual. Priest Lin asked the family to bring all the paper money, including that for the deities and that for the fetus spirits, to the burner and there he burned it all. His elder son helped everyone move, and then he started cleaning up the hall. His elder son's girlfriend had arrived a few hours prior, who came to the temple after school and waited for her boyfriend almost everyday. When I asked Priest Lin where the fetus spirits would be going, he told me that Lady Linshui has worked with other deities in charge of the world of the deceased, to bring the spirits back into reincarnation, to be reborn again.

8-7 Analysis

The ritual at the Linshui Furen Temple was a social drama in which conflicts arose but were resolved, and tension between family members occurred but were abated. The son was rebellious (breach). His failure as a diligent, obedient son challenged the parents' values and authority (crisis). The ritual allowed for an opportunity of communication, particularly the parents'

worries (redressive action). Finally, the ritual was expected to achieve a new familial unity, in which the son is mature and behaved (reintegration).⁴⁰ This family ritual shows that *Yingling* is an active actor in the family social drama. The idea that a *Yingling* causes misfortune - including rebellious behaviors in his/her siblings - is embedded in popular belief in Taiwan.

8-7-1 The Goddess, the Woman

In his study of Chinese goddesses including Kuan Yin (Guanyin), Ma Tsu and the Eternal Mother, Paul Steven Sangren claims, that while male deities occupy the celestial government acting as bureaucrats and officials, female deities are more “informal” (Sangren 1983, 14), with roles situated within the struggles in the family: “[a]s idealizations of womanhood, then, female deities must overcome the stigma of pollution associated with menstruation, sexual intercourse, death, and childbirth. Hence, analysis of the purity of female deities serves to highlight what is polluting in women” (Sangren 1983, 11).

In other words, the polluting nature of the female body resulting from her roles in the family organization is transcended and by the fact that these goddesses avoid the duties of a mother, a daughter, or a wife. To be an exceptional figure beyond the family organization allows her to be a powerful goddess. However, it does not mean that the goddess is totally detached from the struggles in the family. Rather, according to Sangren, women are deeply involved in conflicts in the family in a gendered way. He claims that the Chinese belief in goddesses has “three salient dimensions- inclusivity, mediation, and alliance” (Sangren 1983, 15). A mother mediates between the father and the son (Sangren 1983, 15), and an elder sister between parents and siblings (Sangren 1983, 14). On the other hand, the alliance between a mother and a son, as a subversive dimension, makes the goddess a challenging power to the patriarchal familial order. Echoing Margery Wolf’s theory of the “uterine family” (Sangren 1983, 14 & 21-22), Sangren points out that the unifying force between a mother and a son form a coalition which may be seen as a threat to the husband’s family’s interests. This force can even threaten the celestial bureaucracy, such as the goddess the Eternal Mother (Sangren 1983, 22). As a result, as Arthur P. Wolf’s famous model of gods, ghosts, and ancestors corresponding to the humanly social structure shows, the goddesses’ images are sociologically significant. They reveal the contradictory roles of women within a family (Sangren 1983, 23).

⁴⁰ For more analysis of the transition of identity during a ritual process, please consult: 2-1: A Rite of Passage.

The complexity of femininity analyzed by Sangren can be seen in the legend of Chen Jinggu and the ritual. In the ritual observed in the Linshui Furen Temple, we saw a worried mother who was trying to protect her children through a ritual. This bond shows that the motherhood and sisterhood of Chen Jinggu performs for the community. Brigitte Baptandier-Berthier asks a crucial question: “what does it mean to be ‘woman in China,’ in Chinese religion?” (Baptandier 2008, 261). She points out the struggling roles within a woman’s body in Chinese society. Chen Jinggu’s legend constantly is presented in a way that features the perspective of women, while simultaneously dealing with the community and the family. Yet, Chen Jinggu’s shamanic talents allow her to act as a protector of women, children and the state. Her legend reveals the difficulties a woman has to handle in the patrilineal structure, but also highlights the power of femininity.

Chen Jinggu came from a female bodhisattva, Guanyin, not from the union of a man and a woman. The female deity’s blood is the source of Chen Jinggu’s power, and thus reveals the association between Chen Jinggu and the perspective of women. It appears to be a transmission of femininity since the pregnancy comes from one woman to another. She was given the supernatural ability to communicate with gods and animals, and thus afterwards she chose to become a shaman. Furthermore, her strength is superior to that of men and, thus, the Min Kingdom was dependent on her. Similarly, although Chen Jinggu was forced to have an abortion to perform a rain-fall ritual, she decided to hide the fetus in her mother's house instead of her husband's. Later, after her death in result of the abortion, Chen Jinggu never returned to her husband or her family, which again affirms her rare but strong response to the patrilineal structure. Rather, Chen Jinggu stayed in Lushan with two other goddess, Li and Lin. which is a rare, but strong, response to the patrilineal society. As Brigitte Baptandier-Berthier observes, “if escape is necessary for them, they become shamans and mediums, in this way moving between their social reality and their religious model” (Baptandier 2008, 262).

The cult of *Sannai* together with Lady Li and Lady Lin present an image of feminine union, and was worshipped in the patrilineal society. Chen Jinggu’s decision highlights her independent will and her maternal power. Female aspects might have been implicitly demonized by patriarchal power in Chen Jinggu’s legend. Nonetheless, she responds in an ingenious way: taming, instead of resistance. The cleavage between ego and predetermined destiny are able to meet and show us how a woman is able to react within her social and cultural contexts.

At the same time, a man’s image is also noteworthy in the cult of the Lady Linshui. As the

analysis above shows, the astrological map of a child's fate is beyond the patrilineal structure's control. Moreover, men seem absent during the birth of Chen Jinggu and cannot have a son to carry on their family name without Chen Jinggu. Furthermore, men are helpless outsiders with respect to Chen Jinggu's career as a shaman performing ritual on the river and killing the white serpent, until becoming a goddess respected as the leader of the *Sannai* tradition. If one interprets the legend of Lady Linshui based on the power relationship, then the protagonists should be the good goddess and the evil serpent. Most of the time, men were merely outsiders since they were not involved in the fights because they could not be involved.

Similarly, masculinity does not serve as a pacifying force in the Kaiguan ritual. First, male shamans are required to dress up as Chen Jinggu in order to perform the ritual. Their appearance as men weakens the effect of the ritual and thus the shamans must behave like women. Consequently, in performing the ritual male shaman and priests are proud not to look like men and thus to contribute to religious orthodoxy and effectiveness. During the ritual, the shaman encounters the three major goddesses, *Wangmu*, *Linshui Furen* and *Pojie*. Again childbirth is stressed as the prerogative of women, and thus if the kinship system is longing for a child, it must negotiate with the goddesses who control this domain.

8-7-2 Parent-child Relationship: Ongoing Eruptions and Negotiations

As Brigitte Baptandier-Berthier stresses, a Chinese patrilineage identifies children as good or bad by means of *bazi* (eight birth characters). The kinship system fears the cleavage between the ego and the predetermined destiny of the child, because it is potentially harmful to the lineage line. We can see that *bazi*, the astrological theme, is not constructed by the will of men. Instead, it appears to be under the charge of *Wangmu*, a goddess. *Bazi* is not subordinate to the control of patrilineage, and thus men have no choice but to ask for the permission of the three goddesses by means of ritual in order to modify the division of power. In other words, a son is not innately rebellious. Instead, his fate (*yun*), results in the disorders (Baptandier 2008, 204). The *shas* can be the destined astrological misfortunes, or in Ms. Chen's family's case, the aborted fetuses (causing a car accident), or the bad friends (causing rebellious behavior). As Baptandier states, "childhood is constantly threatened by dangers, crises, and illnesses that require the intervention and protection of Chen Jinggu and her acolytes" (Baptandier 2008, 204).

Brigitte Baptandier-Berthier highlights that the development of an embryo to an adult in Chinese cosmology is a sophisticated progressive process. First of all, the life in the womb and the

first year after birth “correspond... to two symmetrical parts of a whole divided by the passage of birth than to two distinct strata of life” (Baptandier 2008, 196). Then, childhood refers to the gradual “separation from the maternal world, followed by the age of instruction, and finally adulthood” (Baptandier 2008, p. 196). Since the child’s personhood is forming; in addition, with the influences of *shas* the parent-child relationship is still taking shape. As such, this shaping process involves constant eruptions between parents and the children, and regular rituals are necessary. Various rituals, including opening the passes (*kaiguan*), cultivating the flowers (*Zaihua* 栽花), and the abortion ritual elements in the ritual observed above, can be seen as a mechanism of converting uncertainty to certainty embedded in the Chinese familial order.

Nonetheless, the fact that the child is located in numerous dangers does not mean he is powerless. On the contrary, he is in fact powerful: “The child occupies the center: the center of the pass, but also the symbolic center of Chinese society, of which he is the heart. This is why he is especially threatened. This situation also constitutes the child’s power: that of joining in itself cosmic forces and influxes” (Baptandier 2008, 221).

The son is powerful because he is the center of attention due to his ability to carry on ancestral worship. In other words, he is born to be powerful. The parent-child relationship is not the source of problems, but the victim of the problems. The relationship stands beyond the *shas* and needs to be resumed and reinforced. The ritual observed in this chapter did not attempt to forcefully reestablish a familial order by means of recalling the authority of the parents. Rather, the ritual attempted to recall the biological and affective ties between the two generations. The parents were worried and caring. They confessed, admitted their weakness and powerlessness, and sought help. Therefore, the son was not there to be disciplined by the parents. Instead, he was there to be dissuaded and advised. He was to be transformed instead of punished. He has the ultimate power to decide: to conform or not?

8-7-3 Family Reunion

In addition to the psychological function, the most significant contribution of this ritual to Ms. Chen and her family is that this ritual served as a venue where the family directly engaged in a bodily practice together. This process was undergone under the authority of the divine power of the priest and the liturgy. The father, the mother and the children were merely followers during the ritual, which transformed them into equal actors without hierarchy between the parents and the children. Under the authority of the goddesses and the priests none of them would be able to

determine which deities to invite, from which manuscripts to chant, and how many repetitions of walking on the bridge would be required. They took part in this collective movements as a unity. This sort of unity of the family could be articulated by Brigitte Baptandier-Berthier's observation of the cult of Linshui: "From the most ancient times down to the present, in patrilineal fathers and sons were considered to be one and the same body" (Baptandier 2008, 172).

Other forms of rites of passage may function in similar way, which is to attune the subject to her status within the family or community. An example would be the *Jiezhū* (receiving Buddhist prayer beads) ritual, which is a religious menopausal ritual which women attend in Ninghua, western Fujian (Cheung 2014). According to Neky Tak-ching Cheung, this ritual reinforces the patriarchal ideal of a woman's life since the husband's company is required and single women and widows are denied full or partial participation (Cheung 2014, 19). Moreover, ritual objects representing the idea that "more sons, more happiness" are displayed in the ritual space (Cheung 2014, 20). Cheung suggests that "*Jiezhū* espouses patriarchal family values with the husband as the transmitter of the Buddhist prayer beads, and the male offspring as the lineage carrier" (Cheung 2014, 22). A woman's identity as a wife and a mother may be reinforced after the ritual.

Liminality (Turner 1991) is the stage in a ritual which temporarily disabled the hierarchical nature of the relationship between the parents and the children, and transformed the family into *communitas*.⁴¹ Through this process of unity in ritual participation, the participants were allowed to relocate themselves within the social order. Therefore, the absence of the parents' power may have effectively enabled the strengthening of family ties. As Émile Durkheim claims, "all that is sacred is the object of respect, and every sentiment of respect is translated, in him who feels it, by movements of inhibition" (Durkheim 1915, 317). During the ritual, while facing the goddess as well as the spokesman for the sacred world (Priest Lin), Ms. Chen's second son transformed from a rebellious son into a docile participant. At this special moment of bodily practices and emotional expression, the idea of being a good son and a good member of society was highlighted. As Durkheim affirms, the sole purpose of a ceremony is "to awaken certain ideas and sentiments, to attach the present to the past or the individual to the group" (Durkheim 1915, 378).

Meanwhile, in the performing of the ritual, Priest Lin's family experienced a journey as well. The cooperation within his family, to some extent, seems to fit the findings of earlier scholars of China, such as Maurice Freedman (Freedman 1965) or Marcel Granet (Granet 1950). Freedman

⁴¹ For more detailed analysis of Victor Turner's ritual theory, please consult Chapter 2: Methodology.

claims that the stable Chinese social order is embodied in a stable lineage. A lineage in traditional China is formed on a patrilineal basis. The eldest son is in charge of ancestral worship, and in order to maintain the worship he will need to have at least one son to carry it on (Freedman 1965, 31-32). Similarly, Marcel Granet reports: “[a]s he [the eldest son] is destined to preside over the paternal worship, and to retain authority by this position over his younger brothers, the son strives during the life of his father to nourish the holiness in him which will qualify him to pursue an ancestral career” (Granet 1950, 320). Through the father-son bond, a family line is able to be carried on. For Priest Lin’s family, all the members have a different function and are centered around the father of the family (i.e., the knowledgeable priest of the temple). The members form a team and coworker partnership, which resulted in another type of *communitas*. The linkages among them are affectionate and occupational at the same time. While preaching family values, Priest Lin strengthened his figure of paternal authority to the public, and at the same reinforced his own family ties.

8-7-4 Therapeutic Functions

The ritual observed in the Linshui Furen Temple seemed to have served a therapeutic function for Ms. Chen. She was worried and anxious about her son, and felt sorry about the fetus spirits. In order to understand why the situation was as it was and how to work out the difficulty, her abortions were grafted onto the son’s fate. She confessed that having an abortion was not a good thing to do, in spite of the fact that she did not have a choice. By virtue of having paid for the ritual according to her means (both in terms in of time and money), she can finally, to some extent, feel relieved; and a new hope has been created for her. She believes in Taoism and Buddhism, and within the contexts of Chinese cosmology and her religious understandings of life, death, fortune and misfortune, to participate in such a ritual is one of the best solutions one can consider. Psychologically speaking, she was comforted and made to feel more secure by the fact she participated in the ritual, and she could drop the burden of feeling that she still owed the fetus spirits. This type of mentality can also be found in other interviews I have conducted in Taiwan. Some of my informants told me: “after practicing the ritual I was able to set my mind at rest (*xin’an* 心安).” Similarly, in spite of denouncing the commercialization of religious institutions, some of the OB/GYN doctors and feminist activists I interviewed in Taiwan agree that there is a need for this type of ritual for it satisfies the psychological needs of the woman.

8-8 Conclusion

The ritual observed in the Linshui Furen Temple exposed three types of power relationships: father/mother and son, man and woman, and religious practitioner and patrons. The ritual serves as a platform where power struggles within the family occur and are resolved. This study provides us with a window into how the religious understanding of life and death in China is blended into modern life, as well as the everlasting conflicts and cooperation among the hierarchical segments, in both the profane and sacred worlds. In traditional cosmology, the ritual was regarded as a troubleshooting strategy for the family. Moreover, through the ritual, the sense of family as a community is shaped which brings its members together. This process includes collective actions (participating in the ritual together) and communication (the parents' message delivered to the children). Moreover, the power of femininity, including the goddess' power, the priest's performance and the mother's voice, were highlighted during the ritual.

Chapter 9

Supplemental Ritual

Quite a few of the abortion rituals I observed were performed as supplements to another larger ritual. In this supplemental type of ritual, the abortion ritual is not highlighted as the central feature of the entire ritual and the participants do not play a central role. Fetus spirits are worshipped and redeemed (*chaodu* 超渡) along with other categories of spirits, including ancestors, creditors from one's past lives (*yuanqin zhaizhu* 冤親債主) and spirits attached to the land (*dijizhu* 地基主) in the larger ritual complex of the Seventh Lunar month Hungry Ghost Festival. Through these rituals, these spirits are expected to be reincarnated and reborn. Among the temples I visited where this synthetic type of ritual can be seen are the Taipei City God Temple (*Taibeifu Chenghuang* 台北府城隍), the Spirit Holy Palace (*Lingshenggong* 靈聖宮), the Hsinchu City God Temple (*Xinzhu Chenghuangmiao* 新竹城隍廟), the Eastern Peace Palace in Hsinchu (*Xinzhu Dongninggong* 新竹東寧宮) and the Lugang Ksitigarbha Temple (*Lugang Dizangwang Miao* 鹿港地藏王廟). Since this is a supplemental ritual and the ritual elements involving abortion ritual are relatively limited, the patron pays 1,500 NT to 3,000 NT (50-100 CAD) to appease a fetus spirit. In addition, since the synthetic type of ritual is often held during the massive Hungry Ghost festival, the temples hire a big number of priests and sutra-chanting groups to perform the ritual and the ritual processes are strictly carried out. As a result, there is often a distance between the patrons and the ritual. Very often, the patrons are more like an audience, rather than involved actors in the actual ritual process.

Very often spirit tablets of *Yingling* were placed in corners. Tablets allowed the patrons to reconnect themselves with the fetus spirit by giving him/her a name through visualizing the fetus' sex and appearance. The name can be *Yingling* only, or a general pronoun following the mother or the father's surname - for example, "Chen Dabao (the Chen's big baby)" or "Chen Erbao (the Chen's second baby)", or an actual name for example, "Chen Meijuan". The tablet is the communicative counterpart to the patron, to confess and to pour out her heart. Furthermore, the tablet is the material target for the priests to preach to and bless.

In addition to *Yingling*, categories of spirits worshipped in the ghost month have been growing recently. There are several newly emerged categories: one is creditors from one's past

lives (*yuanqin zhaizhu* 冤親債主), which means “those deceased to whom some debt is owed” (Tremlett 2007, 31) or “vengeful spirits” who could haunt the living (Katz 2009, 156). According to Yeh Chun-Jung at Academia Sinica, this is a new category of spirit that emerged only recently (Interview with Yeh, Oct. 1, 2008). *Yuanqin zhaizhu* should be segregated from the living through rituals, which shows people’s fear of being haunted by the “aggrieved dead” (Katz 2009, 156). People who died tragic deaths are also worshipped during the Hungry Ghost Festival. For example, in the ritual observed at the Taipei City God Temple (*Taipeifu Chenghuang Miao* 台北府城隍) in 2009, a spirit tablet for the people killed during the attack of Typhoon Morakot on August 8th, 2009 was displayed.

Another new category is noteworthy: the spirits of animals (*dongwuling* 動物靈)⁴² have been included in these rites for several years in the Taipei City God Temple, the Eastern Peace Palace in Hsinchu, and the Buddhist *Hongshi* Institute in Taoyuan. The emergence of appeasement of animal spirits is as noteworthy as the rise of rituals addressing the fetus spirit. According to the staff of the Taipei City God Temple, the temple did not perform *chaodu* for animal spirits until 2007 (Interview, Dec. 17, 2008). The temple launched this worship because one of the staff lost her pet. In addition, more and more urban worshippers requested the service for their pets. Similarly, in the Buddhist *Hongshi* Institute, the growing number of people who appease animal spirits results from the growing vegetarian population in the Buddhist and lay community (Interview with Master Shih Chaohwei, July 31, 2008). This religious change has led to the recent commercial service of building the pagodas for placing the ashes of animal bodies, which are gaining in popularity in Taiwan (Gao 2018).

During the process of the supplemental type of ritual, compared to the priests or staff, the participants are less involved in the actual ritual process. The ritual patrons in a massive ritual do not determine the ritual’s routine, nor are they active actors during the ritual process. Nonetheless, it does not mean that the participants were not engaged in the atmosphere. Hungry Ghost Festivals were like carnivals. The extravagant ritual space was full of ritual objects. Tons of food was piled on tables and incense smoke filled the air. Loud chanting and music could be heard everywhere. Lanterns, banners and paper tablets fluttered in the breeze. Neighbours greeted each other while media reporters interviewed staff and priests.

⁴² “*Ling* 靈” reminds us of the *Ling* theory of Dragon Lake Temple’s Lin Jianyi. To worship animal spirits may be an influence of Japan.

9-1 A Ritual Mixing Elements of Buddhism and Taoism: the Eastern Peace Palace

The predecessor of Hsinchu Eastern Peace Palace (*Dongninggong* 東寧宮) was the Eastern Peak Temple (*Dongyuemiao* 東嶽廟), which was founded in 1821, during the Qing dynasty (*Dongninggong Fengsi*). Since the Ksitigarbha Nunnery and the Palace of Five Cereals were demolished by the Japanese colonial government, the Temple took over the statues of the Bodhisattva, the Yama, and the Primordial Emperor of Five Cereals. However, the Eastern Peak Temple was further demolished by the Japanese colonial government in 1937, and the deities' statues were relocated ("Dongninggong"). In 1952, under the KMT rule, the Temple was re-established and included more deities. This new temple was named "Eastern Peace" ("Dongninggong"). Currently, the deities worshipped by the temple were a mixture of Buddhist and Taoist deities because the temple worships deities from both religions. The host deity worshipped in the Eastern Peace Palace is Ksitigarbha, but the Palace also worships the Eastern Peak Great Emperor (*Dongyue Dadi* 東嶽大帝) and other Taoist deities, including the Godly Agricultural Great Emperor (*Shennong Dadi* 神農大帝), the Five Grains Primary Emperor (*Wugu Xiandi* 五穀先帝), the Empress of Birth Registration (*Zhusheng niangniang* 註生娘娘) and Koxinga the Lord of Yanping (*Yanping Junwang* 延平郡王). Based on the fusion, Buddhist scholar Master Shih Chaohwei calls the belief in Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva in the Eastern Peace Palace "folk Buddhism (*minjian fojiao*) 民間佛教" (Interview with Master Shih Chaohwei, July 31, 2008).

The Eastern Peace Palace is located in downtown Hsinchu, only a couple of blocks away from the City God Temple (*Chenghuangmiao* 城隍廟). Part of the historical heritage of early Chinese immigrants, the Eastern Peace Palace and the City God Temple have long been acting as religious centres of the Hsinchu community. The Hungry Ghost Festival in Hsinchu City follows the tradition that the Gate to the Underworld is opened by the City God Temple on July 1st (lunar calendar) and sealed on August 1st (lunar calendar) by the Eastern Peace Palace ("Dongninggong"). When visiting the Palace during the Hungry Ghost festival, one can tell that the festival is strongly promoted and advertised through newspapers, bus advertisements and cable TV. The mayor was invited to attend the ritual. He was accompanied by the chief staff of the Temple and prayed for the prosperity of the country and peace of the people (*guotai min'an* 國泰

民安).

The ritual, called the Grand Ceremony of Ksitigarbha and the Liang Emperor Repentance Dharma Assembly (*Dizang Lianghuang Baochan Dafahui* 地藏、梁皇寶懺大法會), also celebrates the birthday of Ksitigarbha, Lord of the Underworld, on the 29th day of the seventh lunar month.⁴³ Chinese Buddhism does not only diagnose human sins, but also prescribes ritualistic means for salvation in one of its most elaborate and grandiose rituals. The Retreat of Water and Land (水陸齋 *Shuiluzhai*), or the Water and Land Dharma Assembly (水陸法會 *Shuilu fahui*), aims to rescue suffering beings residing in the water, land, and skies through the assistance of the power of the saints. This rite has served for *Pudu* (普渡 universal salvation) since the Song dynasty, and it was in “continuity with the medieval ghost festival” to feed the hungry ghosts (Davis 2001, 236). Stephen F. Teiser discusses the popularity of the Retreat of Water and Land during the Song Dynasties by saying:

The Sung dynasties saw the growth of a liturgical tradition centering on the “Assembly of Water and Land (shui-lu hui)”, a kind of mass dedicated to wandering spirits. Offerings to spirits haunting waterways were dumped into streams and rivers, while presents destined for souls suffering recompense in the hells were thrown onto the ground. This ritual too was practiced at irregular intervals throughout the year, including the fifteenth day of the seventh month. Tsun-shih (964-1032) was particularly active in propagating the Assembly of Water and Land. (Teiser 1988a, 108)

Nowadays, various Buddhist institutions share the “elaborate origin myth” with the public while elaborating on the origin of *shuiluzhai*. For example:

One night, a few months after the death of his Queen Chishi, Emperor Wu heard some rattling noise outside his bedroom as he was getting ready for bed. When he peeked outside his bedroom door, he saw a big boa constrictor staring at him. Surprised and frightened, the Emperor said to the snake, “This is a stately court, a place of majesty and decorum, hardly a place for a snake to hang out.” The snake said, “Your Majesty, I was your queen Chishi. I am now reborn as a snake because in my past life, out of anger, jealousy, self-indulgence, and cruelty, I destroyed many things and harmed many lives. Now I have nothing to eat and no cave to hide. Most painfully, I am constantly being bitten by the many

⁴³ For more info on the Ksitigarbha Dharma Assembly, please consult Chapter 10: Buddhist Ritual 1.

insects living under my scales. It is out of desperation that I come to seek help from your Highness, hoping through the merits of your Majesty, I can escape this vile body.” Then the snake disappeared.

The next day Emperor Wu consulted with Chan Master Zhi Gong. The Master said, “The karma obstacles of the former Queen must be cleansed by repentance and prostrations to the Buddha.” The Emperor then asked the Master to compile a list of Buddhas’ names, and to write the text of repentance based on the sutras. The Master compiled a repentance liturgy that was ten volumes long. The Emperor then followed the liturgy and made repentance on behalf of his queen. One day, as he was getting ready to chant, he smelled a sweet fragrance in the room. When he looked up, he saw a person of grace and beauty standing before him. The person said, “By the grace of your Majesty’s sincere repentance on my behalf, I am now reborn as a heavenly being in the Trayastrimsa Heaven. I come especially to thank your Highness.” Then the person disappeared. (“Liang Huang Jeweled Repentance Ceremony”)

The text, *Golden Mountain Imperial Edition of the Repentance of Emperor Liang* (*Jinshan Yuzhi Liang Huang Baochan* 金山御製梁皇寶懺), has been widely chanted during the Ritual of the Assembly of (all the spirits of the) Water and Land. The Assembly targets all the beings in the divine category: Buddha, the Bodhisattvas, Pratyeka-Buddhas, and Sravakas as well as all those suffering in the Six Realms. The *Liturgy for the Cultivation of the Purificatory Fast of the Victorious Assembly of Water and Land for the Saints and Commoners of the Dharma-World* (法界聖凡水陸勝會修齋儀軌 *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui*) was initially composed by Zhi Pan 志磐 (1220-1275), which was then revised and edited by monk Zhu Hong 祿宏 (1535-1615) (Davis 2001, 238). The Liturgy is divided into six chapters, elaborating the ritual process: purification of the ritual space, summoning of the saints to the upper hall (or inner altar) (Davis 2001, 238), invitation to ten classes of commoners and ordering of the hierarchy of the Six Realms to the lower hall of the inner altar. In addition, two additional populations are summoned. The first is the gods and ancestors, including the City Gods and gods of the local temples (Davis 2001, 239), tutelary divinities of the monastery and its buildings, all the ancestors of the patron and his relatives, the spiritual ancestors of the monks and various and sundry souls of the dead (Davis 2001, 240). Second is the suffering ghosts, including those who have suffered violent death from emperors to those who died in prison as well as hungry ghosts (Davis 2001, 240). All those

summoned are presented with offerings. Then, through scripture chanting, the priests request the sufferings souls in the Six Realms to convert to the Dharma and escape from suffering. They are expected to be liberated and be reborn in Amitābha's Pure Land the Western Paradise (Davis 2001, 241). The Water and Land Dharma Assembly promises universal and egalitarian karmic benefits (Davis 2001, 241). According to Buddhist sources, the merit of the ceremony is so magnificent that even an attendee can receive great karmic merit and blessings. Edward L. Davis claims that the promise to incorporate all humans in the *Shuiluzhai* was extended even to "notorious figures from China's past and to representatives of all the social classes of her present as well" (Davis 2001, 241). This type of ontological totality is premised on a sense of Buddhahood shared by all beings (Davis 2001, 241). Taiwanese scholar Lin Jiande argues that some Taiwanese Buddhist institutions' enthusiasm for the Water and Land Dharma Assembly is triggered by the needs of the disciples, but it also helps "increase their income" (J. Lin).

The ritual observed in this chapter took place from August 24 (July 24th, lunar calendar) to August 30 (July 31st, lunar calendar) in 2008 and gathered citizens of Hsinchu city and county. People brought offerings to the Temple, sat in the corridor and square and chatted. The staff of the Temple were enthusiastic to help journalists or researchers, including scholars and students. While being asked about the abortion ritual, Mr. Cai, the chief of the management committee, told me that more and more young girls come to the temple for fetus appeasement recently (Interview with Mr. Cai, July 1, 2008). Chairman Cai and his staff kindly introduced me to several ritual participants who later agreed to be interviewed.

During the ritual, the participants walked around with incense in their hands. They bowed and prayed to the deities in the Temple and at tables of offerings arrayed outside of the temple. In spite of the fact that they did not join the sutra chanting, they were given an official notice to read in front of the deity. People were given different official notices according to the category of the spirit he/she wished to appease. The official notice for a fetus spirit mainly addresses the need to redeem. Here is what the official notice indicates:

Humbly request Namō Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva along with the deities to show mercy

Chaodu Yingling arriving at the altar to receive mercy

Respectfully preparing gold, cloth, offerings, respectfully inviting the Yingling to receive and use.

Money to be saved in the underworld treasury (*kuqian* 庫錢)

Spare money (*siqian* 私錢)

Travel expense (*wangshengqian* 往生錢)

Piles of paper money used as a pillow (*dayin* 大銀)

Piles of paper money in smaller bills used as a pillow (*xiaoyin* 小銀)

Miscellaneous (*jinyi* 巾衣)

Ritual participant's address

Humbly requesting reconciliation, receiving mercy, good belief, transmission

Date

The deities in charge included Ksitigarbha, the City God, as well as other relevant deities. The official notice also allowed the participant to indicate the title of her/his own local temple or shrines. The official notice lastly addresses the expectation of the participant: 1. The karmic relationship is to be erased; 2 the fetus spirit is able to be sent to the Sukhāvātī Heaven of Great Joy (*Jilejie* 極樂界) or returned to reincarnate and be born into a virtuous and wealthy family.

The Temple was surrounded by tables where offerings and paper money were placed. Mr. Cai showed me the paper money made specifically for Ksitigarbha, other deities, spirits of dead people, and fetus spirits. One participant can pay 300 NT (10 CAD) to get all these in a box set. The *Yingling jin* (fetus spirit money) includes ordinary paper money as well as paper clothes, papers on which were printed images of toys and food. In each box, there is a name tag for the participant to write her/his name. These days, the governmental policy regarding burning paper money has been getting more and more strict, so people normally do not burn a big amount of paper money during the Ghost Month festival in the Temple. Outside of the Temple, several soul-summoning banners were hung. In the adjacent buildings, the tables were covered in offerings. The different spirits were categorized and the fetus spirits were placed in the outer building. Beside the spirit tablets, the statues of the guardians of the Underworld, the Giant and the Dwarf (*Qiye* 七爺 and *Baye* 八爺), stood beside the wall.

Inside of the Temple, the space in the centre, surrounded by the status of the deities, was occupied by numerous tables and seats, where more than thirty women sat and chanted Buddhist scriptures in deep blue gowns (*haiqing* 海青). The sutra, the Golden Mountain Imperially Ordered Emperor Liang's Repentance (*Jinshan Yuzhi Lianghuang Baochan* 金山御製梁皇寶懺), includes

ten chapters, and was chanted by the crew all day for seven days. These women are volunteers, who often come to the Temple to study sutras and chant together. The ritual was divided into: feasting the Heavens (*zhaitian* 齋天), celebrating the birthday (of Ksitigarbha) (*zhushou* 祝壽), presenting the incense by other temples/shrines (*yougong canxiang* 友宮參香), sending off the longevity merit tablets (*song yansheng luwei* 送延生祿位; where the names of the family were inscribed), worshipping all Buddhas who give long life (*yansheng pufu* 延生普佛), guiding the spirits through the cold realm (*guohan* 過寒) and offerings food to the flaming mouth ghosts (*yankou* 焰口). The ritual is not only for the spirits of the dead, but also for increasing the merit and decreasing the misfortune of living. In the last stage of the ritual, offered food, including candies and cookies, were thrown into the square outside of the Temple in order to feed the hungry ghosts.

The ritual to Release Flaming Mouths took place from 17:00–21:30 on the last day, Lunar Calendar July 30th. This ritual originates from the *Dhāraṇī for Extinguishing the Flaming Mouths* (Sanskrit: Pretamukhāgnivālāyaśarakāra-dhāraṇī, *Jiuba Yankou Egui Tuoluoni Jing* 救拔焰口餓鬼陀羅尼經, T1313), translated by Amoghavajra (705–774 AD) (Yu 2013, 353). According to this *Dhāraṇī*, during his meditation, Ananda encountered a hungry ghost (*preta*, also named *Yankou*), who was skinny and ugly, with a big belly like a mountain and a thin throat like needle, and flames burning on his face. He told Ananda he had been suffering from punishment, due to his miserliness and greed in his previous life. He warned Ananda that he would die in three days and suffer in the *Preta* Hungry Ghost Realm as well. Ananda turned to the Buddha seeking advice. The Buddha taught him to make an offering of various foods to hungry ghosts. By means of reciting the “Infinite Power and Virtue Freedom Light Tathāgata Dhāraṇī Spell” seven times, the food is able to transform into numerous dewes and food to feed all beings in all realms, including the hungry ghosts.⁴⁴ According to Master Sheng Yen, this ritual was shaped by the esoteric tradition in Buddhism (Master Sheng Yen 2016). This food is “symbolic food,” which does not only feed the hungry ghosts’ stomach, but also lifts them to higher realms in the six realms (Master Sheng Yen 2016).

⁴⁴ For more analysis on *Dhāraṇī* sutras, as well as their healing purposes and mantra practices, please consult 11-4: The Sutra: the *Dharani Sutra of Buddha on Longevity, the Extinction of Offences and the Protection of Young*.

9-2 A Taoist Ritual: The Spirit Holy Palace

As a small temple located in a residential area, the Spirit Holy Palace is the place where more than thirty staff members gather, all who claim to have the ability to connect with the supernatural world. This temple attracts a lot of urban residents to “ask (the gods) about things (*wenshi* 問事).” In fact, my friends who accompanied me on a visit to the temple decided to stay to ask when their apartment could be sold. The host deity of the Spirit Holy Palace is the Jade Pond Golden Mother (*Yaochi Jinmu* 瑤池金母, also called *Xiawangmu* 西王母). Nonetheless, the Ghost Month *chaodu* ritual was hosted by the Amitabha Buddha and the three Pure ones of Taoism: the Heavenly Venerable Jade Purity Lord of Premieval Commencement (*Yuqing Yuanshi Datianzun* 玉清元始大天尊), the Heavenly Venerable Supreme Purity Great Lord of the Numinous Treasure (*Shangqing Lingbao Datianzun* 上清靈寶大天尊) and the Heavenly Venerable Highest Purity Great Lord of the Dao and Its Virtue (*Taiqing Daode Datianzun* 太清道德大天尊). The ritual was held in Jilin Park, across from the temple, from 6:30–18:50 on August 16 (July 16th, lunar calendar) in 2008. The staff of the temple were core patrons and organizers, who, in fact, started arranging the ritual space and ritual objects the previous day, but the ritual was mainly run by Taoist priests hired from the Songshan Compassion and Merit Temple (*Songshan Cihui Tang* 松山慈惠堂). As an experienced and well-known Taoist priest and teacher of the Chanhe School of Zhengyi (*Zhengyi Chanhepai* 正一禪和派)⁴⁵, Master Liling Ma (a woman priest) acted as the chief Master, guiding five female priests and three male priests to perform the ritual.

The ritual performed was the Liturgy of the Invitation of the Deities (*Canling Keyi* 參靈科)

⁴⁵ Here is Lee Fong-Mao’s introduction to the *Chanhe* School:

The *Chanhe* School (禪和派) is a local branch of Daoism of the Fujian region in China. It was originally popular in Fuzhou City and its nearby regions. The Fuzhou immigrants brought the school to Taiwan after 1949. The *Chanhe* School emphasizes phonetics in chanting. The chanting is formed from a combination of the northern Chinese *Quanzhen* phonetics (*Quanzhenyun* 全真韻) that were assimilated by the Fujian people who were officials in the White Cloud Temple (*Baiyunguan* 白雲觀) of Beijing during earlier years, the chants of the Fuzhou *Zhengyi* Orthodox Unity School as well as some Buddhist sutras. It gradually became popular after the middle period of the Qing Dynasty among the families of court officials as an activity of self-cultivation and recreation; and then gradually spread to the other levels of the social hierarchy... After arriving in Taiwan, many halls were established in cities such as Taipei City (for example, the *Jixuan Heyi* Hall [集玄合一堂] and the *Baoan* Hall [Bao’an Tang 保安堂]), and Kaohsiung City. It was originally popular among Fujian immigrants, but it was promoted due to repeated cooperation with the Daoism Society of the R.O.C. (Zhonghua Minguo Daojiaohui 中華民國道教會), and its membership gradually expanded to include non-Fujian Daoist groups. (F. Lee 2009)

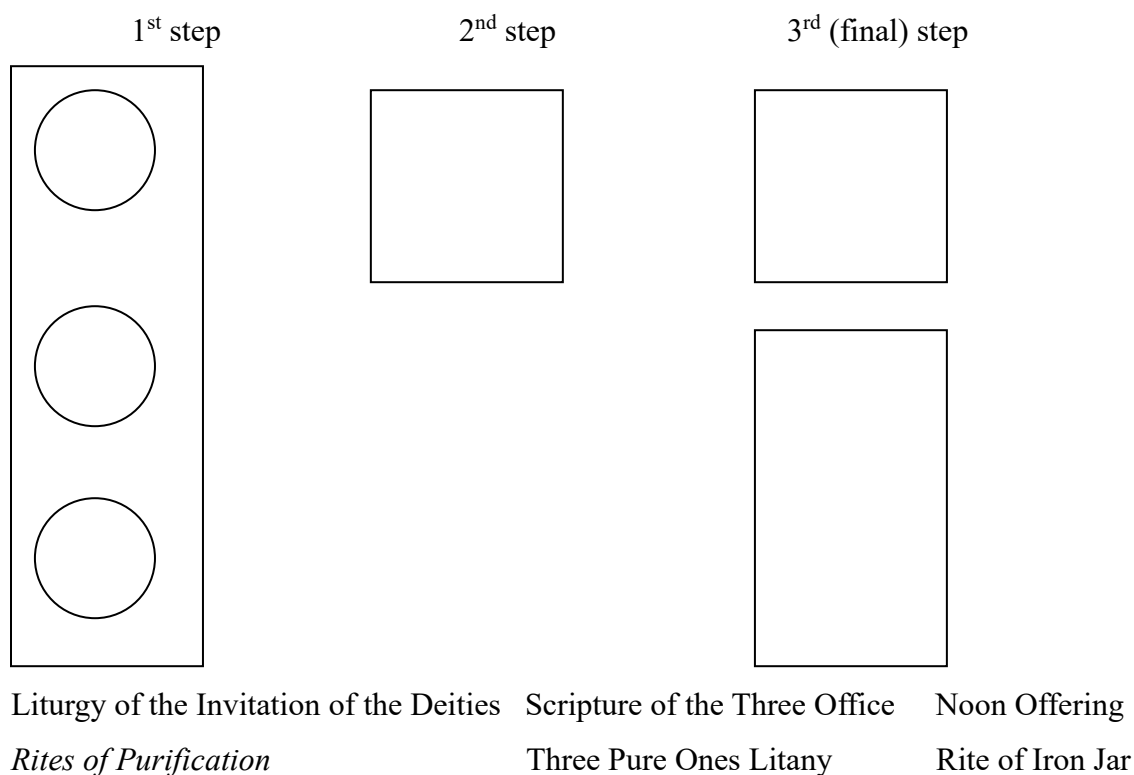
儀), one liturgy of the Zhengyi *Chanhe* school rites. The altar worshipping the Three Pure Celestials was located in the centre. The paper-made tablets of the spirits were located on the tables surrounding the ritual space. The number of fetus spirits were approximately 150, out of 1,000 other categories of spirits. The patrons, including the representatives of local politicians, held incense in their hand and stood in the square outside the altar. On the other side of the small park, offerings and paper money were placed on numerous tables.

Priest Ma held incense in her hand and started walking around the altar. After bowing to the three celestials, she turned to the audience, wrote the talisman of invitation with her finger toward the sky. Immediately she formed a Daoist mudra with her fingers (*daozhi* 道指). A while later, she bowed to the sky and repeated the fingering summoning the Three Pure Ones: Jade Purity Formula (*Yuqingjue* 玉清訣), the Supreme Purity Formula (*Shangqingjue* 上清訣) and the Highest Purity Formula (*Taiqingjue* 太清訣). By the use of these mudras, the space of the rite was transformed into cosmic space. By pointing at the palm with specific fingers, different deities were identified. After doing this, the other priests started chanting beside her. They chanted to welcome the deities and to invite all categories of the dead to attend the rite and receive the offerings. Following the above presentation of the purpose of the festival, the priests started summoning the subjects of the ritual, all the beings in the Six Realms. The scripture describes the atmosphere and the characters of each realm. The beings of each realm should depart and join the “heavenly gourmet meeting (*tianchuhui* 天廚會)” after being summoned. Meanwhile, the scripture particularly addresses how hard it is for the hungry ghosts to be released from their realm as well as the difficulty of undergoing reincarnation. “The dark pass of the underworld, the heavy *Yin* space of the nine lands, a prison surrounded by iron walls, bitter karma never stops.” The scripture shows prominent Buddhist impact. Indeed, the Chanhe school was developed in Fuzhou, combining the Complete Perfection Taoist ritual tradition from the White Cloud Taoist Temple in Beijing, as well as local musical classics and Buddhist teachings. The following liturgies were performed: *Rites of Purification* (*Yanjing Keyi* 演淨科儀), *Rites for the Elimination of Resentments* (of the Dead) (*Jieyuan Jing* 解冤經), the *Scripture of the Three Offices* (*Sanguan Ganying Jing* 三官感應經), and the *Three Pure Ones Litany* (*Dasanyuan Fachan* 大三元法懺). These rites were a fusion of Taoist and Buddhist rituals. In addition to the suffering beings in the Six Realms, the literati and common people in the ten directions were hailed as well. Furthermore, the officers in

charge of the underworld were required not to impose harsh penalties on the suffering ones.⁴⁶

After the Noon Offering stage, the staff of the Spirit Holy Palace presented incense to the deities. They kowtowed before the deities and then, some of them started to hiccup and went into trance. According to the transcriber (*bisheng* 筆生), Sunny, this was a sign showing the staff's sensitivity as well as their supernatural connections. All the participants followed the staff and walked in a line around the park. After arriving in the Temple, across from the park, they bowed and presented rice to the host deities. The participants held five sticks of incense, one for each incense burner, in addition to eight sticks of incense for the Buddha.

Figure 10. Ritual space in the Spirit Holy Palace



While the participants were parading around the park, the priests poured water, then offered rice, as a metaphor of the feeding of the hungry ghosts. Then, they burned several sticks of incense, paper money, as well as thicker sticks of incense. In addition, they threw away the ritual water (*fashui* 法水), as an offering to the gods. At this time, the core staff and participants already formed a path in pairs, leaving space in the middle. They passed an iron bucket, in which there was a bowl with lotus lamps placed on water, and passed it from the end of the temple to the front of the park.

⁴⁶ For more analysis of the Chinese imagination of the bureaucratic ten-direction underworld, please consult: 7-4-1: The Compassionate Father Lord Taiyi and the Rash Boy-God Nezha.

The priests walked through the path to the Temple and offered donations to the host deities. After doing so, they went back to the altar in the park. They led the participants in bowing to the Deities of the Five Camps (*wuying dashen* 五營大神) and started chanting the True Words of Exorcism (*qumo zhenyan* 驅魔真言) and the True Words for Subduing the Demons (*xiangmo zhenyan* 降魔真言).

Priest Ma started performing the key scriptures of the Chanhe School, including the *Complete Liturgy of Zhengyi Jade Yang Iron Jar Attending the Stand* (*Zhengyi Yuyang Tieguan Shangzuo Quanke* 正一玉陽鐵觀上座全科). She invited Lord Taiyi⁴⁷ to supervise the process of raising the spirits of the dead to the ritual space, where they could listen to the sutras, come to understand and convert to the true belief and achieve pure understanding of the Heaven and the Earth. Eventually, she expressed appreciation to all the deities for having descended to the ritual before they went back to the Heavenly Court. The Iron Jar Rite (*Tieguan Fahui* 鐵罐法會) took place late afternoon, before the closure of the entire ritual. The Iron Jar Ritual inherits the teaching of Sa Shoujian, one of the Taoist Heavenly Masters and employs the Buddhist idea of Flaming Mouth (Lee 1997, 281-283). An iron jar is a symbolic container in which the following objects are placed:

weapons to summon gods and expel evils, stamps on talismans, rulers to measure good and bad deeds, sceptre to call auspiciousness and repress evils, banners to give ghosts directions, *Yin* and *Yang* mirrors to identify gods and ghosts, swords in peach wood to expel demons, water container and rice container in which water and food are placed, willow branches to spread water, and lanterns to light up the path.

Priest Ma chanted and recited spells to lead the ghosts to go through the ritual process. The ghosts took a bath and put on new clothes. Through the priests' spells, (the symbolic) food increased to an amount that can feed the multitude. In addition, through the priests' spells, the ghosts' throats were opened and they could eat. Chanting plays a crucial role in *Chanhe* School rituals. According to Fong-Mao Lee (2009), chanters — who are mostly amateurs — provided their services in temples as well as in private homes on invitation. They deal with “auspicious sites” — meaning happy occasions — as well as “sites for salvation” — meaning funeral arrangements. Other than

⁴⁷ For more analysis of the deity the Lord *Taiyi*, please consult: 7-4-1: The Compassionate Father Lord *Taiyi* and the Rash Boy-God *Nezha*.

the routine class procedures performed in the morning, afternoon, and evening, the *Qionglong* Jade Dipper (*Qionglong Yudou* 穹隆玉斗) is one of the more solemn rituals out of the auspicious sites; mortuary rituals (*chaochang* 超場) and the Iron Jar Offering (*Tieguan shishi* 鐵罐施食) on the last day of Hungry Ghost Festival are two rituals that solemnly deliver merit and offering to the dead (Lee 2009). In the past, backstage music and written memorials have been enriched by local literati and “brought to a higher level of cultural standards (Lee 2009)”. The chanters can be invited to perform the Worship for Dippers (*Baidou* 拜斗) for the welfare of the communities on a regular basis. They can also be invited by temples, such as the Linshui Palace (*Linshuigong* 臨水宮), to celebrate the birthday of Lady Linshui (Chen Jinggu 陳靖姑).⁴⁸

The ritual finished around 17:00. A truck had been waiting outside the park, which was to carry all the paper money to the Taipei municipal incinerator in Beitou, where all of the jewelry boxes and tablets were sent to be burned.

9-3 Ritual Patrons

I interviewed several ritual participants and found two sharing similar stories in their lives: Little Ling and Ms. Liu were both sex workers before.

9-3-1 Ritual Patron 1: Little Ling

Countless Aborted Children; Casting Divine Blocks to Ask Gods (Nadiao Haizi Shubuqing, Zhijiao wen Shenming 拿掉孩子數不清 擲筊問神明)

Forty-five year old prostitute registered and appeased 13 fetus spirits (Sishiwusui Fengchen Nuzi Dengji Chaodu Shisange Yingling 45 歲風塵女子登記超渡 13 個嬰靈)

Little Ling, who lives in Taichung City, registered for the abortion ritual in the Lugang Ksitigarbha Temple (Lugang Dizangwang Miao 鹿港地藏王廟) *at the beginning of July 2008. She has had so many abortions that she cannot remember how many fetus spirits she should worship. Eventually she asked the god by casting divine blocks and confirmed that it was 13.*

Little Ling works in a brothel. She has a petite body, finely chiseled features,

⁴⁸ For more analysis of the deity Chen Jinggu, please consult: Chapter 8: Family/Multifunctional Ritual: the Lady Linshui Temple.

and flirtatious eyes. Obviously, she was a pretty woman when she was young. Now, she has darker skin, and is walking with a slightly hunched back, though she is still pretty and attractive. However, her beauty does not cover her vicissitudes of life. (Liu 2008)

The above is an excerpt of a news article. I contacted Little Ling through the Lugang Ksitigarbha Dizangwang Temple after reading the news. Little Ling agreed to give the interview, because “I want girls of the younger generation to know my story so that they do not make the same mistake” (Interview with Little Ling, Aug. 15, 2008).

Little Ling had her first abortion when she was 19 years old. Her boyfriend did not want the baby and asked her to have abortion, but she refused. Then the boyfriend disappeared. Without any support to raise the baby, she had no choice but to have an abortion. She lost her confidence in romance. Not long after the abortion, she became a sex worker. She was young and beautiful, so she was popular. One of the men liked her a lot and married her. She was pregnant again, and gave birth to a boy. However, her husband wanted her to “go back to work 13 days after my Caesarean section because he needed money!” She was disappointed and sad, so she left him. Her sister took care of the baby for her, and she continued to be a sex worker to make money.

Little Ling had numerous abortions. She considered contraception, but she believed pills were not good for the body. Her body rejected IUDs. Without any protection, she often got pregnant again, only a few months after her abortion. She had so many abortions that some OB/GYN doctors refused to perform the operation for her anymore. They even warned her: “aren’t you afraid that these children could be longing for their mother?” Eventually she was pregnant with her daughter and she decided not to have an abortion. However, she kept bleeding, and even a cough can cause serious bleeding. The OB/GYN checked her and told her the tissue of her uterus is too thin due to frequent abortions. The doctor asked her to stay hospitalized while being treated with highly dosed injection of hormones. Finally, her daughter was born safely.

Little Ling’s health, mood and job were not in good shape; she was wondering why. She believed she was a good person, so she did not understand why life treats her cruelly until some people told her that it was probably the consequences of her abortions. In addition, before attending the abortion ritual, she had been suffering from nightmares. As a result, she has attended several abortion rituals in Taichung and Kaohsiung; nonetheless, these rituals did not work for her. Little

Ling has been going to temples and shrines for ritual visits (*baibai*). Fortunately, one of the seniors in the temple understood her struggles and suggested that she should go to the Lugang Ksitigarbha Dizangwang Temple in order to appease the fetus spirits that she had aborted. She travelled to Changhua to attend the ritual. She prepared paper clothes and shoes, as well as sweets to offer the fetus spirits. She hand wrote the Sutra of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's Fundamental Vows 13 times.

Little Ling was finally able to be “in contact” with the fetus spirits and accomplished her wishes. She regrets having her abortions; she feels sorry for the decision. According to her, the fetus spirits spend a long time cultivating merit in order to be reborn as a human. Abortions terminate their lives; she made serious mistakes; she had been dreaming of the children constantly. She urges girls to cherish themselves; they should protect themselves carefully. They should not be reckless when relationships with their partners do not work out.

I called Little Ling several months after the interview, to ask how everything had been going. Her voice sounded very delighted: “Everything is going well! I’m glad I attended the ritual. I’m happy now.” She planned to attend the grand salvation ritual at the Lugang Ksitigarbha Dizangwang Temple again the following year.

9-3-2 Ritual Patron 2: Ms. Liu

Ms. Liu is originally from Tainan. Her mother divorced her father, who did not take care of his family, when Ms. Liu was a high school student. Due to economic hardship, the mother and Ms. Liu both worked as “dancing ladies” (*wunu* 舞女), waitresses accompanying patrons in a night club and sex workers until Ms. Liu’s mother married her second husband. The stepfather treated the mother and the daughter very well. Ms. Liu said that she loved and respected her stepfather very much.

Ms. Liu got married when she was very young. She had a daughter with her husband, but marriage did not go well. They got divorced and the husband received custody of their child. Ms. Liu has not seen her daughter very often and she does not complain about the situation, but her thoughts are with the girl.

Later, Ms. Liu got married again and it was the second time for both of them. Her husband had the custody of the daughter from his previous marriage. This girl is 6 months older than her own daughter and Ms. Liu loves her a lot. On the contrary, according to Ms. Liu, her husband is not close to his child, because “he is not very patient with kids.” When getting married, her mother-in-law told her that she “is not allowed” to have a child with her husband, because she should

“concentrate” on her step-daughter. Ms. Liu accepted it. In fact, she strongly agrees with her mother-in-law. She believes that if she has a child with her husband, in order to show she is a fair mother, she would hesitate to show her love to her child or behave strictly to the child, “which would make him or her a poor child.”

Nonetheless, other than the issue of the child, Ms. Liu does not get along with her mother-in-law very well, because she does not appreciate her mother-in-law’s controlling style. She does not like the fact that her mother-in-law regards her as an obedient daughter-in-law and that she should serve everyone in the husband’s family. Once she became so tired and angry with her husband’s family that she decided to return to her mother’s home in Tainan and take a rest for several months.

Ms. Liu attended the abortion ritual for two fetus spirits.

More than 12 years ago, when Ms. Liu was in her first marriage, she found that her period was late. Since her period was not very regular, she was not very concerned. She happened to go to a private shrine (*shenmingtan* 神明壇) with her stepfather, because her stepfather wanted to ask the god if she would give birth to a boy for her husband’s family. The god’s answer was that she is short of blood and she should go to see a doctor. After going home, she started feeling pain in her lower abdomen. When she arrived at the hospital, she felt so much pain that she could not walk anymore. After examining her, the doctor told her she had an ectopic gestation and sent her to the operation room.

Three years later, when Ms. Liu was in her second marriage, Ms. Liu became pregnant. She went to the clinic and asked the doctor to prescribe Mifepristone and Misoprostol for an abortion when she was 3-4 weeks pregnant. She recalled how painful it was. After taking the medication, she started having pain in her lower abdomen. She sat on the toilet bowl and kept bleeding. The process was bitter, so her husband felt anxious and sad. He took care of her after the abortion. He helped with all the household chores and cooking.

Since Ms. Liu married her husband and moved to Hsinchu, she has been going to the East Peace Palace to *baibai* with her mother-in-law on a regular basis. When she went to the East Peace Palace to *chaodu* her biological father, her father-in-law and her stepfather, she found some cans of powdered milk on the table where offerings were placed. She asked the staff of the Palace and learned the function of the abortion ritual. She asked the Palace if she could attend the ritual and the Palace told her she could come during the Hungry Ghost month.

In fact, fetus spirits are not new to Ms. Liu. When she was a child, she went to see a medium (尪姨 *angyi*) and, according to the medium, Ms. Liu's mother had two abortions. The aborted fetuses were Ms. Liu's brothers (elder and younger). Actually, when Ms. Liu was a child, she could "see" these boys. They invited her to hang out and play, until the loudspeaker of the village called her to go home. She described how the boys looked to other villagers, but nobody knew them. Ms. Liu said that she is sensitive to spirits. For example, once she was visiting a coworker with other coworkers in Tainan, she felt very sick in the apartment, with pressure on her heart and felt like vomiting. She could not stand the feeling anymore, so she invited everyone to leave and go to a teashop. Ms. Liu told her coworker that the apartment is not a good place to stay at and that she should leave as soon as possible. The coworker told her that the apartment is indeed haunted. People in the neighbourhood call it "the house of *yin* (*yinzhai* 陰宅)". She could feel someone standing beside the bed while she slept.

Although she has the ability to feel the spirits around her, Ms. Liu has never felt any signs of the fetus spirits. We talked about the popular images of fetus spirits represented by media, haunting and causing trouble. Ms. Liu said that, if that is how her fetus spirits are, then "they are not good children. They are headstrong (*renxing* 任性)."

9-4 Analysis

This section first examines the status of *Yingling* as ghosts within the categorization of gods, ghosts and ancestors in Chinese religion. Focused on the rites surrounding ghost, this section scrutinizes how ghosts are imagined and appeased due the fact that they act as marginal beings in the social structure. The transformation of human-ghost relationship is realized within such a symbolic system of rituals. Moreover, this section demonstrates how the Hungry Ghost Festival serves as a private and informal sphere where people of all classes are welcome to satisfy their spiritual and material needs during this carnival for menacing ghosts.

9-4-1 Gods, Ghosts, Ancestors and Those Who are In-Between

David K. Jordan (1972), Stephan Feuchtwang (1974) and Arthur P. Wolf (1978) analyze the Chinese supernatural structure based on its correspondence to the living world. The population of the dead is divided into two: worshipped and not worshipped (Wolf 1978, 154; Feuchtwang 1974, 119). They are further divided into three categories of supernatural beings: gods, ghosts and ancestors. These categories serve as symbolic constructions (Feuchtwang 1974, 116) and there are

social selection processes and mechanisms which determine who belongs to which category (Feuchtwang 1974, 119). These categories are embedded in a “social landscape” (Wolf 1978, 175) which reveals hierarchy in a human community. An individual’s identity and status within such a social landscape after death is determined by his/her identity and status within his/her community.

The first group — worshipped — is constituted of subcategories. Within a community, those who acted as governing officials in bureaucracy (Wolf 1978, 133) or those who acted virtuously (Jordan 1972) will become gods. Gods are heavenly rulers, which represent an “emperor and the empire” (Wolf 1978, 175). During a ritual, they are offered spirit money in gold (Feuchtwang 1974, 107; Harrell 1974, 194). Within a lineage, those who have descendants or siblings to take care of his/her tablets will become ancestors (Wolf 1978, 148; Jordan 1972). These ancestors are known to the family or lineage (Feuchtwang 1974, 119). Only a full lineage member is qualified to have a tablet since it represents the social status of the dead, and “those whose tablets cannot be placed there (an ancestral hall) are not full lineage members” (Ahern 1973, 116). In addition, ancestors are offered spirit money in silver and incense sticks in even numbers, while gods and ghosts receive in odd numbers (Feuchtwang 1974, 107). Gods and ancestors are good souls (Jordan 1972). According to Wolf, gods (government) and ancestors (families) are “productive social relationship[s]” (Wolf 1978, 175).

On the contrary, ghosts are souls that cannot fit in the subcategories above (Jordan 1972 year). The second group — not-worshipped — includes those who have nobody responsible for worshipping them because they do not have descendants, or they do not belong to a lineage, such as unmarried women (Wolf 1978, 149). Rituals have to be arranged in order to make sure these souls can be properly located in a lineage; otherwise, the souls become ghosts. Otherwise, ghosts are thought as a “heterogeneous category” whose members are “dangerous”, “destructive” (Wolf 1978, 175) and cause “pollution” (Wolf 1978, 179). Ghosts are outsiders (Feuchtwang 1974, 115; Wolf 1978, 175). They are either foreigners or strangers who invade the community (Feuchtwang 1974, 125), beggars who take advantage of the community (Wolf 1978, 171) or gangs of secret brotherhoods who manipulates local politics in the community (Feuchtwang 1974, 124). Those who die bad deaths (Harrell 1974, 205) and commit suicide (Katz 2009, 156) are believed to suffer in the underworld, too. A ghost stands at the disjunction between life and death (Feuchtwang 1974, 117). These souls are located at the “edge of the home community” (Feuchtwang 1974, 124) and are worshipped outside the house without any sophisticated funerals (Feuchtwang 1974, 113; Wolf

1978, 179). They are offered spirit money in silver (Feuchtwang 1974, 107; Harrell 1974, 194) and paper clothing. These souls are unknown to the community (Feuchtwang 1974, 119).

At the same time, there are two types of souls who are “in-betweens” and reside under the umbrella of a household as a social unit. The first type — ancestors — is very often portrayed in mixed images. They can be kind and caring and this is why ancestor worship is regarded as a ritual of obeisance (Wolf 1978, 159). However, ancestors can be offended by their descendants’ neglect and cause illness or misfortunes (Feuchtwang 1974, 119). In fact, Emily M. Ahern’s research even shows that ancestors are “fierce, often capricious, and occasionally malicious” (Ahern 1973, 199). Moreover, since ancestors are family-based souls, “one man’s ancestor is another man’s ghost” (Wolf 1978, 146). This mixed quality of ancestors is materialized in ritual spaces. Ancestors are regarded as insiders (Feuchtwang 1974, 115), so they are worshipped inside the home, meaning their tablets are placed on the domestic altar in the main room, during the New Year (Feuchtwang 1974, 114). However, at the same time, they are also worshipped outside in a public space during the Hungry Ghost festival (Feuchtwang 1974, 114). Another type of ambivalent category of souls are foundation spirits (*Dijizhu* 地基主) (Feuchtwang 1974, 114). They are “ghost landlords” of the house who are believed to stay at the threshold to the kitchen or in the kitchen (Feuchtwang 1974, 114). They are like ancestors, who are worshipped before New Year Eve’s family dinner. The appeasement functions as rent. Nonetheless, foundation spirits are worshipped inside the home “but not at the domestic altar” and they are only offered silver money (spirit money for ghosts) (Feuchtwang 1974, 114).

There are several types of ghosts who have an “intermediate status” (Harrell 1974, 195). Redeemed or honoured ghosts are loyal people who died without any descendants and are promoted to be “assistants of gods” and “controllers of ghosts” (Feuchtwang 1974, 125). In addition, C. Stevan Harrell investigates in what circumstances a ghost is able to become a god. Here is the list of “candidates” to become gods: unknown bones found and worshipped as *Iu Ieng Kong* (or *Youyinggong* 有應公) or *Tua Bong Kiong* (or *Damugong* 大墓公) (Harrell 1974, 205); those — mostly gang members — who died violent/bad deaths (Harrell 1974, 195 & 205); those who died without descendants (Harrell 1974, 195); Robin Hoods who robbed the rich to help the poor (Harrell 1974, 197); bones found on the beach (Harrell 1974, 202 & 203); bones of those killed in battles between Quanzhou and Changzhou immigrants in the 19th Century (Harrell 1974, 199 & 202); those killed by aborigines during the Han settlement (Harrell 1974, 201); spirits of

those killed by aborigines came to indirectly save a whole community (Harrell 1974, 201); eight men killed by Japanese colonizers in 1895 (Harrell 1974, 199); and gangs killed fighting the Japanese (Harrell 1974, 200).

People's worship and belief transforms these ghosts into gods (Harrell 1974, 196) and people's neglect transforms these gods back to un-worshipped ghosts (Harrell 1974, 202). These gods are believed to be very efficacious (Harrell 1974, 199 & 201). In addition, they are willing to fulfill worshippers' wishes — often unethical — if they are paid (through offerings) (Harrell 1974, 194 & 201). According to C. Stevan Harrell's observation, normally the ghost-gods' shrines were built in "out-of-the-way" places when the amount of bones reaches a good number (Harrell 1974, 195). Unlike gods, these ghost-gods have neither a regular ritual to worship them, nor they are worshipped during the Hungry Ghost Festival (Harrell 1974, 195). They are sometimes offered spirit money in gold but also sometimes in silver. However, these ghost-gods do not always enjoy worship like gods.

As shown above, symbols emerge out of experience. The social landscape admits and rejects membership based on interests. The world of the dead is in fact the "extensions of life and symbols of life" (Feuchtwang 1974, 116). Stephan Feuchtwang claims: "Within the metaphor of gods and *kui* (or *gui*, a ghost) itself, the *kui* in purgatory as an unstructured mass are contrastingly paired with the gods' structure, a structure that is, moreover, a hierarchy and the organ of domination over the *kui*" (Feuchtwang 1974, 128). Heaven, the living world (the *yang* world) and the earth prisons (the *yin* world) form a social structure that stand along with the living world (Feuchtwang 1974, 116). A god or an ancestor should be remembered, but a ghost is a threat to the social structure so he/she should be forgotten (Feuchtwang 1974, 117).

9-4-2 Convergence between Buddhist and Taoist Imaginations

It is noteworthy to mention the integration between Buddhism and Taoism in China, particularly the imagination toward the underworld as well as mortuary rituals and liturgies. Stephen F. Teiser claims: "Fashioned jointly out of ancient Indian materials, central Asian tastes, and Chinese traditions, within a few centuries the new world view would conquer the Chinese imagination and form the standard view of the afterlife in modern times" (Teiser 1988a, 434). Teiser stresses that, despite the diversity in origins, these foreign and local traditions were able to form a "single comprehensive system" which allows for a "variety of ritual settings" at the same time (Teiser 1988a, 459). Indeed, Edward L. Davis' research shows that there was a "convergence"

between the most popular forms of mortuary ritual, Retreat of Water and Land (*Shuiluzhai* 水陸齋)” (Buddhism) and “Retreat of the Yellow Register (*Huangluzhai* 黃籙齋) - during the Song dynasty (Davis 2001, 172). For example, Buddhist and Taoist elements can alternate in one ritual (Davis 2001, 175) and professionals from both institutions can perform together (Davis 2001, 176). These two forms of rituals share similarities in structure, including purification of a ritual space, summoning gods and ghosts and rites of deliverance (Davis 2001, 172). They also share similarities in imaginations including attacking the hell, opening a path to the underworld, releasing the dead from sin, entertaining the dead in the ritual space, and eventually converting the dead (Davis 2001, 172-173). Chinese vernacular tradition has seeped into both Buddhist and Taoist forms of mortuary ritual; for example, Taoist exorcism, i.e., spirit possession (Davis 2001, 179). As Stephen R. Bokenkamp warns: “Buddhist accounts of rebirth and the afterlife did not come to be accepted in China by default, or through ideological poverty, or by fiat. Instead, they were gradually adapted into pre-existing Chinese conceptions of how to deal with the dead because they helped to solve particular problems among the living” (Bokenkamp 2007, 10).⁴⁹ In other words, Buddhist and Taoist rites serve as platforms which carry out the “preexisting Chinese conception”. For example, Paul Katz (2009) claims the mortuary rituals reveal the “judicial continuum” embedded in the Chinese ideology of justice, or Chinese legal culture, which was first formed by Taoism (Katz 2009, xi, 2 & 5). According to Katz, religion is the source for this type of imagination: “Chinese conceptions of the underworld feature chthonic deities who serve as officials in the afterlife while also functioning like earthly bureaucrats in using legal procedures to judge the deceased” (Katz 2009, 27).

9-4-3 Feeding the Dead

The dead and the living are believed to be still connected with each other after death in Chinese context. “[T]hey (the dead) helped to solve particular problems among the living” (Bokenkamp 2007, 10). Therefore, a mortuary ritual not only serves for commemoration, but it also attempts to satisfy the needs of the dead in order to achieve a harmonious relationship between the dead and the living. If the ritual fails to be performed, consequences will be dire. As a result, Stephen R. Bokenkamp points out that anxiety is the essential motive that shapes the goals and practices of the cult of the dead. “Anxieties projected onto the dead most often concern fears that

⁴⁹ Stephen R. Bokenkamp’s analysis of anxieties concerning the status of the dead in the afterlife is further analyzed in Chapter 9: Supplemental Ritual.

descendants will fail to carry out the memorial services that would deliver the dead from purgatory” (Bokenkamp 2007, 46). An appropriate funeral protects the dead and the living at the same time.

While analyzing the distinction between ancestors and ghosts, Maurice Freedman clarifies that if the deceased are worshipped (ancestors), they are able to enjoy food and money for survival. If they are not worshipped (ghosts), they will suffer from hunger so that they haunt for material needs (Freedman 1958, 88). As such, it is necessary to satisfy the material needs of the dead in order to prevent the haunting of ghosts. The major activities during the Hungry Ghost Festival are to invite the ghosts with lanterns, as well as to feed and wash them (Feuchtwang 2010, 131). Ms. Liu saw powdered milk in the Eastern Peace Palace, which was a popular type of offering along with snacks, toys and spirit money for abortion rituals. Moreover, since ghosts are selfish and ruthless like gangs, offerings such as cigarettes and beer can be presented in order to please them (Wolf 1978, 178).

In spite of the differences in forms of rituals, the two rituals observed in this chapter share various aspects in common. They both portray the Underworld Hell as well as suffering hungry ghosts. Moreover, chanting plays a crucial role.⁵⁰ Furthermore, both rituals involve material offerings and food feeding (Flaming Mouth in the Eastern Peace Palace and Iron Jar in the Spirit Holy Palace). Xue Yu analyzes the three functions in a Chinese Buddhist mortuary ritual, which are: “(1) to cancel out the evil karma of the dead; (2) to enlighten the dead with the Dharma and (3) to release the dead from suffering through sacred words that feed foods and transfer merits to the dead” (Yu 2013, 353). In addition, the feast does not only benefit those suffering in the limbo, but also benefits the presenters with abundant blessings from the Buddha (Cole 2013, 89).

As Xue Yu points out, the introduction of the concept of Flaming Mouth to China reinforced the imagination — a hungry ancestor — toward the dead. Moreover, it reinforces the belief that filial descendants should repay their ancestors in order to prevent them from suffering (Yu 2013, 353). The other way around, food offering rituals in both Buddhism and Taoism enriched mortuary rituals and ancestor worship in China. Furthermore, ancestors also need merit. Chanting allows the merit to be distributed to ancestors and other ghosts, which will further boost merit. This ritual is regarded as “a means of insurance” (Yu 2013, 353). Hence, “traditional Chinese and

⁵⁰ For more analysis on the power of chanting, please consult Chapter 10: Buddhist Ritual 1 and Chapter 11: Buddhist Ritual 2.

Buddhist beliefs in the afterlife were mutually reinforcing” (Yu 2013, 353).

9-4-4 Hungry Ghost Festival: a Disruptive Community

It is clear that the Hungry Ghost Festivals in the Eastern Peace Palace and Holy Spirit Palace are ritual spaces where ungodly beings were present. The rituals were displays of the unstructured mass: ghosts, *Yingling* (child ghosts), ancestors (in-between), foundation spirits (in-between), creditors from one’s past lives (in-between, since they were normal people who were offended by the deceased), animal spirits (ghosts), and victims killed during the attack of natural disasters (ghosts who died bad deaths).

Ghosts should be forgotten. However, there are occasions when a ghost is recalled, one of which is the Hungry Ghost Festival (*pudu*) (Feuchtwang 2010, 131). The Hungry Ghost Festival is a regional ritual, and the unit is neighbourhood. This ritual used to be sponsored by guilds of the neighbourhood for “guilds were making a civic contribution to their section of town or city” (Feuchtwang 1974, 113). Stephan Feuchtwang observes: “All performances of this rite renew and redraw a locality, calling the unremembered dead which could be haunting that locality into it, and expelling them away again in the end” (Feuchtwang 2010, 131). This ritual process enhances the sense of a territory through appeasing, educating and banishing the threat to the community. To further assure the safety of the community, “between the territorial group and the mass of ghosts, are single guardian gods and individual [saviour] gods” (Feuchtwang 1974, 116). Ms. Liu attended the Hungry Ghost Festival at the Eastern Peace Palace because she became a member of the territorial community after getting married. A communal ritual serves as a driving force which connects the residents within the region, as well as the communities within the nation. The power of religious symbols allows people in different regions to unite and obtain a unitary identity.⁵¹

Since ghosts represent “socially and politically marginal beings” (Weller 1985, 46) threatening the ruling power in the social landscape, governments in Taiwan, including the Qing government, Japanese colonizers, as well as KMT, attempted to repress the Hungry Ghost Festival, a venue where ghosts were present, active and served. However, Robert P. Weller explains how the popular interpretation of ghosts allows the Hungry Ghost Festival remain prominent in Taiwan in spite of numerous interferences (Weller 1985). The determining hierarchy of gods, ghosts and ancestors serves as a symbolic system which “sets [the] limit on the possible meaning of ghosts,” i.e. marginal beings (Weller 1985, 47). However, according to Weller, this symbolic system allows

⁵¹ For more analysis on how communal rituals reinforce the sense of identity, please consult 2-1: A Rite of Passage.

for grassroots interpretation: “[t]he interpretation of ghosts changed as people’s experience of social marginality changed” (Weller 1985, 47). Along with social changes, old marginal beings are replaced with new marginal beings (Weller 1985, 47). This social landscape is able to adapt and continue.

Robert P. Weller’s review of the transformation in the rite “robbing of the lonely ghosts” from pre-modern to modern Taiwan shows how interpretative turns occur along with political and economic changes (Weller 1985, 50). “Robbing the lonely ghosts” normally took place on the last day of the Hungry Ghost Festival, in which abundant food was placed in the ritual space in order to feed invisible hungry ghosts. However, as Stephan Feuchtwang describes vividly: “women, children, and some men, usually sick, old, and poor, scramble for the small cakes and coins scattered by the priests in this ceremony, collecting them almost as if they were themselves *kui* (ghosts)” (Feuchtwang 1974, 109). Most of the time, the participants, often “low-end” population, were even more aggressive than hungry ghosts (Weller 1985, 47 & 53). Similar findings are seen among the “equivocal” (Harrell 1974, 198) and “ambiguous” (Harrell 1974, 201) ghost-gods. C. Stevan Harrell claims that very often the worshippers understand the ghost-gods are not necessarily “legitimate” (Harrell 1974, 201). In fact, the worshippers are not legitimate themselves in the community, either, as they are “gamblers, fugitives, illicit lovers, people seeking revenge, and all other types who were engaged in illicit activity” (Harrell 1974, 198).

Robert P. Weller divides the images of these robbers into two periods: violent ghosts (1860-1945 AD) (Weller 1985,) and pitiful ghosts (1945-1980 AD) (Weller 1985, 54). During the first period, Taiwan was experiencing drastic economic change: an agricultural mode of production was switching to international trade and commercialization (Weller 1985, 51). Manufactures took over land and a new labour class emerged out of risky market economy (Weller 1985, 52). These proletariats constituted the marginality (Weller 1985, 52). Meanwhile, conflicts between the Han and aborigines under the weak Qing government (Weller 1985, 51), as well as conflicts between Taiwanese and the Japanese colonial governments, shaped the violent personality of the population. Hence, during this period the ghost-robbers were beggars, vagabonds and ruffians, who were greedy and fierce (Weller 1985, 49). The Japanese efforts of industrialization in Taiwan gradually led the society into modernization from 1930 (Weller 1985, 52). During the second period, Taiwanese society turned into a mature market economy and the shaky labour class was replaced by an aging population. The older generation resided in a household where sons and

daughters-in-law were financially and intellectually independent. Their authority declined and conflicts between two generations isolated them (Weller 1985, 54). Understandably, “kinship marginality replaced political marginality” (Weller 1985, 54). The ghost robbers became old women and children (Weller 1985, 47).

During the two periods, the spiritual structure of gods, ghosts and ancestors embedded in material conditions has never been able to be replaced by any governmental propaganda (Weller 1985, 49). Moreover, a new effective interpretation of the status of ghosts has never been created (Weller 1985, 54). The Hungry Ghost Festival continues to flourish despite of changes in forms and scale. Robert P. Weller claims that this Festival serves as a “sphere of resistance to state institutions and ideologies” (Weller 1985, 47).

9-4-5 Who are the Marginal Beings?

Both informants of this chapter were sex workers. Little Ling’s story shows how a sex worker is exposed to high risks about sexual health issues. Studies show that these health issues include STDs, HIV, and reproductive issues, such as frequent pregnancies due to inadequate contraceptive methods (Duff et al., 2011, 61). Research conducted by the Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care, Faculty of Medicine, part of the Chinese University of Hong Kong found that more than 50% of its 293 subjects had had abortions, and only 52% of the abortions were performed in licensed clinics. Meanwhile, sex workers who are elder, married, or sex workers who are willing to abandon contraceptive methods when being paid more or requested by the clients are more prone to have abortions (*Yixue* Online 2006).

As commonly seen in many regions, sex workers have been suffering from “stigma” and “shame” (Ding 2006, 327). For example, feminists in Taiwan argue that the social state of mind, instead of being sex workers itself, serves as the major factor to stigmatization (Ding 2006, 327). This state of mind locates a sex worker in the “private and informal spheres” since sex outside of marriage is ridiculed in society (Ding 2006, 327). Within a “bourgeoisie society” (Hsu 2013, 275), sex for non-reproductive purposes, such as pleasure, income or service challenges the normative form of man-woman relationships (Ding 2006, 327). Acting as a sex worker also violates the ideal of motherhood (Hsu 2013, 277, 279-281). Sex workers are, therefore, regarded as a “menace” to society in Taiwan (Hsu 2013, 274) and they ought to be socially segregated. Various laws in Taiwan have criminalized prostitution. Laws such as the Police Offence Law (Hsu 2013, 276), Child and Youth Sexual Transaction Prevention Act (CYSTPA) (Hsu 2013, 273) and the Social Order

Maintenance Act (Hsu 2013, 273) allow the government to detain and educate sex workers. They should go through vocational training in correctional institutions (Hsu 2013, 273).

As shown above, the Hungry Ghost Festival is a “private and informal” sphere where people are able to satisfy their personal needs, even these desires are believed to be “menacing” to the society. Meanwhile, being situated in liberal politics and a market economy like Taiwan, new participants — new metropolitan residents who are away from their hometown community— have been joining political and economic marginal beings in the Hungry Ghost Festival. Modernization and urbanization generate this new social class who are no longer loyal members of a kinship or lineage. For example, Little Ling travelled to the Lugang Ksitigarbha Dizangwang Temple because the temple is said to be very efficacious. This class deals with emotional struggles alone, with a pet or a partner, or clients, coworkers, friends and acquaintances in new styles of interpersonal relationship. Hungry Ghost Festivals provide these modern worshippers with an opportunity to revisit their relations with family and partners (ancestors, *Yingling* and animal spirits), ownership of properties (foundation spirits), disputes in all social circles (creditors), or concerns about life-threatening disasters (victims killed by a typhoon). A ghost disintegrates a community into families (Weller 1985, 48) and even individuals, as seen nowadays. Ghosts flourish in human desires and worship. Ghosts also symbolize human desires, even if these desires are not legitimate or ethical in the eyes of bourgeois society, such as abortion, or a hierarchical society, the loss of an animal. Since they are ghosts or in-betweens, they are able to be pacified through feeding. Ghost worship serves the purposes of commemoration and utilitarian motivation at the same time.

Along with the decreasing number of children in families, the emergence of infant education, and the progress of medical technology, fetus/children have gained more and more visibility in the personal and family lives of a woman. To allow the fetus spirit to be identified with a tablet is to recognize his/her social status to some extent. An unborn fetus is officially recognized as a ghost. The walls of tablets in the temples during the Ghost Month festival are the hint to discover the social change in Taiwan.

9-5 Conclusion

The spiritual beings in Chinese cosmology have often been divided into gods, ghosts and ancestors by scholars. The structure remains the same nowadays, but the scope has expanded. Along with social changes in Taiwan, *Yingling* have been included in the various types of ghosts.

Moreover, the composition of worshippers has grown, too. Hungry Ghost Festivals organized by both the Eastern Peace Palace in Hsinchu and the Spirit Holy Palace in Taipei indicate that the temples provide women with a space to satisfy their private and informal needs. The Ghost Month Festival is often interpreted as a communal carnival invoking prosperity of the country and peace in the neighbourhood. However, fetus spirits stand in the corner of this image and voice an alternative message to the viewers. The ritual serves as an arena where the marginal population can create their own narratives.

Chapter 10

Buddhist ritual 1: the Buddhist Hongshi Academic Institute

Chapters 10 and 11 analyze abortion ritual in Buddhist style. The Ksitigarbha Dizang Bodhisattva is honored as the savior to relieve the *Yingling* in both rituals. In spite of being Buddhist, these two rituals differ sharply in the form, purposes and discourses. Master Shih Chaohwei/Chaohwei (Chapter 10) and Master Haitao (Chapter 11) are both influenced by Master Yinshun (with the former officially trained and the later claiming to read his books).⁵² Both are highly concerned about animal protection. However, their approaches, styles of ritual as well as the discourses differ significantly. The two rituals organized by Master Chaohwei and Master Haitao can be seen as the two representative models of Buddhist abortion rituals in Taiwan.

10-1 Background information on Buddhist conceptions of the fetus: Buddhist Embryology

Therefore, Nanda, whatever comprises birth, [namely] the arising of matter, its subsistence, its growth, and its emergence, the arising, subsistence, growth, and emergence of feeling, conceptualization, conditioning forces, and consciousness, [all that] is suffering. (Garbhāvākṛāntisūtra; T. 1451: 254a22–29; Peking 124a4–7; Derge 257.6–258.2; T. 317: 887a15–20). Translated and quoted by Robert Kritzer 2008, 82).

⁵² Buddhist reformist Master Taixu (太虛, 1898–1947) as well as his student Master Yinshun (印順 1906–2005) were key figures of Humanistic Buddhism (*Renjian Fojiao* 人間佛教) in modern Taiwan and China. Master Taixu's reform targeted *jingchan* (經懺, "penance through the recitation of sutras" in Dharma Assemblies (Yu 2013, 352)), which aims to erase the karma of the dead, educate the dead and save the dead from suffering and hunger. (Yu 2013, 353)). *Jingchan* has been a popular duty of Buddhist monks and nuns since the Ming (Yu 352). Master Taixu argues that *jingchan* "constituted superstitious and feudal relics (Yu 2013, 355)". Furthermore, heavy *jingchan* duty as paid labor caused corruption within sangha (Heise 2012, 228; Yu 2013, 355). Master Yinshun further established a new paradigm for cultivation of the sangha. The idea that we, including monks, nuns, lay Buddhist and humans, are able to acquire Buddhahood through human intelligence and practices within a humanly life, serves as the core of *Renjian Fojiao*. Here is the definition of *Renjian Fojiao* demonstrated by Bhikṣu Changtzu: "As humans, we can purify ourselves to perfection. This perfect state is Buddhahood, and the way to cultivate oneself to perfection is with the practices of a bodhisattva. A bodhisattva is a being who aspires towards Buddhahood. (Changtzu 2017, 25)." With the reform, Master Taixu and Master Yinshun are seen as "part of a larger reorientation in the self-perception of Chinese Buddhists" (Bingenheimer 2009, 256). Master Yinshun claims that the Hungry Ghost Festival not only delivers the dead, but also strongly requires the living to conduct themselves appropriately, i.e., by doing good deeds (Heise 2012, 228-229). Hence, in Taiwan, "Buddhist modernism is largely responsible for the disentanglement of Buddhist monks from what is now considered a Taoist or folk religion" (Heise 2012, 233).

A detailed demonstration of the development of the embryo is found in the following Sutra *Garbhāvākṛāntisūtra* (*Rutaijing* 入胎經)”. This sutra has three translated versions in Chinese Buddhism and one version in Tibetan Buddhism:

Table 8. Sutra *Garbhāvākṛāntisūtra* and its translations

Title and Taishō Tripiṭaka Index	Dynasty	Translator and Collection
<i>Garbhavakrānti</i> , <i>Foshuo baotaijing</i> 佛說胞胎經[Sutra Spoken by the Buddha on the Womb and Embryo; T317]	Western Jin	Tran. by Dharmarakṣa (Zhufahu 竺法護) of the State of Rouzhi (月氏)
<i>Foweī Anan shuo chutaihui</i> 佛為阿難 說處胎會 [Sutra on Abiding in the Womb on Pregnancy Spoken by the Buddha to Ānanda; T11n0310_055]	Tang Dynasty	Trans. by Bodhiruci 菩提流 支, in Vol. 55, <i>Maharatnakuta Sutra</i> , <i>Dabao ji jing</i> 大寶積經 [Scripture Great Accumulation of Treasures; T310]
<i>Garbhāvākṛāntisūtra</i> , <i>Foshuo rutai canghui</i> 佛說入胎藏會 [Sutra on Entering the Womb Spoken by the Buddha; T. 310 n. 14]	Tang Dynasty	Trans. by Yijing 義淨. in Vol. 56 and 57, <i>Maharatnakuta Sutra</i> , <i>Dabao ji jing</i> 大寶積經 [Scripture Great Accumulation of Treasures; T310] and in Vol. 12 and 12, <i>Mūlasarvāstivāda</i> <i>Vinaya</i> , <i>Genben shuo yiqie</i> <i>youbu pinaiye zashi</i> 根本 說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 [Various Matters of the

		Vinaya of the Mūla Sarvāstivāda School; T1451]
Fowei Anan suoshuo rutaijing 佛為阿難所說入胎經 [Sutra on Entering the Womb Spoken by the Buddha to Ānanda]	Tibetan Buddhism	

Source: Cheng 2005, 1-2; Andreeva and Steavu 2016, 42-43.

The *Garbhāvākṛāntisūtra* describes the week-by-week embryonic development for 38 weeks (Kritzer 2008, 73), which was described as the most “dramatic” narration of the process of rebirth (Kritzer 2008, 76). For Buddhism, life does not begin at the moment of conception. Instead, it is part of the ongoing process of birth and rebirth, so “the process of rebirth begins at the moment of death” (Kritzer 2008, 73). After death, life continues through the intermediate being/existence/state (*shen* 神 or *zhongyou* 中有, or *antarābhava* in Sanskrit, Kritzer 2008, 78; Choo 2012, 195). This intermediate existence enters a mother's womb because a human's body is a desired tool for cultivation for the sake of eternal salvation (Cheng 2005, 3). Conception, just like death, is fundamentally determined by karmic causes and conditions. There is an adequate karmic relationship between the parents and the child. The accumulation of karma connects the man and the woman with the intermediate being and make them parents and child (Cheng 2005, 1-2; Kritzer 2008, 78; Choo 2012, 195). Meanwhile, other principal and subsidiary causes should all be ready in order to achieve conception and pregnancy (*yinyuan juzu* 因緣具足) (Shi Chaohwei 1994). First, the mother is fertile, which means she is at the proper time of her menstrual cycle. Second, the father and the mother's reproductive organs are clean and healthy. Third, of course, they have intercourse (Kritzer 2008, 78). Moreover, the intermediate being should be present at the moment of the intercourse due to the parents' "defiled thought (lustful thought)" (Kritzer 2008, 78). Here is Buddhism's illustration of the interaction between the three parties (the mother, the father, the intermediate being):

The intermediate being sees the intercourse of the parents (humans or animals) who have a karmic connection to it. A desire arises in it and draws it to them. First there

is a confusing perception arising targeting the semen and the blood: it (the intermediate being) does not understand this is the intercourse between its parents. The confusion makes it believe that it is the intercourse between it and the parent, and this understanding creates greed and love. If it is going to be born as a girl, it has the desire toward the father and hopes the mother be away; on the contrary, if it is going to be born as a boy, it has a sexual desire toward the mother and hopes the father be away. It can see nothing but the counterpart they want to have intercourse with. Based on the desire it can only see the body of the parent (of the opposite sex) and approaches the parents. Then it gradually cannot see the body but only the genitals (*Nannu genmen* 男女根門). Hence it is caught (*ju'ai* 拘礙) and enters the uterus. (Shih Chaohwei 2004)

Scholars agree that this conceptive process is a Freudian style of parent-child relationship (Shih Chaohwei 2004; Kritzer 2008, 80; Choo 2012, 195). When the parents' pleasure achieves the extreme, they eject a drop of thick liquid, semen from the father and blood from the mother (*gechu yidi nonghou jingxue* 各出一滴濃厚精血) and the two drops blend. The blend resides in the mother's womb in the shape of a fatty lump (Shih Chaohwei 2004). Following the conception period, the intermediate being disappears and transforms into a new life called *kalala* (*jieluolan* 羯羅藍) (Shih Chaohwei 2004; Kritzer 2008, 81). *Kalala* is "formed on the basis of the semen and blood but with the cooperation of various causes and conditions" (Kritzer 2008, 81). The following causes and conditions closely influence the material development of the embryo. "Earth contributes hardness; water, wetness; fire, hotness; and wind, fluidity. (*weizhu jianzhe, ruanshi shuizhong, renuan huozhong, qixi fengzhong* (謂諸堅者, 軟濕水種, 熱煖火種, 氣息風種)" (T11n0317_p 0886c06 (00) (translated by Kritzer 2008, 81) Karma prepares the causes and conditions so that the embryo is able to develop. Otherwise, "[i]f there is earth without water, the *kalala* will dry up and fall apart, like a handful of dry flour or ashes" (Kritzer 2008, 81).

Gestation is a suffering process for the embryo (Kritzer 2008, 82; Choo 2012, 198). The womb is an oppressive, hot and filthy environment, while numerous winds (*feng* 風) with imaginative names that rise and shape the embryo. The body- the eyes, tongue, organs, joints, muscles, the tendons and blood vessels- gradually develop and form during the gestation (Kritzer 2008, 84; Choo 2012, 198). In 19th week, sight, sound, smell and taste senses are acquired (Kritzer 2008, 84; Choo 2012, 198). Flesh and bones grow during the 20th week (Kritzer 2008, 85; Choo

2012, 198) and skin develops during the 21st (Kritzer 2008, 85). Then the fetus is able to make a sound within the 22nd week (Choo 2012, 198). The 26th and the 27th weeks are the time during which the fetus faces "the consequences of its karmas", by which its temperament, as well as the imperfections of the body and mind, are determined (Choo 2012, 198). If the karma is bad: "[the fetus'] attributes will all be the opposite of what is desirable in the world into which it will be reborn; it will have various disabilities, such as deafness, and even its relatives will hate it. If the fetus has done good things in a previous life, the opposite will happen" (Kritzer 2008, 85). Furthermore, "[i]f the fetus is male, he will squat on the mother's right side, his hands covering his face, facing his mother's back. If the fetus is female, she will squat on the mother's left side, her hands covering her face, facing her mother's belly" (Kritzer 2008, 86). Following this stage, the fetus grows eight emotions ("mistaken ideas"), which occurs during the 28th week (Kritzer 2008, 87; Choo 2012, 198).

Due to the tight distance between the fetus and the mother, the fetus is sensitive to the quality, the temperature, the taste and the flavour of the food that the mother eats (Kritzer 2008, 86; Choo 2012, 198). Furthermore, the mother's movements, including sex, impacts the fetus (Kritzer 2008, 86; Choo 2012, 198). As the fetus' external features have been completed, it gradually feels unhappy in the womb and is eager to escape. In the 37th week, it begins to believe that the womb is as filthy, stinky and dark as a prison (Kritzer 2008, 87; Choo 2012, 198). Finally, being led by a wind, the fetus starts to move toward the vagina, and following another wind, "compelled by the force of karma" (Kritzer 2008, 87), the fetus is born. The struggling process of birth causes severe pain to the mother, but it is also accompanied by the mother's great kindness to her child (Choo 2012, 198).

What is noteworthy is that Buddhism acknowledges that the embryo/fetus has consciousness ("all memory of their past lives" (Kritzer 2008, 74)) during the entire pregnancy. However, this consciousness is lost due to the pain caused by birth. Like gestation, birth is also a painful process for the fetus, called "suffering at birth" (*janmaduḥkha*) (Kritzer 2008, 74). The womb and vagina are so hot, repressive, and painful to the fetus that its consciousness in utero disappears. Hence, ordinary people are predetermined to be ignorant and suffering (Kritzer 2008, 74). On the contrary, the Buddha was exceptional, being able to maintain his consciousness and to achieve enlightenment (Kritzer 2008, 74). Yet, at the same time, this type of consciousness is not fully intact during the pregnancy. According to the Sutra's sophisticated description of the

psychological and emotional progress at each stage of the embryonic development, Jessey J.C. Choo claims that the embryo/fetus “is becoming increasingly aware of its predicament as it physically matures” (Choo 2012, 200). This process of development eventually allows the fetus to feel pain out of suffering. Based on this idea of “developing consciousness”, Chih-Ming Cheng asserts that the Buddhist interpretation of the processes of conception, gestation and birth is not merely a fatalist idea. Instead, the emotional, intellectual, moral and physical conditions of the parents are highly emphasized for the sake of the fetal development, which is a type of “eugenic teaching” (Cheng 2005, 27).

Based on the above, Jessey J.C. Choo suggests that the mother’s body, behaviour, as well as her style of education, determine how her child will turn out. On the contrary, the father has “little control” and “little input” (Choo 2012, 214). In addition, gestation and birth stages are other source with which to examine the mother-child relationship in Chinese Buddhist embryology. The mother and the child both experience severe pain and suffering, while the father seems to be absent in the entire process, except during conception (Choo 2012, 201). Though the physical and mental formation of the fetus is highly determined by karma, the mother has been always there to accompany the child while risking her health and life. Even after childbirth, she continues to be a caregiver. These ideas inevitably lead to the appeal of filial piety in medieval China (Choo 2012, 202).

10-2 The Figure: Master Shih Chaohwei

Master Chaohwei was the founder of Buddhist Hongshi Academic Institute (Fojiao Hongshi Xueyuan 佛教弘誓學院). She was born and raised in Myanmar (Zeng 2018). When she turned 8, she was brought to Taiwan by her Chinese parents due to the anti-Chinese Ne Wen power. She continued her education and later was admitted by the Department of Chinese at the National Taiwan Normal University (Zeng 2018). In her 3rd year of University, she was tonsured to become a nun (*chujia* 出家) while continuing her studies. Master Chaohwei is an active Buddhist scholar in Taiwan. As a student of Master Yinshun, she was the founder of the Buddhist Hongshi Institute in Taoyuan county, aiming to promote the studies of Buddhism and Master Yinshun’s philosophy. In addition, she is currently the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science as well as the Chair of the Department of Religious Studies of the Hsuan Chuang University in Hsinchu City (Zeng 2018). She has also published books on Buddhist theory and history and she is acquainted with the

academic circle in Taiwan.

Master Chaohwei has been involved in social movements constantly since the 1980s. She supports LGBT rights, human rights, animal protection and environmentalism. Serving as the chair of Life Conservationist Association in the 90s, she and her colleagues contributed to the legislation of the Animal Protection Law. She even married a lesbian couple in 2012 (Zeng 2018). Furthermore, as a previous leader of the Protecting Buddhism Corps of BAROC (Buddhist Association of the Republic of China), she has been working enthusiastically against stigmatization of Buddhism in media since the 1980s (C. F. Shih & S. Shih 2009; Zeng 2018). Moreover, Master Chaohwei is a feminist. She strongly opines that the Eight Garudhammas (the Eight Rules of Respect, *Bajingfa* 八敬法) which inferiorize nuns in the monastery should be abrogated (Zeng 2018). She challenged the Dalai Lama on gender hierarchy within the monastic order when he visited Taiwan in 2001, which pushed him to call for a meeting of Tibetan and Southeastern Asian Buddhist representatives (Zeng 2018). In 2018, the “#MeToo” campaign arose in Chinese Buddhist institutions and scandals of sexual harassments were disclosed to the public. Master Chaohwei wrote an article to denounce the patriarchal structure and organizational closure in contemporary Chinese Buddhism (Zeng 2018). All in all, Master Chaohwei has been acting as an advanced and adventurous Buddhist figure known by society.

Master Chaohwei is well aware of the debates between feminist and religious groups on abortion in Taiwan. Nonetheless, she claims that either of the two poles, whether it be the fetus’ right to life or the woman’s right to choose, can result in the situation of “morality kills” if they go too far, to the extreme (Interview with Master Chaohwei, Jul. 31, 2008). Optimally, the two should be protected at the same time. However, if one of them has to be sacrificed (for example, if a pregnant woman gives up the fetus in order to live (*qiusheng* 求生), she should not be excessively blamed due to her morality (Interview with Master Chaohwei, Jul. 31, 2008). At the same time, Master Chaohwei is not a pro-choice activist. She has been defending the principle of respect for life. The distribution and screening of the American-made anti-abortionist documentary, “The Eclipse of Reason” in Taiwan in early 2000s caused harsh debates between feminist and religious groups.⁵³ Master Chaohwei comments in an article: “it is the truth [of abortion] despite the frightening images” (C. Shih 2004). Feminist groups argued that a religious group distributed the

⁵³ For more analysis of the screening of this documentary and the accompanying debates, please consult Chapter 4: Voices.

documentary based on their anti-abortion motives. Master Chaohwei responded: “Didn’t the feminist group strongly oppose the documentary based on its motives, too?” (C. Shih, 2004). She does not agree with feminists that the images of abortion should be hidden or embellished from the public. Rather, during the debate, neither side should stop the other from presenting supporting material (C. Shih, 2004). Master Chaohwei has also been working closely with Catholic activists as well as other Buddhist institutions in the Legislative Yuan, lobbying the government to institutionalize women’s 3-day consideration period before abortion into the Eugenics and Health Protection Law. For the ongoing debates on the consideration period, Master Chaohwei argues that the consideration period is a means for women to exercise their autonomy - a key quality to ethics - by means of providing them with sufficient information, knowledge and time. This means is particularly important to women from disadvantaged backgrounds and who are exposed to patriarchal pressure (C. Shih 2007).

Master Chaohwei is also active in the debates of the recent Buddhist adoption of the abortion ritual in Taiwan. She was the leader of the protest against the Lecture Hall of Compassion’s propaganda of abortion ritual in 1990, arguing that Buddhist institutions should not make profit from imposing threatening religious discourses on women (Interview with Master Chaohwei, Jul. 31, 2008). After my interview with her, she wrote an article to further elaborate her opinions (C. Shih 2010). She asserts that *yingling* and the abortion ritual should be analyzed in a macro context, including religious psychology and social needs, as well as life and death in the cultural tradition and within the Sinicization of Buddhism. Master Chaohwei clarifies that a fetus is an intermediate being which is embodied by its intention (*zhongyou de yichengshen* 中有的意成身). The personalities of the intermediate beings vary, so it is possible that some of them linger in the mundane world due to their attachment (C. Shih 2010). However, without the support of a physical body, the souls eventually leave and return to reincarnation unless they fall into the Realm of Hungry Ghosts; hence, continuous haunting fetus spirits are rare cases. However, abortion ritual performers very often take advantage of these exceptional cases to generalize the image of fetus spirits and manipulate the language of false classics. By doing so, they exacerbate women’s fear, worries and distress and thus, make money. Master Chaohwei asserts that a tablet for the *Yingling* seems to be a means to “eradicate demons and ward off evil (*qumo bixie* 祛魔避邪)”. This ritual is disrespectful to the dead and is not a selfless kindness to comfort the living (C. Shih 2010). Similarly, Master Hsing Yun -another Humanistic Buddhist- does not appreciate abortion rituals in

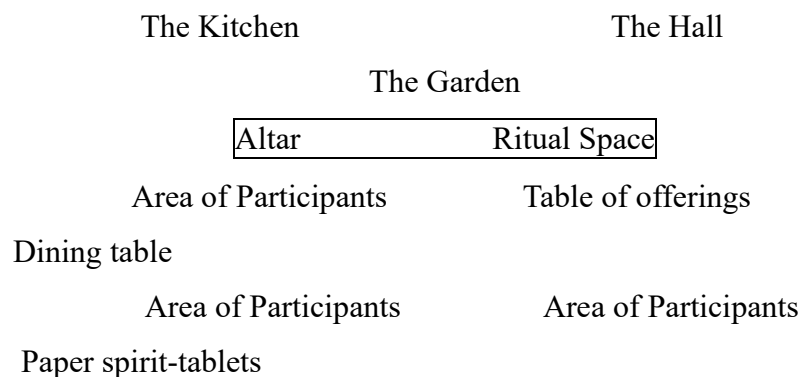
“buying-peace” style. He criticizes that very often manipulative businesses take advantage of women’s sense of guilt after abortion and uses religion as a scam for money. (Master Hsing Yun 2003, 19) According to him, based on the idea of human rights, women should have full capability to make the decision. Everyone has problems to solve. A woman has the right to make a decision and to take the consequences she chooses, and her decision should be fully respected. (Master Hsing Yun 2003, 18).

10-3 The Ksitigarbha Dizang Dharma Assembly

The Buddhist Hongshi Academic Institute is located in a small village, Datong, in Taoyuan County, surrounded by rice fields and scattered houses and factories. It was purchased and donated by a faithful entrepreneur. The Institute organizes the Ksitigarbha Dharma Assembly (*Dizang Fahui* 地藏法會) annually on the god’s birthday (the 30th of the seventh month of the lunar calendar). The ritual in 2008 had around 700 participants, including villagers, Master Chaohwei’s disciples and students from across Taiwan, as well as several politicians. The Dharma Assembly was performed by Master Chaohwei and her team, including another Buddhist scholar Master Shing-kuang.

The Institute owns a huge, grassy yard where homeless dogs and cats, adopted by the Institute, often rest comfortably. On the day of the ritual, the yard was divided into several areas. In the center, there was an altar and a table of offerings. On the altar, the statues of the Three Saints of the Avatamsaka School (*Huayan Sansheng* 華嚴三聖) - the Buddha, Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra - were placed. Across from the altar, wooden billboards fully covered with paper spirit-tablets were standing. On the two sides of the square where the ritual took place were the areas for participants.

Figure 11. The ritual space in the Buddhist Hongshi Academic Institute



The ritual was held in commemoration Ksitigarbha Dizang's legendary life. Master Chaohwei does not encourage worshippers to seek salvation from Ksitigarbha during a *pudu* salvation or *chaodu* requiem ritual. According to her, in a Buddhist funeral the only things the living need are to chant sutras and transfer merit to the dead (*huixiang* 回向) (Interview with Master Chaohwei, Jul. 31, 2008). However, Master Chaohwei admits that a funeral is a means that religions provide in order to assist people going through emotional strife. As a result, "if the participants like to think this way then let it be" (Interview with Master Chaohwei, Jul. 31, 2008). The Buddhist Hongshi Academic Institute provided participants with paper spirit-tablets on which they can write the names of their ancestors, creditors, fetus ghosts, and even animal spirits. A wall placed on the other side of the ritual space facing the statues of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva was completely covered with these paper spirit-tablets, representing the *bahu-jana* (all the creatures) coming to attend the ritual. As Master Chaohwei observes, it is quite common that tablets of the dead are placed in Dharma Assemblies of Hungry Ghost Month in Taiwan nowadays (Interview with Master Chaohwei, Jul. 31, 2008). If even a pet's name can appear on the tablet, "why not the *Yingling*?" (Interview with Master Chaohwei, Jul. 31, 2008). Hence, although Master Chaohwei does not encourage the participants to use the tablets to that end, she acknowledges the custom and the ritual participants' psychological need for it. If a concrete object is needed in the ritual space to symbolize transference, such as the tablet, it is acceptable. The object allows the participants to express their respects and to comfort the dead. However, she is strongly against exploitative temples which profit from these tablets by threatening women. In this context, the tablet merely serves as a tool to repel devils and ward off evil. She does not agree that the tablet is a means of toadyism to the dead (*changui* 諂鬼). She reiterates that the Buddhist ritual of grand salvation is an accommodation of the rite of the dead in China, showing a transformation from toadyism to selfless compassion (Interview with Master Chaohwei, Jul. 31, 2008).

10-4 *Dizang* (the Ksitigarbha): Japanese or Chinese?

Dizang 地藏 (Ksitigarbha), along with Guanyin 觀音 (Avalokiteśvara), Puxian 普賢 (Samantabhadra) and Wenshu 文殊 (Mañjuśrī), are regarded as the four great bodhisattvas in East Asian Buddhism. He is widely revered as the Lord of the Underworld or the Teacher of the Desolate Darkness and is regarded as the dominant deity in the cult of the dead in modern Chinese religion (Ng 2007, 5). A popular version of this story in Taiwan is that one of his incarnations was

as the Korean prince Jin Qiaojue who cultivated Buddhism on Jiuhua Mountain in China and finally became the embodiment of Ksitigarbha. He vowed to rescue the dead and to empty all hells before he achieves Buddhahood (*diyu bukong, shibu chengfo* 地獄不空, 誓不成佛) (Caituan Faren Taibeishi Guandugong). He also vowed to help save all beings in the Six Realms until the arrival of next historical Buddha, Maitreya Bodhisattva (Leighton 2012, 217).

The Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva is vernacularized in both China and Japan. In fact, some scholars suggest that he “was either a minor figure or had only a nominal existence in Indian Buddhism” (Ng 2007, 8). Some scholars even believe he “is better understood as a Chinese bodhisattva who, except perhaps for his name, was engendered almost entirely in Chinese culture and society” (Ng 2007, 8). The legend of and belief in Dizang in China have been closely related to social-political conditions. His emergence in texts can be traced back to the Sutra on the Ten Wheels and the Section on the *Sumeru Treasury* in the late sixth century (Ng 2007, 29 & 36). Both texts reflect the chaos during the North-South Dynasties by discussing the demise of the Buddhist teachings in the *mofa* (末法, latter dharma) era, the tense state-church relationship and the symbolic meaning of monks’ robes through Dizang’s stories (Ng 2007, 47). Before the tenth Century, the *Sutra of the Ten Kings* as well as numerous related writings illustrate Dizang as a guardian of the underworld. Mixing both Buddhist and Taoist imaginations of the underworld, sometimes Dizang is regarded as one of the ten kings, and even another form of Yama (Leighton 2012, 223). Scholars agree that Dizang’s supernatural power and his close ties to the underworld make him a deity with shamanic features intertwined with Taoist esoteric tactics (Leighton 2012, 223; Ng 2007, 97). Furthermore, Dizang and Guanyin in medieval China were often “venerated together” in images due to their roles of rescuing the suffering (Ng 2007, 125). He even replaced Mahâsthâmaprâpta (Dashizhi 大勢至) as one of the Saints in the Three Saints of the West (*Xifang Sansheng* 西方三聖) in addition to Amitâbha and Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin) of the Pure Land sect in the Longmen and Sichuan art collection (Ng 2007, 135). In Taiwan, he is also believed to be one of the Sahâ Triad (*Suopo Sansheng* 娑婆三聖) along with Amitâbha and Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin) who rescue suffering beings in the present world (Ng 2007, 13). The history of China’s belief in Dizang shows that the bodhisattva has a multifaceted dynamic within the Chinese Buddhist tradition as well as with other religious and cultural agencies.

The *Dizang pusa benyuan jing* 地藏菩薩本願經 (*Scripture on the Fundamental Vows of*

Dizang Bodhisattva), believed to be compiled in Central Asia or China in the 7th Century (Leighton 2012, 211; Ng 2007, 107), was written in the form of *avadâna* or *jâtaka*, an Indian Buddhist narrative style, and largely falls in the genre of literature on the past vows of Buddhism (Ch. *benyuan* 本願; Skt. *pûrvaprayidhâna*) (Ng 2007, 108). The sutra consists of thirteen chapters, which is divided into three sections. This *Sutra of Fundamental Vows* vividly demonstrates the Buddhist rite of death and afterlife in late medieval China and India (Ng 2007, 115). However, it is still uncertain whether the sutra obtained its status as a ritual canon at that time or if it was written simply as an effort to connect the belief in *Dizang* in popular mortuary practices (Ng 2007, 115). This sutra was already regarded as a core text in the *Dizang* cult, becoming renowned by the tenth century (Ng 2007, 115), but it was only included in the Chinese Buddhist Canon in the Ming dynasty (Ng 2007, 107). In addition, among the possible diverse sources, scholars agree that this sutra was highly influenced by Chinese culture due to its numerous uses of indigenous terms and its strong appeal of filial piety to ancestors (Ng 2007, 108). Nowadays, it is a popular sutra in Chinese Buddhism and has been employed in Dharma assemblies in various Chinese regions.

In China and Taiwan, *Dizang* is worshipped in temples and during the Hungry Ghost Festival, which indicates the “folklorization” or “vulgarization” of this Buddhist figure in the Chinese religious context (Ng 2007, 7). *Dizang* is highly related to the cult of death in China. For example, in his study of the *Xianghua Foshi* 香花佛事 (Incense and flower Buddhist rites), during a local Buddhist funeral ritual in northeastern Guangzhou, Yik Fai Tam describes that, after the soul of the dead is summoned, bathed and offered with wine, Buddhist deities including Sakyamuni Buddha (in the first appeal), Avalokitesvara (in the second appeal), and Ksitigarbha (in the third appeal) are appealed to for relief from suffering (Tam 2012, 252). *Dizang* is also enshrined in numerous popular temples in Taiwan. However, due to his connection with death, there is a “curious stigma attached to him” (Ng 2007, 13). His altar is very often located in a less visible spot in a temple. Moreover, people are less willing to place his statue and worship him at home (Ng 2007, 13). Similarly, there is a discomfort associated with reciting The Sutra on the Fundamental Vows of *Dizang Bodhisattva* at home, since ghosts may be thus invited (Ng 2007, 13; King Zero 2015). Yet, according to the Sutra, some Buddhist priests in Taiwan affirm that, when a massive audience chant and listen to the Scripture, filial piety is not limited to one’s parents anymore; instead, the merit spreads to all sentient beings, including the chanters themselves (J. Shih 2015).

The Buddhist figure *Jizo* was delivered to Japan from China during the 9th and 10th Centuries (Lafleur 1992, 49). In Japan, *Jizo* is very often portrayed as a friendly little monk present in everyday life (Ng 2007, 20). In the space of an abortion ritual, *Jizo* seems to be solemn Buddhist figures in meditation on the one hand. However, on the other hand, “these are diminutive figures - child-sized” (Lafleur 1992, 6), in which tranquility can be seen as innocence, and baldness can be seen as a newborn’s head (Lafleur 1992, 6). Indeed, with the red bibs, toys and pinwheels (which also represent the Wheel of the Dharma), “the monk... is also a child” (Lafleur 1992, 6). Elizabeth G. Harrison describes the ritual space centered around statues of *Jizo*:

They are made to the deity and the child mutually represented by the figure, suggesting that no matter what the image looks like, it serves as a nexus between a caring deity and a spirit construed as needing help. The image, whether large or small, expensive or cheap, provides a place for both the child and its protector to whom the parents pray, and it often becomes the site of continued practice. (Harrison & Igeta 1995, 69)

According to William R. Lafleur, “[T]he image is meant to represent two realities at the same time” (Lafleur 1992, 7). This is a “double-take effect (Lafleur 1992, 51)” as *Jizo* “represents both savior and saved (Lafleur 1992, 53)”. *Jizo* owns a character of “doubleness”: “*mizuko jizo*” (for “deceased children and fetuses”) and “*koyasu jizo*” (for “conception and birth”) (Lafleur 1992, 127). Moreover, *Jizo* is a deity of empathy. He went through a “down scaling” construction process in Japan which eventually made him an imperfect but compassionate “bodhisattva that is close to the people” (Lafleur 1992, 47). The “approachability” (Lafleur 1992, 47) and “doubleness” (Lafleur 1992, 6) shape *Jizo*’s unique image in *Mizuko Kuyō*.

In Taiwan, the qualities of down-scaling construction and doubleness do not seem to be present in the cult of Dizang. Nonetheless, he is honored as the leading deity to host an abortion ritual in some temples as well. For example, the Xinzhuang Dizang Abbey, a popular temple in New Taipei City, is gaining popularity for organizing abortion rituals along with other types of rituals for the dead. In the Great Yang Prophet’s *Yingling* Palace, an urban shrine in Taipei city analyzed in Chapter 5 of this thesis, after a Taoist abortion ritual is performed, the tablet of the fetus spirit is placed in a hall where a Dizang’s statue is in place. Master Chaohwei suggests that the *Han* cultural mortuary rites, such as belief in ghosts, should be understood in Chinese tradition (Interview with Master Chaohwei, Jul. 31, 2008). She does not agree that abortion ritual was

imported since the belief in Dizang has been central to the Chinese religious context for a very long time.

10-5 A Ritual Organized by Women

Chinese funerals often involve an exchange of money and professional labor (Watson 1988, 14). Indeed, James L. Watson shows that a Chinese funeral implicates a money exchange partly because the elaborate ritual process has to be performed by professionals (Watson 1988, 111). The Dharma Assembly at Hongshi Institute is free of charge. The gift-exchange mechanism is replaced by service and labor, with women as the main contributors. The ritual is largely in the hands of women, from the host ritual performers to the staff preparing food in the kitchen. The ritual was prepared early in advance. In addition to the Institute's team, volunteers (mostly women from the neighborhood, including a local women's association led by the mayor's wife), assisted in managing the space and preparing the food. On the day of the ritual, the volunteers arrived early in the morning to start the extremely busy day, continuing until the middle of the night. They organized the space, accepted ritual participants and served food. They left after the hall and the kitchen were cleaned and tidied up. The kitchen was extremely busy. The volunteers cooked food the Institute purchased and organized the food that disciples donated. Around noon, there was a two and half hour lunch break. The volunteers placed the feast on the table, guided people to wait in a line and passed plates and chopsticks to everyone. They encouraged the participants to wash their own plates in the sink after eating. When Master Chaohwei went to the kitchen and greeted to them, the volunteers' faces were full of happiness at seeing the Master.

Cooking for staff and ritual participants is seen as a woman's job in Chinese religious traditions, especially in Taiwan (Y.-C. Li 1999). Some priests, such as Guangqin the Old Monk (Guangqin Laoheshang 廣欽老和尚), claim that the task is given to nuns instead of monks because "to be women is a karma. The karma can be erased by doing 'women's work'" (Y.-C. Li 1999). However, in the Buddhist Hongshi Academic Institute, there are not obvious signs of gendered division in the labor supply since the entire process of ritual preparation and performance are both in women's hands. The lay women, acting as organizers and participants at the same time, form a powerful class that crosses the sacred ritual space and the secular space, mainly in the kitchen.

Food as an essential resource reveals the allocation of powers between men and women through its production, provision, distribution and consumption (Counihan 1998, 2). As Nickie

Charles and Marion Kerr's research shows, preparing food may show that women are believed to be servers. Moreover, women often need to negotiate their own choice of food with their husbands (for their preference) and children (for their nutrition). These gendered roles could reproduce the gendered ideology desired by male society (Charles & Kerr 1988, 2). On the other hand, in her studies of the food preparation for funerals by Thai Buddhist women, Penny Van Esterik claims that women exercise their power over the ritual by defining the symbolic meanings of the food based on its nature, staging the ritual by serving and removing food, and categorizing ritual practitioners and participants by serving different kinds of food (Van Esterik 1998, 81-98). Similarly, in her studies of medieval Christianity in Europe, Caroline Walker Bynum shows how food is transformed into a medium by which women achieve their goals secularly and sacredly. By means of fasting and accepting the Eucharist, women transcend their gender and familial roles and approach a saintly status. This process of piety formation is accomplished by women's own interpretation and practice of food (Bynum 1987).

In her studies of food preparation by Buddhist women in Taiwan, Yu-Chen Li observes the kitchen of the temples as a field (Pierre Bourdieu's term) where nuns and lay women are able to practice and reproduce their belief, as well as create their connection among women (Y.-C. Li 1999). Preparing food in the kitchen is an experience shared by all nuns after their conversion. Similar to apprentices, they begin with simple missions, such as washing vegetables and dishes, until they are able to cook good meals. The kitchen is a "battlefield" where young women give up their old lifestyle as girls and become members of a religious community. Led by priests and senior nuns, the newcomers learn the rules of collective life. These nuns' cooking activities contribute enormously to the economy of the temple. Moreover, doctrines and ideologies are delivered within that space. For example, during a dinner at the Institute, I heard Master Chaohwei teaching her student nuns how to prepare food properly. Some priests claim that cooking is a process of cultivation. For example, Master Zhengyan of the Tzu-Chi organization urges her disciples to cook with sincere hearts. Food allows for the resonance between the hearts of the people who prepare the food and those who eat the food, including spiritual beings. During this type of training process, a family-style of community is established. The kitchen is not merely a mechanical space where food is prepared. Instead, as Hwei-Syin Lu demonstrates, the religious institution is "family-ized" with strong emotional-affectional ties (*zongjiao jiating hua* 宗教家庭化) between a mother-like leading figure, nuns and laity (Lu 1998). Lu suggests, the community-style participation of

Buddhist lay women could partly result from the Buddhist idea of “Three Treasures” - the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, which acknowledges the significance of community. Furthermore, as Li observes, the dynamics of the temple kitchen are changed due to the active participation of the female volunteers. Since cooking in the kitchen is a non-invasive means to participate in temple affairs without threatening administrative authority, it is often employed by lay women as the first step to participate within the organization. Nowadays, they gradually replace nuns as the food preparers, which allows the nuns to concentrate on missionary work.

10-6 The Ritual Process

The ritual began at 8:00 a.m. Master Chaohwei led the team, composed of priests and representatives of lay disciples who wore deep blue gowns (*haiqing* 海青), to the Altar. The team was composed of only women. Master Chaohwei poured water, representing Sweet Dew (*ganlu* 甘露), on to the ritual space, in order to clean and clarify it. Meanwhile, the first incense was burned and the space was believed to be purified (*yanjing* 演淨). She summoned and invited (*zhaoqing* 召請) Buddha and Bodhisattva to arrive in order to reinforce the power of the ritual. She led all the participants to bow to the statues and then she led the team to turn around, as she walked towards the paper tablets. She hailed all the spirits to come to the ritual space in order to learn and receive the profit of the Dharma.

10-6-1 Chanting

The *Sutra of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's Fundamental Vows* was chanted by everyone in the yard throughout the day. A lot of participants already had their own copies in hand. Meanwhile, the staff and volunteers passed the copies owned by the Institute to those who did not have it. At 8:40, Master Chaohwei guided all the participants to chant the first volume of the *Sutra*. Everyone sat or stood, chanting together. The participants concentrated and helped each other. During the chanting, I had come back from taking photos and the priest beside me kindly showed me which line to follow.

Summary of the Sutra

Chapter 1: Spiritual penetrations in the Palace of the Trayastrimsha Heaven:

The Buddha teaches the Dharma for his mother, Queen Maya, in the Trayastrimsha Heaven. He details Dizang's past lives and vocation, and praises his compassion and achievements. His first life was a son to a great Elder. He admired the Buddha's fine features and blessings, and

learned the way to achieve Buddhist status. He vowed:

From now until the ends of future time throughout uncountable eons I will use expansive expedient means to help beings in the Six Realms who are suffering for their offenses. Only when they have all been liberated, will I myself become a Buddha.” (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas)

Ksitigarbha’s second life was as a Brahman woman who sincerely followed and practiced the Buddha’s teaching. However, her deceased mother was suffering in the hell due to her condemnation of the Three Treasures. Hence, the daughter paid many great offerings to rescue her mother from the severe punishment in the hell. She vowed:

I vow that until the end of future eons I will respond to beings suffering for their offenses by using many expedient means to bring about their liberation.” (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas)⁵⁴

Chapter 2: The division bodies:

Ksitigarbha promised to the Buddha in tears:

Even if their good deeds within the dharma amount to as little as a strand of hair, a drop of water, a grain of sand, or a mote of dust, I will gradually take them across, liberate them, and help them gain great benefit. I only hope that the World Honored One will not be concerned about beings of the future who have bad karma.” (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas)

This passage employs the idea “ten stages” (tenfold schema Ch. *shidi* 十地; Skt. Daśabhūmi), which is a “classic Indian paradigm of the bodhisattva career” and the “Mahāyāna systematization of the bodhisattva path” (Ng 2007, 110). The Buddha’s trust implies that Ksitigarbha is a tenth-stage bodhisattva. At the same time, Ksitigarbha was assigned by Śākyamuni as the savior until the arrival of the next Buddha, Maitreya. According to Zhiru Ng, this passage demonstrated in the *Sutra of the Ten Wheels*, shows people’s anxiety about eschatology which arose in the sixth to seventh century (Ng 2007, 111).

Chapter 3: Contemplating the karmic conditions of beings:

⁵⁴ The Brahman’s story is obviously similar to Mulian’s. Zhiru Ng claims that the story successfully “harmonizes” two images into one: a filial child and a bodhisattva. The repayment to the ancestor is accomplished by the practice of Dharma. (Ng 2007, 109-110)

The Buddha lists karmic sins, including the violation of filial piety, which results in harsh punishments in hell. In addition, he vividly describes those punishments.

Chapter 4: Karmic retributions of beings of Jambudvīpa:

Ksitigarbha was a king in his third life. His people committed sins, so he vowed:

I do not want to become a Buddha until I first take across all those who are suffering for their offenses, enable them to gain peace, and finally to reach Bodhi.” (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas)

In the fourth life, Ksitigarbha was a filial woman whose name was Bright Eyes (*Guangmu* 光目). Her mother enjoyed eating creatures who dwelled in water such as fish and turtles, which made her suffer in hell due to her cruel appetite. With the assistance of an arhat, Bright Eyes carved and painted images of Pure-Lotus-Eyes Thus Come One and made offerings. Her mother reincarnated into a baby born into Bright Eye’s house. The daughter vowed:

I vow that from this day on, throughout billions of eons I will respond to all beings who are undergoing suffering for their offenses in the hells or the Three Evil Paths of any world. I vow to rescue them from the bad destinies of the hells, hungry ghosts, animals, and the like. Only after beings with such retributions have all become Buddhas will I myself achieve Proper Enlightenment.” (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas)

This was another Ksitigarbha story describing mother-daughter tie.

Around 10:00, the first volume was finished and people turned to the second volume.

Chapter 5: Names of hells:

Samantabhadra (*Puxian Pusa* 普賢菩薩) asks about the names of the hells and which destinations the sinners go to depending on their offenses. In order to lift the suffering *saha* Ksitigarbha answers in detail.

Chapter 6: The thus come one's praises:

The Buddha’s body illuminated the Buddhlands and he praised Ksitigarbha. The Universally Expansive (*Puguang* 普廣) Bodhisattva then asked how the *saha* should benefit from the merit. The Buddha answered:

If, in the future, good men or good women who, upon hearing Ksitigarbha Mahasattva's name, place their palms together, praise him, bow to him, or gaze in worship, they will

overcome thirty eon's worth of offenses. Puguang, if good men or good women gaze upon and bow but once to painted or drawn images of the Bodhisattva or images made using clay, stone, lacquer, gold, silver, copper and iron, they will be reborn one hundred times in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three and will eternally avoid falling into the Evil Paths.” (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas)

This chapter illustrates the power of recitation. The Buddha asserts that men and women “should recite this Sutra aloud once before images of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas” if they suffer from nightmares created by their karma. Also, the recitation of Ksitigarbha’s name can transform a person’s social status in their next life, erase the karma of a newborn and secure their life and prevent families from disasters, disease and poverty. The Buddha describes that recitation is essential to the cult of death. He demonstrates how reciting the Sutra to those who are severely sick or dying counteracts their karma and creates merit:

They should speak distinctly to the sick people saying, ‘Now before this Sutra or these images, we are offering these items on behalf of these sick people.’ They may offer sutras or images, or commission images of Buddhas or Bodhisattvas, or build stupas or monasteries, or light oil lamps, or give to the Eternally Dwelling. They should tell the sick people three times about the offerings that are being made, informing them so they both hear and understand what is being done.

If their consciousnesses are already scattered and their breathing has stopped, then for one, two, three, four, and on through seven days, others should continue to inform them clearly and to read this Sutra aloud. (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas)

Meanwhile, the Buddha identifies the haunting ghosts:

Beings in the future may, while dreaming or drowsy, see ghosts, spirits, and other forms that are either sad, weeping, or worried, fearful, or terrified. Those are all fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, and relatives from one, ten, a hundred, or a thousand lives past who have not yet been able to leave their bad destinies. They have no place from which to hope for the power of blessings to rescue them, and so they try to communicate with their closest descendants, hoping that those relatives will use some skillful means to help them get out of the Evil Paths. (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas)

The fear of haunting spirits and the duty of the descendants could be an influence of Chinese ancestor worship. Recitation of the sutra is the most efficient way rescue suffering ancestors (Ng

2007, 112).

Chapter 7: Benefiting the living and the dead:

Through a dialogue with the Buddha, Ksitigarbha encourages the *saha* to stop doing negative deeds and to cultivate good deeds. He answers the question of an Elder named Great Eloquence (*Dabian* 大辯), clarifying that one-seventh of the merit generated for the deceased goes to the deceased and the rest, six-seventh, goes to the living. This chapter mentions that Ksitigarbha strongly urges people to stop performing sacrificial rites for a better life. Instead,

When beings who have committed karmic offenses die, their relatives may prepare vegetarian offerings to aid them on their karmic paths. In the process of preparing the vegetarian meal and before it has been eaten, rice-washing water and vegetable leaves should not be thrown on the ground. Before the food is offered to the Buddhas and Sangha no one should eat it.

Zhiru Ng observes that this command is similar to Taoist condemnation against the longstanding sacrifices performed in mortuary services in medieval China (Ng 2007, 113). Also, this chapter describes how the deceased faces judgement in the underworld:

The arrival of the Great Ghost of Impermanence is so unexpected that the deceased ones' consciousnesses first roam in darkness and obscurity, unaware of offenses and blessings. For forty-nine days they are as if deluded or deaf, or as if in courts where their karmic retributions are being decided. Once judgment is fixed, rebirths are undergone according to their karma.

In the time before rebirths are determined, the deceased suffer thousands of myriads of concerns. How much more is that the case for those who are to fall into the bad destinies. Throughout forty-nine days those whose lives have ended and who have not yet been reborn will be hoping every moment that their immediate relatives will earn blessings powerful enough to rescue them.

At the end of that time the deceased will undergo retribution according to their karma. If someone is an offender, he may pass through hundreds of thousands of years without even a day's liberation. (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas)

In spite of its torturous nature, the mechanism in the underworld allows for “penance” and “purgation” based on the intervening cultivation of merit (Ng 2007, 114). The bureaucratic representation of the underworld originates from popular conception (Ng 2007, 114), which can

also be seen in the visualization of the underworld in the Scripture on the Ten Kings (Ng 2007, 114).⁵⁵

Chapter 8: Praises of King Yama and his followers:

The King Yama and his follower ghost kings arrive, asking the reason why the saha do not do good deeds and follow the right path. The Buddha answers, people are like those who lose their way home. If they meet a knowledgeable guide, like Ksitigarbha, they are healed and find the way. A ghost king named Lord of Life (*Zhuming* 主命) vowed:

If at the time of death beings of any kind have an opportunity to hear the name of one Buddha or Bodhisattva or to hear a sentence or gatha of a Mahayana Sutra, I observe that such beings can quickly be freed from the pull of their accumulated minor bad deeds that would otherwise send them to the bad paths.” (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas)

Chapter 9: The names of Buddhas:

In order to benefit the saha, Ksitigarbha articulates the names of the Buddhas as well as their achievements and merits.

At 2:30 p.m., Master Chaohwei led the team and participants to chant the third volume of Sutra of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's Fundamental Vows.

Chapter 10: The conditions and comparative merits and virtues of giving:

Ksitigarbha asks the Buddha why people receive blessings differently. The Buddha answers in detail by presenting numerous examples.

Chapter 11: The dharma protection of an earth spirit:

The Buddha lists ten benefits by lighting incense, making offerings, beholding, worshipping and praising the statue of Ksitigarbha.

Chapter 12: Benefits derived from seeing and hearing:

“At that time the World Honored One emitted hundreds of thousands of millions of great rays of light from the opening at the crown of his head” (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas). In addition, “he spoke in subtle and wonderful sounds to the great assembly of gods, dragons, the rest

⁵⁵ For more detailed analysis of the bureaucratic imagination toward the underworld, please see Chapter 8 Collective Ritual 2: Temple of Zhao Gongming, the God of Wealth.

of the Eightfold Division, humans, non-humans and others” (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas). He praises Ksitigarbha. Avalokiteśvara asked the Buddha to talk more about the “inconceivable events (*busiyishi* 不思議事) (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas)” of Ksitigarbha. The Buddha then elaborates the merits of seeing and holding the image of Ksitigarbha, as well as hearing and reciting the name of Ksitigarbha.

Chapter 13: The entrustment of people and gods:

Again, the Buddha rubs the crown on Ksitigarbha’s head: “I now earnestly entrust the multitudes of gods and people to you.” He requests: “you should use your spiritual powers to rescue them (the men and women who recite Ksitigarbha’s name) with expedient means” (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas).

Chanting

Chanting made up a major part of the ritual. Chanting is in service of a particular liturgical text or action. The purpose of chanting and recitation is for “wider religious setting and presentation” instead of for personal pleasure or needs (P. Chen 2004, 83). Pi-yen Chen asserts: “Through Chanting, Chinese Buddhists experience the phenomenality of existence, which is the condition of being as simply they are, all interdependently related in one constructive process” (P. Chen 2004, 84).

Fan (梵, originally means Indian Buddhist) refers to candid, elegant, pure, deep and far-reaching (P. Chen 2004, 81). *Fanbai* (梵唄, *bhasa* in Sanskrit) is the term defining all types of recitation and chanting of Buddhist scriptures, which has been practiced since Buddhism arrived in China (P. Chen 2004, 80). *Fanyin* (梵音 the sound of the Indian Buddha) is vocalized by the human Buddhist, but it is believed to reach beyond the sound of this world (P. Chen 2004, 81). Indeed, in the Dizang Dharma Assembly in the Buddhist Hongshi Academic Institute the participants' chanting was calm and monotone. Master Chaohwei asserts that *fanyin* should be solemn, grand and calm so that it can achieve the efficacy of cultivation. This type of recitation promotes peace, pleasure and tranquility (S. Chen 2001).

The power of *fanbai* does not rely on the musical material or the text recited, but on the deed itself, along with a purified mind. The mind is the source of sound, so a purified mind achieves a purified sound (Chen 2004, 81). Pi-yen Chen reports that the deed, the word, and the thoughts of the chanter are pure and sincere so that the Buddha’s teachings, the chanter and the sentient beings are connected. The sound, the ideas and the emotions form a constant flow which allows the

chanter to “experience the nature of the transformation in how he or she senses, perceives, and feels” (P. Chen 2004, 82). Sincerity refers to purity; the chanter's self disappears and the Buddha's teaching prevails, so that the relationship between “the phenomenal world” and “one's true nature (the Reality: the impermanence of being)” is understood. Both the mentality and physicality of the chanter achieve Buddhist wisdom (P. Chen 2004, 84).

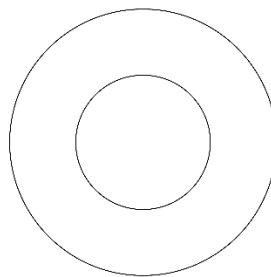
Chanting or recitation, as a linguistic activity, serves as the powerful matrix in which ritual meaning originated. During the chanting, the legend of Dizang was recalled and remembered. In his analysis of myth, Claude Lévi-Strauss observes: “A myth always refers to events alleged to have taken place long ago. But what gives the myth an operational value is that the specific pattern described is timeless; it explains the present and the past as well as the future” (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 209). Lévi-Strauss claims that “in both anthropological and linguistic research, we are dealing strictly with symbolism” (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 51). These symbolic deployments as well as the relationship between each element refer to the structure deep within the human's unconsciousness as well as the social structure they develop. All the disconnected elements in myths across the world are able to be brought together to “make a continuous story” (Lévi-Strauss 1978, 35), which discloses the universal deep structure of human society. Therefore, Lévi-Strauss affirms: “remembrance of things past... is only one expression of a more fundamental method” (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 204). In addition, in order to inscribe the myth in people's understanding, it has to be told and written repeatedly; “it is a part of human speech” (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 209). Lévi-Strauss affirms that “[t]he function of repetition is to render the structure of the myth apparent. For we have seen that the synchronic-diachronic structure of the myth permits us to organize it into diachronic ritual process... a myth exhibits a “slated” structure, which comes to the surface, so to speak, through the process of repetition” (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 229).

According to Claude Lévi-Strauss, the structure hidden in humans' unconsciousness and represented by a myth is “binary oppositions (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 160)”. In the myth of Dizang, the Buddha, Dizang, the admiring Bodhisattvas, the faithful disciples, the sons and daughters as well as the mothers and the fathers, and the kings from hell constitute a hierarchy in terms of their distance from Salvation. This network clearly draws the border between suffering and rescuing, as well as cruel sins and sympathetic vows. When analyzing myths, the binary structure allows each element to be understood through comparison and contrast. The “widespread opposition” (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 161) highlights the eternal liberation in the Buddha's land and define good and bad,

right and wrong.

Claude Lévi-Strauss' concept of concentric dualism provides a possibility to interpret this supernatural space "where we have a simultaneous distinction between two rings (Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 138)" (Figure 12). The pole in the center represents enlightenment and salvation. In the "central circle (Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 152)" are those beings who have achieved salvation. In the "circle (Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 152)" are those beings whose salvation is yet to be determined. Lévi-Strauss reiterates that opposition is contained between sectors "with regard to social and/or religious prestige, necessarily unequal (Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 139)". The circles are not equal to each other since "one of the circles is closer (to the center) than the other (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 140)." At the same time, those beings whose salvation yet to be determined are urged to take rightful actions in order to achieve enlightenment- a desirable status in contrast to the Hell. Lévi-Strauss stresses that this type of dualism is not "static (Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 151)"; instead, between the three classes there is a "dynamic (Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 151)" relationship due to an "attempt to move from an asymmetric triad to a symmetric dyad (Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 151)." Moreover, concentric dualism has a "ternary nature (Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 152)." Lévi-Strauss claims that "[t]he system is not self-sufficient, and its frame of reference is always the environment. (Lévi Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 152)" Outside these circles is the hell where those doomed beings who fail to achieve salvation belong and there is no chance to escape. On the one hand, the dichotomy between the two circles (the heaven and the mundane world) were confined within the "third element (Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 152)." On the other hand, the dichotomy is expanded to the contrast between the mundane world and the Hell (Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 152).

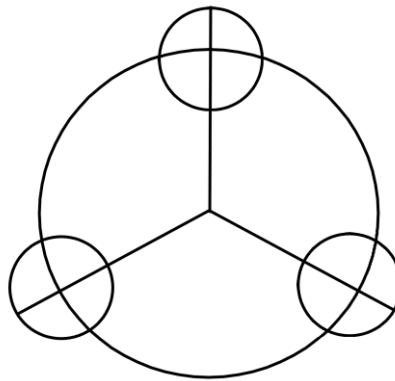
Figure 12. Claude Lévi-Strauss' model of concentric dualism



Or, the triskelion diagram illustrated by Claude Lévi-Strauss could explain such a mode of binary opposition. There were "(1) a group of three small circles; (2) a triskelion; (3) a large circle.

(Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 154-155)” (Figure 13). The upper moiety comprises those beings who have achieved salvation. The lower moiety is those who fail to achieve salvation and those beings whose salvation is yet to be determined. The large circle refers to the potential migration of the members based on karma. Within this triskelion diagram there is a binary characteristic (enlightened vs. unenlightened) and a ternary characteristic (three classes) (Lévi-Strauss 1963, p. 160). Again, this is a structure embedded in a dynamic relationship.

Figure 13. Claude Lévi-Strauss’ model of triskelion diagram



Nonetheless, at the same time, “mythical thought always progresses from the awareness of oppositions toward their resolution, the reason for these choices become clearer” (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 224). In spite of the conflicted or even confrontational nature of the two sides, Claude Lévi-Strauss claims that the binary structure is not clear-cut and divided. Instead, “[w]e have deities or supernaturals, who play the roles of intermediaries between the powers above and humanity below. They can be represented in different ways: we have, for instance, characters of the types of a Messiah; we have heavenly twins” (Lévi-Strauss 1978, 32-33). Through the life-death mediator, the confrontation of oppositions is resolved (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 220-221). According to Lévi-Strauss, this intermediary “is not twins, but he is incipient twins” (Lévi-Strauss 1978, 33). Just as various myths show, twins often have distinct personalities and fates. This mediator has both: “since his mediating function occupies a position halfway between two polar terms, he must retain something of that duality - namely an ambiguous and equivocal character” (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 226). In the *Sutra of Dizang’s Fundamental Vows*, Dizang serves as such a mediator. Embracing the wisdom and sympathy belonging to Buddhahood, he is in fact a being who goes through numerous human reincarnations. In spite of the fact that he is highly respected by the Buddha, he refuses to enter the land of impermanence. Instead, he experiences the hope and despair of a human being. These qualities make him different from any Bodhisattvas or other humans. Both his

relationships, with Buddhahood and human being, make him unique. As Claude Lévi-Strauss' analysis shows, he is there to prevent the bright side (eternity of the Buddha land) and dark side (the suffering in hell) from being replaced:

Two opposite terms with no intermediary always tend to be replaced by two equivalent terms which admit of a third one as a mediator; then one of the polar terms and the mediator become replaced by a new triad, and so on. (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 224)

As a result, Dizang' career and vows reinforce the oppositions, as well as the superiority of the Dharma. The acts of chanting, as well as the vows of Dizang, are both practices of languages, which, in turn, create these meanings.

However, this does not mean that the chanter is merely a passive subject without the agency to create his/her own meaning. "Myth exists within man himself instead of the industrial civilization" (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 204). When observing how a shaman assists a woman in childbirth, Claude Lévi-Strauss affirms that the effectiveness of symbols is accomplished through singing: "[t]he shaman provides the sick women with language" by means of which unexpressed - and otherwise inexpressible - psychic states can be immediately expressed (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 198). Language has to be written, spoken, read and listened to so that its meaning is conveyed and put into effectiveness.

The text of the *Sutra of the Fundamental Vows* is basically written in classical Chinese; so, there are numerous versions in modern Chinese in print or online assisting people in understanding it. It is not clear whether the participants in the Dharma Assembly acquired the meaning of the *Sutra* completely or accurately. In addition, when following the lines and reciting, very often the chanting became an unconscious act: the chanter merely recited the words they saw without perceiving the meanings. Nonetheless, to be knowledgeable about the text is not necessary the key to ritual success. As the *Sutra of the Fundamental Vows* reminds one again and again, through chanting, the teachings of the Buddha is delivered to the dead and the living at the same time and reduces suffering. Positive merit accumulates and thus offsets the bad karma generated by the deceased in their lifetime, leading them to be reborn in a desirable realm, such as the human realm or the heavenly realm, rather than as an Asura, animal, hungry ghost or a denizen in hell. This principle is common in chanting activities in a Chinese Buddhist funeral (F. Chen 2012, 269-270;

Szczepanski 2012, 55). In other words, action, such as recitation, offering and worshipping, surpasses a mere understanding of the theology.

The acknowledgement of mutual benefits could be the reason for the transformation of chanting services in Taiwan nowadays. Buddhist chanting is very often organized for the dead or the dying. The professionals, including the monks and nuns, as well as the families and attendees join in the chanting together. Nowadays, chanting services (*zhunian* 助念) offered by priests, laity, and even machines are gaining popularity in Taiwan. According to Pao-Chu Chang's investigation, chanting services are not only performed for the deceased, but also generate karmic value for the chanters. She cites Master Yinguang's interpretation:

1. I chant for the deceased. The good root in me grows. So my merit increases.
2. I chant for the deceased. I gain unlimited experience, which teaches me the dharma and precepts (*fajie* 法戒).
3. I chant for the deceased this time. Others chant for me another time. It achieves mutual merits.
4. I chant for the deceased so that they are reborn in the West. Based on this merit, they come to receive me and empower me. (Chang 2008, 9)

Chanting, therefore, generates individual cultivation and achievements: the chanter has to act so that the merit reaches them. The benefit of chanting is exchanged with the labor of the self. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that the chanting was led by the team of priests, everyone, as long as they are literate, can participate in the process of creating merit and transferring positive karma. The ritual does have a host priest and a team, but all the participants participate in the process of meaning creation. The contribution of labor ensures that everyone is equal in front of the Buddha and the suffering *saha*.

At the same time, since it is a Dharma Assembly, a sense of collectiveness is achieved. As Pi-yen Chen reveals, Buddhist chanting is mostly performed in a "rite," which refers to "a set of coded movements," "gestures," "time," "space," and "specific ritual objects" (Chen 2004, 83). These ritual elements transform the participants from a motley crowd into a unity. There is a multilayered sense of identity within such a ritual space. First, the Three Treasures - the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha - are gathered in the ritual space and serve as the path to Buddhahood. Second, the participants are those laity or disciples who agree or prefer Master Chaohwei's philosophy among the various Buddhist schools in Taiwan. Third, the participants are residents of

the neighborhood who appreciate the service offered by the Buddhist Hongshi Academic Institute. Fourth, the participants are not only those we can see. In the space, it is assumed that all sentient beings arrive and benefit from the benevolence of the Dharma and the ritual. Everyone is included in the Buddhist teachings.

As a result, chanting as an action serves as the signifier and signified at the same time. Chanting itself is the source of knowledge. Mobilized and achieved by the self, chanting serves as an epistemological, ontological and cosmological process at the same time.

10-6-2 Accompanying Ritual Processes: Preaching, Conversion and Offering

Around 11:00, Master Chaohwei started the ritual of Grand Offering in front of the Buddha, Ksitigarbhas and all the Bodhisattvas (*Foqian Dagong* 佛前大供). The Grand offerings included flowers, lanterns, fruits and vegetarian meals. The team chanted in front of the altar, while participants were allowed to take a break.

Preaching

Around 15:20, Master Shing-kuang (性廣法師), the principal of the Buddhist Hongshi Institute, gave a speech of enlightenment (*kaishi* 開示). Her language was straightforward and friendly; her tone modest and stable. The speech aimed to convey the Buddhist idea about the Ghost Month to the audience. She explained that the Ullambana Festival originated from Mulian's wish to save his suffering mother in the underworld. This ritual includes treating the monks and nuns, as well as dedication/transferring merit (*huixiang* 迴向). Meanwhile, July also has the Self-Carefree Day (*Ziziri* 自恣日) when the monastery is able to rest peacefully, which is a day of happiness for the Buddha.⁵⁶ As such, July is an auspicious month, rather than a scary Ghost Month. She affirmed that Buddhists are concerned with karmic connection and relationships. After cultivating connections for hundreds and thousands of years, one can become the family of the other. She urged all the participants to cherish the connection by chanting Buddhist sutras sincerely and dedicating the merit to their families and ancestors.

Conversion

After the speech of enlightenment, there was the ceremony of conversion (*guiyi* 皈依), which was hosted by Master Shing-kuang. It took place in the Zen Hall on the third floor of the

⁵⁶ The Hungry Ghost Festival can also be called "Buddhas' happy days (*Fo Huanxi Ri* 佛歡喜日)" in the monasteries (Heise 2012, 224).

Fayin Building. Hundreds of participants converted and vowed allegiance to the Three Treasures of Buddhism, the Buddha, the Dharma and Sangha. Then, around 16:00 p.m. there was a one-hour break.

The Major Mengshan Offering (Damengshan Shishi 大蒙山施食) took place at 17:00, hosted by Master Chaohwei. As Zhiru Ng shows, “[a]t the heart of this festival was a ritual dramatization of the feeding the hungry ghosts ceremony (*shishi* 施食)” (Ng 2007, 60). The rite is part of the grand offering liturgical segment, such as the Relieving (the Hunger of the Ghosts with) Flaming Mouths (*Fangyankou*) (Ng 2007, 60).⁵⁷ The Mengshan Rite for Releasing the Hungry Ghosts (*Mengshan shishi yi*) has been integrated in the Chan liturgical manual since the seventeenth century (J. Wu 2008, 271). This rite serves as an example showing esoteric and tantric elements were introduced to Buddhist rituals (J. Wu 2008, 271). The virtuous and cultivated leading priest should employ techniques including visualization (*guanxiang* 觀想), saying incantation “*songzhou* 誦咒” and using mudras (*shouyin* 手印) to transform and deliver food and water to the hungry ghosts (Y.-C. Li & M. Huang). Through this ritual, the hungry ghosts are able to listen to the preaching, to be converted, to enjoy food like the living, and eventually achieve salvation (Y.-C. Li & M. Huang).

10-7 Conclusion

The Ksitigarbha Dizang Dharma Assembly organized by the Buddhist Hongshi Academic Insitute was a democratic ritual. The leading Buddhist priest - Master Chaohwei - is a social activist who strives for rights of minority groups as well as respect for life of fetuses and animals. She is a Humanisitic Buddhist scholar and she has been publishing and lecturing actively to convey her philosophy. She does not agree with the threatening and manipulative teachings surrounding abortion ritual. However, at the same time, she does not deny social reality and popular needs. She deeply understands the cultural tradition embedded in the society and is sympathetic to people’s emotional quest for a mortuary ritual. As a result, she opened the ritual space to the public: lay women prepared food in the kitchen, and lay participants placed tablets with identifications of ghosts, such as *Yingling*, in the yard. Moreover, she invited all attendees to take part in the ritual: chanting the *The Sutra of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's Fundamental Vows*. In fact, the karmic merit

⁵⁷ For more detailed analysis of *Fangyankou*, please consult Chapter 10: Supplemental Ritual.

can only be created and delivered through everyone's participation. This ritual process was empowered by every individual in the space; meanwhile, every individual was empowered since he/she was the one who engendered the dharmic efficacy. The involvement and engagement of every ritual participant formed communities of different levels.

Master Chaohwei and her colleagues did not place themselves in an authoritarian position during such a process. Yet, on this occasion, the participants did go through several "authoritarian" experiences: preaching and conversion conducted by the priests in the Buddhist Hongshi Academic Institute. Nonetheless, the experiences attempted to encourage and enlighten the participants. The preaching required them to get rid of fear and sense of powerlessness since it was the Self-Carefree Day on which appreciation and love were to be expressed. In addition, the purpose of conversion was to enable them to devote themselves to the Three Treasures instead of to the priest or to the institute. It is noteworthy that these two experiences were shared by the hungry ghosts through the Major Mengshan Offering. Master Chaohwei contributed her virtue and cultivation to assist and exercise the liturgical manual so that the dead could benefit from the rite. Master Chaohwei is respected by the society, but she does not act as a charismatic figure who creates her own teaching. Rather, she insisted in following dharmic intentions and teachings. As the *The Sutra of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's Fundamental Vows* emphasizes, by doing so, all sentient beings in the ritual space earned and enjoyed the merit, which was the ultimate motive of the Buddhist ritual.

Chapter 11

Buddhist Ritual 2: Master Haitao's Compassion Career

This chapter examines another Buddhist type of abortion ritual by focusing on Master Haitao's teachings. Sharply different from Master Shih Chaohwei, Master Haitao regards the *Yingling* as a significant category of souls which are generated from human cruelty. Following this premise, he elaborates on the souls' origins, personalities and interaction with the living. Within such a teaching, *yingling* have emotions and desires and require appropriate treatment. This chapter demonstrates Master Haitao's teachings, including the imagination of the *Yingling*, as well as the ritual which attempts to appease these haunting fetuses. In addition, this chapter analyzes the *Dharani Sutra of Buddha on Longevity, the Extinction of Offences and the Protection of the Young* (*Foshuo Changshou Miezui Huzhu Tongzi Tuoluoni Jing* 佛說長壽滅罪護諸童子陀羅尼經), a sutra which is highly utilized by Master Haitao. Furthermore, it is argued that Master Haitao's discourses are incorporated into several characteristics of New Religious Movements, including the charismatic figure, the straight-forward theology and the user-friendly style of ritual process.

11-1 Background Information on Chinese Oedipal Conflicts as Seen in Buddhist Texts

Sigmund Freud claimed that the jealousy of a son toward his father mobilizes the development of the individual, as well as society. In the Greek myth of Oedipus, the son kills his father and marries his mother. Interestingly, this type of father-son dynamic ends differently in China. As shown in the review of Taoist texts and rituals, there is a distance and even conflict between the parent and the child. While admitting the tension between a father and a son, Taiwanese psychologist Wenxing Zeng claims that the story of the legendary figure, Xue Rengui 薛仁貴 should serve as a Chinese model in contrast with the Western Oedipal myth (Zeng 2004, 188). Xue, the national hero protecting the state during the Tang Dynasty in the 7th Century, accidentally killed his son, Xue Dingshan, when hunting for geese in the mountains. According to Zeng, the story shows the authority of the father over the life of his son and the obedience of the son within Chinese patriarchal society; Chinese children are expected to be restrained and repressed (Zeng 2004, 189). On the other hand, the story of Nezha — the rash child god from Investiture of the Gods (*Fengshen Yanyi*) who is killed by his father — provides another iconic

Chinese example of the father-son tension.⁵⁸ The above two models show that, in order to maintain patrilineal power, the potentially rebellious son should be disciplined and controlled.

Chinese Buddhism presents several images of the mother. The Sutra of the Demon-Mother told by the Buddha (*Foshuo Guizi mujing* 佛說鬼子母經) illustrates a demon mother hunting numerous human children to feed her thousand sons. The *Sutra (Explaining that) the Kindness of Parents is Profound and Difficult to Repay* (*Fumu Enzhong Nanbaojing* 父母恩重難報經), one of the more popular Buddhist scriptures on filial piety in China and Taiwan which can be easily found in temples in Taiwan (Yü 2000, 348), describes the spiritual and physical quality of men and women. The mother “becomes worn and haggard and so her bones turn black in [colour] and are light in weight” due to the exhausting nourishment of the child (Yü 2000, 348). According to Chün-Fang Yü, in the hand-written copies, it is stated that even if the son strives to repay his parents’ kindness by cutting off a piece of flesh from his body to heal or to feed his parents, “he still would not have been able to exhaust his debt” (Yü 2000, 348).

The *Yulan Vessel Sutra* (*Yulanpenjing* 盂蘭盆經) presents a story of a grateful and heartbroken son, Mulian. His mother, a greedy woman, became a hungry ghost in the Avīci Hell after death. She was thirsty and hungry, but her throat became so narrow that water cannot go through and food offered by Mulian transformed into flames. The Buddha told Mulian: “You can only save her if you employ the might of the assembly on the day when the companies of monks in all directions disband at the end of the summer retreat” (Mair 1983, 88). The *Yulan Vessel Sutra* “forms the scriptural basis of a well-known Chinese ritual” (Zürcher 2013, 197) by designating the grand offerings for hungry ghosts during the Ghost Festival (Teiser 1988b, 6-7). The ritual should be performed by monks, which shows that the Sangha acts as the crucial “intermediaries between descendants and ancestors” (Teiser 1988b, 7). The legend of Mulian in the *Yulan Vessel Sutra* is the result of constant integration and accommodation of Buddhism in China (Song 2012, 63). Yoo-who Song shows that the Mulian story was introduced to China from India along with Buddhism. The *Ullambana Scripture* (*Yulanpenjing*, *Yulan Vessel Sutra*) was translated by Dharmaraksha (AD. 265-316) (Song 2012, 63). Stephen F. Teiser believes that the *Yulan Vessel Sutra* was composed in the 5th Century (Teiser 1989, 192). Matthew T. Kapstein describes the effect of the emergence of such a text: “The Chinese stories of Mulian put into sharp relief the

⁵⁸ For more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the child god Nezha and the embedded Oedipal conflicts, please consult Chapter 7: Collective Ritual 2.

contrast between the properly Buddhist ethic of world reunification and the claims of family and clan for the filial provision of perpetual material or ritual support” (Kapstein 2007, 347). In spite of the obvious legitimization of Buddhist institutions in the text, the legend of Mulian has its Taoist and shamanistic parallels and, meanwhile, has been enriched and transformed by precious scrolls, theatres and popular literature (Song 2012, 64; Teiser 1988b, 134-135). The dissemination of Mulian’s tale in China, as well as its ritualistic performance in both Buddhist and Taoist temples, can be traced back as early as the 5th century (Teiser 1989, 191). Elements of the Mulian story evolved into theatrical performances within regional funerary rituals. These can be seen in Fujian, Taiwan and South East Asia (Dean 1989, 50).

In the stories above, the mother is loving, demonized and sexualized, while father is absent. On the one hand, some motherly substances are highly valued, such as breast milk. In the *Sutra (Explaining that) the Kindness of Parents is Profound and Difficult to Repay*, breast milk is described as the nutrient transformed from the mother’s menstruation blood, for which the children are indebted (Lhamo 2003, 159). On the other hand, Buddhism acknowledges that the birth (of both men and women) is a form of suffering (Lhamo 2003, 158) and all substances crossing the boundaries of the body are filthy (Lhamo 2003, 159). In this *Sutra*, childbirth is described as a bloody event similar to the slaughter of sheep (Lhamo 2003, 162). Blood is believed to be the substance which makes women vulnerable to evil powers (Lhamo 2003, 163). As a result, taboos were designed to discipline women’s behaviours, for the sake of their own safety (Lhamo 2003, 163). Through these taboos, women’s spiritual practices are interrupted, resulting in the regression of their capacity for self-cultivation (Lhamo 2003, 164), thereby determining their inferior status to men.

Alan Cole further examines the dual quality of the mother’s body: “The upper half of the mother, the breasts and face, as the good mother, the half that gives love and nourishment. The lower half is demonized for its reproductive powers, with uterine blood being targeted as the most evil substance in the cosmos” (Cole 1998, 230). Cole claims that the mother-son tie originates from the mother’s love, but ends up with the sin of the vagina, which is the “threatening sexual identity as wife and daughter-in-law” (Cole 1998, 231). In other words, the upper part of the mother’s body is “born of love”, and the lower part is “born of sacrifice” (Cole 1998, 230). Hence, the son, belonging both to the mother and the father, is the knot where the negotiation between the patrilineage, the uterine family and the Buddhist monastics take place (Cole 1998, 231). He is

located in this struggle and the ritual is a way for him to achieve the balance between the powers. Alan Cole claims: “the love and the compulsion to repay that will resolve the crisis (can only drawn) from the mother-son connection (instead of from the marital bond)” (Cole 1998, 168). He observes that, while mothers are often missing in Confucian texts on filial piety, Chinese Buddhist texts extensively and ambitiously highlight the mother-son connection: a sinful mother and an anxious son. Therefore, Alan Cole argues that the *Sutra (Explaining that) the Kindness of Parents is Profound and Difficult to Repay Sutra* along with others, such as the *Yulan Vessel Sutra* and the *Blood Tray Sutra*, are “Buddhist family propaganda” (Cole 1998, 1) as it evolved in medieval China from the 4th to the 13th Century. This project was based on the Buddhist efforts to localize in China. The propaganda, written primarily in the form of apocryphal sutras, inscribes and constructs new familial norms, and, furthermore, attempts to “bind the family to the monastery in a symbolic relationship” (Cole 1998, 1).

The mother-son connection inevitably recalls the concept raised by Margery Wolf of the “uterine family”. In her studies of the domestic dynamics within Chinese patrilocal families in Taiwan, Wolf demonstrates how a woman deploys her power in defiance to patriarchal male dominance through the strong emotional tie she forms with her son (Wolf 1972). The tie is based in “sentiment” and “loyalty” (Wolf 1972, 37) and is capable of negotiation and manipulation. Employing Wolf’s assumption, Cole suggests that the mother-son connection is a “romantic” one, as it serves personal needs instead of corporate entities (the Confucian lineage system) (Cole 1998, 39). Furthermore, Cole employs Sigmund Freud’s Oedipal model to describe sensualized love, such as breast-feeding (mother to son) and offering of nutrients (son to mother) (Cole 1998, 82). He suggests that, as an outsider, a woman’s power is accommodated by male dominance since the tie helps carry on the family line and the son’s sense of belonging (Cole 1998, 40).

However, not all scholars agree with the Freudian interpretation. Chün-Fang Yü argues that the mother has never been absent in the Chinese, or Confucian, construction of filial piety, such as the *Book of Rites* and the *Twenty-Four Exemplars of Filial Piety* (Yü 2000, 339-340). In addition, filial daughters’ stories, such as Princess Miaoshan who gave her sick father her limbs and eyes, is popular in China, too (Yü 2000, 349). Yü argues that Cole focuses excessively on the mother-son connection and neglects the ancestor-descendant tie (Yü 2000, 335). Repayment has been a popular idea in earlier discourses of filial piety, and Mulian’s repayment is not based on gender but generation. Second, Yü argues tension between the father and son arises from

polygamy, which is a family structure that changes over time (Yü 2000, 335-336). Third, Cole focuses on the breast and the vagina, but, in fact, such discourses on the mother's body were not even mentioned in Ming or Qing Confucian texts (Yü 2000, 347, quoting Hsiung Ping-Chen, "Constructed Emotions"). Moreover, it is unfair to isolate China from other cultures, solely due to the lack of romance or love between a husband and a wife (what Cole calls horizontal relations) so the affection can be provided by the son (vertical relations) (Yü 2000, 338).

11-2 The Figure: Master Haitao

Master Haitao was born to a rich family of Taipei in 1958. He was inhibited when he was young. He left home and travelled when he was in high school. During his studies at the Chinese Cultural University, he did not concentrate on his studies. Instead, he skipped classes, gambled and took drugs. He worked in a hotel and even acted as a pimp. After graduation, he served the mandatory military service and finally changed his life style. After retiring from the military service, he got married and opened a travel agency. His marriage and career did not go well, which urged him to go to a temple to *baibai* and visit fortunetellers. After the birth of his son, he started learning about Buddhism. In 1991, he decided to be ordained as a monk after learning about Master Yinshun's philosophy. In 1993, he was formally ordained. Here is how the Compassion for Life Organization describes his feelings and vows: "[He became a monk after] visiting Huei-Rhi Lecture Hall in Taipei; an experience in which he was touched by the Buddha statues' low brows and gracious eyes; as well as the relaxing manner of the monks" (*Haitao Fashi de Hongfa Beiyuan*).

After decades of devotion, Master Haitao currently owns an enormous "compassion career (*cibei zhiye* 慈悲志業) (*Haitao Fashi Cibei Zhiye*)", which is divided into several departments. In each city and county, the branch of the Bodhimanda of Life (*Shengming daochang* 生命道場) serves local disciples. Seminars on Buddhist teaching and meetings for the members are organized. Their offices are also organized in various cities across the world, including Southeast Asia, Japan and North America. Seminars on Buddhist teaching and meetings for the members are organized. In case of an urgent event, such as a natural disaster, the branches organize volunteers and donations. The Hall of Dharma (*Hongfa Yuan* 弘法院) located in Miaoli County, mainly organizes Buddhist rituals and events of international Buddhist organizations. The China Preserve Life Association (*Zhonghua Husheng Xiehui* 中華護生協會) is located in Yilan. In addition, Master

Haitao runs a TV channel, Life TV Web (*Shengming dianshitai* 生命電視台), promoting Buddhist doctrines and the events held by his institutions. Taiwan Buddhist Publication Association (*Zhonghua Yinjing Xiehui* 中華印經協會), located in Yilan, is in charge of publication of sutras, books, stickers, banners, cards and audio-visual material. Digital archives are available and the association sends off 4 trucks to towns and cities to circulate its publications (*Zhonghua Yinjing Xiehui*).

Master Haitao is a controversial figure in Taiwanese Buddhism partly because of his promotion and practice of releasing animals (*fangsheng* 放生) for years. This program is organized by his China Preserve Life Association. The association receives disciples' donations and purchases live animals, birds and fish, and then ships them to dams or mountains for release. I attended one of the elaborate releasing fish rituals at a dam in Miaoli on August 1, 2008. The numerous disciples stood in two rows. Everyone passed the buckets full of water and fish and eventually poured them into the water of the dam. Photos and videos were taken by the staff. Master Haitao chanted beside the rows and encouraged everyone. The atmosphere was pleasant, lively and passionate. Here is how Master Haitao describes the benefit of *fangsheng*:

A life cannot be joked with... What if the fish is your mother, or the blackmailed person is my biological son [based on the theory of reincarnation]? I would not joke with this kind of thing... Buddhism's basic theory is... 'Good will be rewarded with good, and evil with evil (*shanyou shanbao, eyou ebao* 善有善報, 惡有惡報)'. It is a guaranteed reward. If you help a patient, then your body will be healthier. If you help the poor, then you will get a little wealthier. If you smile more often, then you will look a little more beautiful... A person gets rewarded because he/she does good things, so he/she enjoys it and never tires of it. (Haitao Fashi Kaishi: Fangsheng Tan)

However, *Fangsheng* has been harshly criticized by animal rights activists as an abusive behaviour since it encourages brokers to catch more animals to sell. Numerous animals die during shipping and moving. Furthermore, the invasion of the strange animals in nature very often harms the ecology. Here is a case of Master Haitao's two disciples who live in Great Britain:

On 20 September 2017 Ni Li and Zhixiong Li pleaded guilty to a breach of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 at Brighton Magistrates' Court. The court heard

how on 15 June 2015, 361 live American lobsters and 35 Dungeness crabs were released off Brighton on the Sussex coast by a party of over 100 Buddhists as part of a religious ceremony. The court was told how Zhixiong Li organized the party and oversaw the release, and that Ni Li procured the lobsters from a specialist fish merchant in London. The action was contrary to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which is in place to protect indigenous species from invasion by non-native species. When the release was discovered swift action by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) working with the local fishing industry led to a significant number of the non-native animals being recovered. (£28,220 penalty for release of non-native species 2017)

However, the disciples react strongly and Master Haitao insists that releasing life is a compassionate act based on the belief in the equality of lives and love for lives (since they could be members of our family or friends in previous or next lives) (*Haitao Fashi Kaishi: Fangsheng Tan*). The *fangsheng* program has been developing rapidly and gathering more and more disciples. Master Haitao extended it overseas, including Malaysia, Beijing, Hong Kong and Macao. In 2005, a Fangsheng event took place in Aceh, Indonesia, after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. The association organized a Dharma Assembly to cultivate merit for the victims. In addition, 500 birds were shipped there by air to release, but unfortunately before the release began 300 had died (Zeng & Chen 2005). Some press reported that through *fangsheng* Master Haitao collected at least 500,000,000 NT (20,000,000 CAD) in total (*Haitao Fashi Liancai Wuyi* 2003).

Sisy Chen, a well-known Taiwanese politician and television commentator, wrote an article which deeply appreciates her *fangsheng* experience with a Buddhist organization. According to her, she had been suffering from deep sadness and insomnia until she attended the event. The experience was so rich, touching and healing that while looking at those released fish in the river from the drawbridge she “cried softly” (Chen 2011). As Robert Garner suggests, nowadays, very often animal protection (in the West) serves as an act which satisfies one’s “deep-seated psychological needs” (Garner 1998, 71). It seems that this tendency is taking place in Taiwan as well. Anthropologist Hsun Chang argues the popularity of *fangsheng* in modern Taiwan results from the emergence of animal rights and popular recognition of animal spirits. The transformation of life style and people’s relationship with animals can be exemplified by the decreasing number of the “holy pigs (*shenzhu* 神豬)” sacrificed in great Daoist communal sacrifices (*jiao* 醮) (Chang

2007).

Several key Buddhist figures in Taiwan also expressed their concerns about *fangsheng*. Master Cheng Yen of the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation commented, “protecting life (*husheng* 護生) does not equal to releasing life” (Haitao fangsheng re zhengyi 2013). Master Shih Chaohwei, a Humanistic Buddhist scholar, presents a sharply different point view from Master Haitao. She acknowledges that, indeed, the Agama Sutra (*Ahan Jing* 阿含經) mentioned the compassion of the Buddha that he suggests that a Brahman priest not to offer the animals as sacrifice, because the act of killing causes pain and fear in the animals (C. Shih 012). However, Master Chaohwei asserts that at Buddha’s time he never stopped his disciples from eating meat donated by people. She affirms that people should maximize the benefit of the animals based on the given conditions and fate at the specific moment. Buddhists should copy the mind instead of the behaviours (C. Shih 2012). According to Master Chaohwei, many *fangsheng* programs in Taiwan nowadays merely follow the teaching of *fangsheng* without considering the consequences, which is an act short of a sense of responsibility, since the animals are released to a unknown environment without further care. Furthermore, the industrialized and modernized lifestyle of humans nowadays easily cultivate massive numbers of economic animals and fowls and it is unlikely to practice *fangsheng* on all of them, since it is beyond the nature’s capacity to absorb them (C. Shih 012). These *fangsheng* organizations should shift their focus to improving the environment, such as urging the government and industries to treat economic animals appropriately, working on environmental protection, educating the people not to consume so much meat and improving the means of slaughtering. This is a more difficult approach and less people are willing to work on it. According to Master Chaohwei, the disciples are sympathetic, passionate and enthusiastic, but they are short of wisdom. “The sympathy is positive, but the consequences are negative” (C. Shih 2012). Furthermore, she does not agree with some disciples who attend the ritual merely because they want to accumulate merit: “*fangsheng* should aim to achieve the merit of the animals instead of selfish needs” (C. Shih 2012).

However, Master Haitao did not stop his *fangsheng* campaigns. He responded to the critiques by saying: “they [the critics] did not know what they were doing. [Because,] not only humans are important” (Haitao fangsheng re zhengyi 2013). He declares that he and his institutions will continue to educate the public, and carry on the *fangsheng* campaigns in order to save more lives.

11-3 Abortion Ritual Promoted and Organized by Master Haitao

Master Haitao is also one of the most enthusiastic Buddhist figures in Taiwan who promotes and organizes abortion ritual. Zhengzong Kan cites him as a representative case to describe how a consensus within Buddhism is hard to achieve when numerous Buddhist institutions have enthusiastically entered the market (Kan 2008, 393). Master Haitao's abortion ritual is bolstered by rich teachings delivered by him and disseminated by the media he owns, including his websites⁵⁹ and TV station.⁶⁰ Aesthetically, both websites are presented in soft colours and tones both in the background and the fonts, illustrated with the image of a smiling Kṣitigarbha with two babies in his arms. On the side, there is a smiling baby sitting on a lotus flower, accompanied by butterflies. This is the image of the Elysian fields where a rescued fetus spirit resides.

11-3-1 The Fetus which Should be Born but is not Born

Master Haitao compares Buddhist understanding of life to Western religion. According to him, in Western culture people believe a child only has a life when he/she is born, which results in the misunderstanding that a fetus does not have a life. He describes that, in Buddhism, spirit (*ling* 靈) is formed during the intercourse of a man and a woman. The destination of the *ling* is determined by causality, which is divided into two modes: reward or revenge.⁶¹ If you abort a fetus that comes to reward you, then you lose the merit. If you abort a fetus that comes to take revenge, you cannot solve the past karma and furthermore, commit a new karmic mistake. Master Haitao affirms that it is difficult for a spirit to be born as a human. An abortion forfeits the spirit's opportunity to be born as a human, and it is a miserable situation since the spirit has to wait for a

⁵⁹ The website *Wei suoyou yingsheng weisheng yinger chaodu qifu* 為所有應生未生嬰兒超渡祈福 can be accessed in Taiwan and other regions which use traditional Chinese. The website *Yingling lianwei* 嬰靈蓮位 are for followers in China. The webpage claims that despite the fact that many people have abortions due to population control exercised by the government, people are fully aware and capable of using birth control to avoid unwanted pregnancy. Abortion is to kill one's own children and is a sin people should avoid by all means. Hence, people should deal with pregnancy with wisdom, which is continence (*jieyu* 節欲). (Yingling lianwei)

⁶⁰ Master Haitao has various video clips of his preaching which clearly demonstrates his teachings on Yingling, such as Haitao fashi hongfa jijin0447: *Duotai dui taier he ziji, doudui zaocheng judade tongku* (海濤法師弘法集錦 0447_墮胎對胎兒和自己生命, 都會造成巨大的痛苦).

⁶¹ Master Haitao's theory of the *ling* 靈 is reminiscent of a similar theory from the Great Prophet Yang's Baby Holy Palace (Chapter 5) and the Dragon Lake Temple (Chapter 7). As analyzed in Chapter 7, there is a good possibility that this theory is influenced by the Japanese concept of *rei* 靈 generated during the New Religious Movements. Please consult Chapter 7: Collective Ritual 1.

long time to be born in the same condition. Hence, Master Haitao defines *Yingling* as a “fetus who should be born but is not born (*Yingsheng weisheng* 應生未生胎兒)” (Nianforen 2011).

11-3-2 Haunting, Vengeful and Fearful Yingling (Particularly against the Mother)

After being aborted, the fetus spirit stays in the human world. The fetus spirit is a “spiritual body (*lingti* 靈體)” (Nianforen 2011), which does not belong to the category of ghost or humans. They have to stay at this stage until their destined life expectancy in the mundane world is over and they can finally enter the category of ghosts and return to reincarnation. Some women have miscarriages. The fetus died, but he/she does not have a grudge because it is an unintentional mistake. He/she simply stays with the parents waiting for a salvation ritual. Nonetheless, some fetus spirits are aborted on purpose so they are full of grudges (Nianforen 2011). According to Master Haitao, the fetus has a stronger power of grudge (*yuanli* 怨力) and this power accumulates when they grow. They survive on the primordial breath (*yuanqi* 元氣) and spirit (*yuanshen* 元神) of the mother. The stronger they become, the weaker the mother becomes (Nianforen 2011).

Master Haitao explains that the aborted fetus has a consciousness, so he/she feels resentment (*jichou* 記仇) (Nianforen 2011). While growing up, his/her consciousness becomes stronger, so he/she will eventually take revenge and this result in the conflicts within the family (Nianforen 2011). Master Haitao goes further to explain how the fetus spirit takes revenge. The *Yingling* haunts the parents. If the *Yingling* is a male, he haunts the mother; if the *Yingling* is a female, she haunts the father: “this is similar to the theory of the two opposite sexes attracting each other” (Nianforen 2011).⁶² The revenging fetus spirit attaches itself to part of the body of the mother, father or relative, which results in pain or accidents. He gave an example of a woman who had several car accidents and always was injured on the feet, which was because “the fetus spirit was on the feet” (Nianforen 2011). In another example, a woman who has had an abortion cannot get pregnant again due to the vengeful fetus spirit. He presented another example. One of the families victimized by the August 8th flood (this happened in 2009 after the attack of Typhoon Morakot, in which 681 people died) lost their beloved son and the parents realized the boy was snatched by a fetus spirit (Nianforen 2011). All related people could be affected. So Master Haitao

⁶² The idea that the intermediate being (the state of the spirit before entering the mother’s womb) is attached to the parent of the opposite sex probably was developed from *Garbhāvākṛāntisūtra* (*Rutaijing* 入胎經). Please consult the analysis of Buddhist Embryology in Chapter 10: Buddhist Ritual 1.

warns: “you should stop anyone you know from abortion. Otherwise, you will be subject to vengeance like the woman who had an abortion” (Nianforen 2011).

Moreover, Master Haitao stresses that abortion is an act threatening humankind. The tragic consequences of abortions grow negative karmas, hatred and evil intentions. Human minds are distorted and chaotic, so the turmoil of wars arise (*Yingling lianwei*). Master Haitao urges everyone to refrain from having abortions. Meanwhile, for those women who have had abortions, he strongly advises them to attend abortion rituals to save their fetus spirits (*Yingling lianwei*). He insists that the ritual should be performed free of charge. If the women needs psychological consultation and assistance, she can also seek help from his temple institution (*Yingling lianwei*).

11-3-3 The Ritual

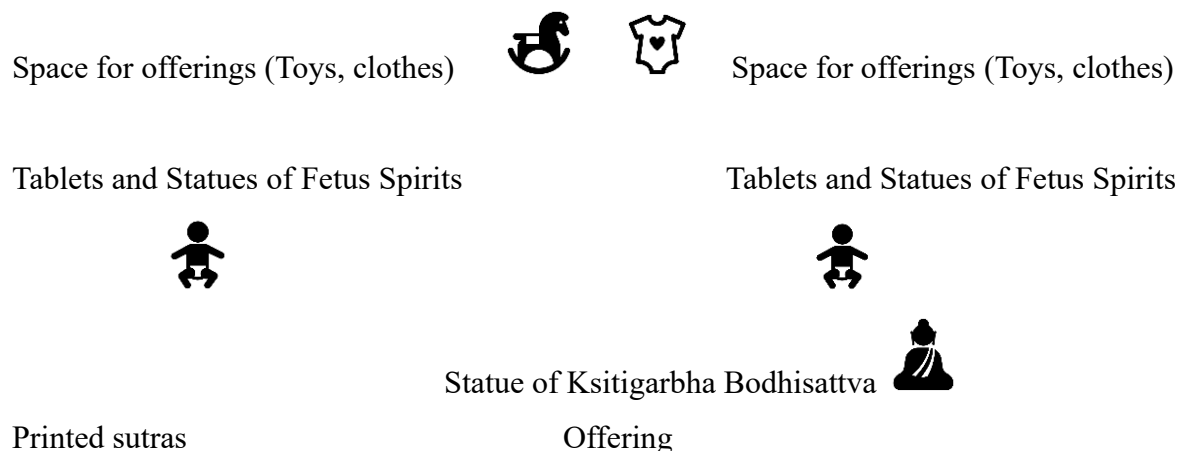
Abortion rituals have been performed by Master Haitao in the Hall of Dharma for years. The ritual depends on Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha’s power. Those people who need these services can contact the Bodhimanda of Life either online, by phone or in person. Here is the procedure:

1. The parents sign up by using their real names or alias online (<http://www.cpla.org.tw/child.htm> in traditional Chinese, <http://www.life-tv.cn/cdqf/> in simplified Chinese).
2. One couple registers and obtains one membership. If the woman has abortions with other men, she has to sign up for another membership (with that man, if he also attends the ritual).
3. She/he/they indicate the relationship between the participant and the fetus spirit, the number of fetus spirits and the location.
4. If she/he/they registers online, she/he/they is able to access the information about the ritual details online with a username and password. After signing up, the institution spends 12 hours for verification.
5. After membership is confirmed, information concerning the fetus spirits can be added online; for example, the number of the fetus spirits or the date of the abortion.
6. According to Master Haitao, the fetus spirit is longing for care and love. He/she hopes to be given a name which makes him/her feel like someone is caring for him or her (Nianforen. Jul. 8, 2011). The names of the fetus spirits are provided by the Buddhist priests of the Hall of Dharma. The name is composed of 2 characters. The first is Zhi (智 wisdom), and the second is picked from the Scripture of Forty-Two Chapters

(Sishier zhang jing 四十二章經). As a result, the names of all fetus spirits linked together will compose the complete scripture. So far, there are more than 2 million tablets placed in the Hall of Dharma.

7. After another 12 hours, the names of the fetus spirit will be inscribed on a lotus tablet (lianwei 蓮位) and placed in the Hall of Dharma in Miaoli and Bodhimanda of Life in Sanxing, Yilan. The Bodhimanda of Life in Sanxing, Yilan has a Ksitigarbha Hall, which serves as the Place for Redeeming the Baby Spirits (Zi'an Dizangdian 子安地藏藏殿), where numerous lotus tablets, toys and offerings are placed. (Liunian 2014)
8. The tablets are placed in the hall and the fetus spirits are taken care of by Ksitigarbha, Buddhist Lord of the Underworld, forever. There is Buddhist chanting, worshipping of the Buddha and recitations by priests in the Hall daily. The participants can log onto the website and check what scripture is being chanted or what ritual is being performed by the priests in the hall at that moment. (Wei suoyou yingsheng weisheng yinger chaodu qifu & Yingling lianwei)

Figure 14. Space in the Place for Redeeming the Baby Spirits of Ksitigarbha Hall



After registration, in order to make sure the fetus spirit arrives at the proper destination, the participant should perform a personal summoning ritual at home. He/she should follow the five steps: preparation, respectful invitation of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha, confession, the fetus spirits taking refuge in the Three Jewels with Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's assistance, recitation of the summoning text (*zhaoqingwen* 召請文) (see Appendix E). The ritual process is simple and easy to follow. In order to dedicate the merit to the fetus spirits, according to Master Haitao, the most important thing to do is:

Buddhism is against abortion because abortion is a sin of killing. Those mothers who have had abortions need to confess sincerely, decline evil intentions and cultivate good deeds. Transfer the merit and good deeds to the aborted children. As long as the intention changes, they can feel it and gradually forgive you. At the same time, attend Dharma Assembly as much as possible. Give the children who are not able to be born the chance to hear the Buddha's teaching and give up their resentment. (*Wei suoyou yingsheng weisheng yinger chaodu qifu*)

11-3-4 Sutras, Mantras and Songs

In addition, participants are strongly encouraged to become vegetarian, avoid killing, practice *fangsheng*, alms giving, recite mantras and do good deeds. Also, they are strongly encouraged to chant sutras at home to deliver karmic merit to the fetus spirits. These two sutras are *The Sutra of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's Fundamental Vow* (*Dizang busa benyuanjing* 地藏菩薩本願經) and *Dharani Sutra of Buddha on Longevity, the Extinction of Offences and the Protection of the Young* (*Foshuo changshou miezui huzhu tongzi tuoluonijing* 佛說長壽滅罪護諸童子陀羅尼經) (*Wei suoyou yingsheng weisheng yinger chaodu qifu*). Master Haitao tells the story of Mañjuśrī from the *Dharani Sutra* to remind people of the importance of confession after having an abortion: “Wenshu Pusa (Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī) had an abortion, too, so s/he went to hell. But s/he had a heart of true confession, so eventually s/he became a Buddha” (Nianforen 2011).

Moreover, participants are strongly encouraged to recite the names of the Namó Amitabha Buddha (*nianfo* 念佛), Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha (*Dizang*) and Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (*Guanyin*) on a regular basis. In addition, they should recite the Great Compassion Mantra (*Dabeizhou* 大悲咒), the Akshobhya Buddha Mantra (*Dongfang Budongfo Xinzhou* 東方不動佛心咒/Nawu Aqu Rulai 南無阿闍如來), the Vajrasattva Mantra (*Jingang Sachui Baizi Mingzhou* 金剛薩埵百字明咒), as well as the following spells: *wēng* 嗡, *bān* 班, *zhá* 札, *sà* 薩, *duǒ* 埵, and *hōng* 吽 (Liunian 2014). These mantras are believed to be able to dispel sins and bad karma. In fact, Master Haitao has a long list of mantras which can help people dispel various kinds of discomforts and misfortunes, such as:

Depression relief mantra (*jiechu youyu zhou* 解除憂郁咒) : *dalie dalie daaya*

bagewadie biandamozanei suoha (達列 達列 達阿呀 拔噶哇爹 邊達摩雜餒 梭

哈)

Children docility mantra (*ernü tinghua zhou* 兒女聽話咒) : namobagewadie

wunikaya dalie darendieye suoha (那摩拔噶哇爹 悟尼卡牙 達列 達仁爹耶梭
哈)

Illness and pain decrease mantra (*jiandi bingtong zhou* 減低病痛咒): dieyata

banzha banzha mahabanzha sawa bayadi hana hana banzhana suoha (爹呀他 班扎
班扎 嘛哈班扎 薩哇 巴呀地 哈那 哈那 班扎那梭哈) (Cengji Heshi 2010)

The Taiwan Buddhist Publication Association publishes books and magazines promoting its anti-abortion philosophy. The book, *Compassionate Buddha Songs (Cibei foqu 慈悲佛曲)* (Zhanjie fashi 2008), is a compilation of melodies of various Chinese popular songs adapted to new lyrics. Master Haitao's team bought the copyrights of these Taiwanese pop songs and made them into Buddhist chants.⁶³ As a result, the chanting and recitation sound quite different from typical Buddhist chanting in monotone. The melody can be quite emotional, either cheerful or sad.

I attended an annual ceremony in Miaoli in August 2008 and listened to Master Haitao preach. Master Haitao's preaching was given in straightforward language; he told his disciples how much the Dharma helps people. One can gain a better life if he/she chants Buddhist sutra on a regular basis. Indeed, one disciple told me the reason he follows Master Haitao is because he wants to make money and earn a good quality of life (Interview with Mr. Lai, August 31, 2008). In addition, Master Haitao did not hesitate to guide his disciples in singing the songs in the *Compassionate Buddha Songs* anthology. In fact, he sings very well, like a professional pop singer.⁶⁴ During the interim of the busy schedule of the ceremony Master Haitao led the disciples to sing the song "The Abhirati Baby (*Miaoxi wawa 妙喜娃娃*)". The lyrics describes the fetus' attachment to the parents, loneliness after being aborted, as well as enlightenment generated by Buddha's compassion (See Appendix F).

Master Haitao's teaching appeals to a large number of ritual participants. Up to Dec. 31, 2016, the number of lotus tablets placed in the Hall of Dharma in Miaoli and Bodhimanda of Life

⁶³ Life TV has a webpage which provides mp3 downloads of songs (Life TV Download Center). In addition, cards (mainly Master Haitao's photos), wallpapers, images of Buddha and Bodhisattvas' and mp4 of Master Haitao's talks are available.

⁶⁴ As mentioned above, his singing can be downloaded from the website of the Taiwan Buddhist Publication Association.

in Sanxing, Yilan has reached 15,414,821 (*Wei suoyou yingsheng weisheng yinger chaodu qifu & Yingling lianwei*). Furthermore, there are new registrations every day (Interview with Master Kaiyun, Aug. 31, 2008). Master Haitao witnesses that *Yingling* arrive at the Dharma Assemblies: “We always prepare milk bottles. During the Dharma Assembly people saw the milk decreasing slowly” (Nianforen 2011). Master Haitao affirms that the ritual greatly assists the fetus spirits. However, he states that the abortion ritual cannot erase the bad karma resulting from an abortion. Once an abortion is done, new karmic causality begins and will go on continuously. It is impossible to get rid of the *Yingling* (Liunian 2014). Hence, Master Haitao urges women not to make reckless decisions (to have an abortion); otherwise, lingering regret and pain will follow (Liunian 2014).

11-4 The Sutra: the *Dharani Sutra of Buddha on Longevity, the Extinction of Offences and the Protection of the Young*

The *Dharani Sutra of Buddha on Longevity, the Extinction of Offences and the Protection of the Young* (*Foshuo Changshou Miezui Huzhu Tongzi Tuoluoni Jing* 佛說長壽滅罪護諸童子陀羅尼經) was included in the category “Composed and Described in India (*Yindu zhuan shu* 印度撰述)” in the Section “Supplementary (*Buyi* 補遺)” of the Additional Canon (*Zokuzokyo/Xuzangjing*, 卍續藏 or 大日本續藏經), compiled in Japan in 1908-1912, often used as a supplement for Buddhist texts not collected in the *Taishō Tripitaka* (Kan 2008, 380). The sutra was first introduced by the first Buddhist temple, the Lecture Hall of Compassion, which performed abortion rituals in Taiwan in the 1980s (Kan 2008, 380). This introduction symbolizes the emergence of Buddhist abortion ritual in Taiwan.

11-4-1 Part 1: The Woman Confusion and Her Sin

When the Buddha was in the world, there was Laywoman by the name Confusion... Sorrowfully she cried to The Buddha,...

"My circumstance is such that my family's condition does not allow me to bear any children. That is why I used medicine to murder the foetus, which was fully eight months old. The foetus that I aborted was fully grown with four healthy limbs and was complete with a human form."

...

The Thus Come One of Pervasive Lights and Proper Views said to Confusion, "There are five kinds of Evil Karma which are difficult to extinguish, even if one were to repent of them. What are the five kinds of offences? The first one is killing

the father; the second one is killing the mother; the third one is abortion, the fourth one is to injure The Buddha, the fifth one is to create disharmony among the Sangha assemblies. These five types of evil and sinful karma are difficult to extinguish."

After listening to that, the woman Confusion wept sorrowfully with tears like falling rain...

The Thus Come One of Pervasive Lights and Proper Views told her, "You are supposed to fall down into the Avici Hell because of your evil karma, and experience acute suffering without any respite.

" 'You have purposely murdered the foetus, so you have to undergo this great torture from one kalpa to another kalpa without any respite!' If I were to lie to you about such torturing retribution, then I am not known as The Buddha."

(The Dharani Sutra of Buddha on Longevity, the Extinction of Offences and the Protection of Young) (BuddhaSutra.com)

The Longevity Sutra has been widely cited by Taiwanese Buddhist institutions that perform the abortion ritual, including advertisements and morality texts (Kan 2008, 384-385). In addition to Master Haitao, Master Chin Kung — the well-known leader of the global Pure Land Hwazan Education Foundation and the Hwazan Satellite TV — also affirms the efficacy of this sutra. When answering a disciple's question about how to compensate the fetus spirits, Master Chin Kung recommends recitation of the name of the Amitabha Buddha (*nianfo* 念佛) and studying the Amitayurbhavana Sutra (the *Buddha Spoke on the Sutra of Eternal Life*, *Foshuo Wuliang Shoujing* 佛說無量壽經), which is able to enhance the disciple's understanding of the Pure Land and the Amitabha Buddha (Master Chin Kung 2013). Yet, when being asked about the *Longevity Sutra*, Master Chin Kung agrees: "if karmic merit is the purpose your cultivation, you could study this (Dharani) sutra. It is a good thing as long as (a sutra) urges people to pursue goodness" (Master Chin Kung, *Dayi Jiehuo*). However, Master Chin Kung urges the disciples to go on to the Sutra of *Dizang Bodhisattva's Fundamental Vows* so that the *Yingling* can receive the transferred karmic merit (*huixiang* 迴向) (Master Chin Kung 2017). Master Chin Kung warns: "Abortion' is killing: not killing others, but killing your own children... This is a heavy sin which is often ignored by modern people. It is clearly explained in the Dharma... [due to the enmity and hatred] the consequences are incredible (Master Chin Kung 2008, 75).

At the same time, the *Longevity Sutra* provoked keen debates within the Buddhist community in Taiwan. The Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA, *Zhonghua*

Dianzi Fodian Xiehui 中華電子佛典協會), a trusted non-profit organization which has been collecting, organizing and editing a digital Buddhist canon for more than twenty years refuses to include the *Longevity Sutra* in its collection (The Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association 2005). The editors argue that in the “Supplementary” section there are several false classics such as the *Buddha Speaks the Sacred Mantra Sutra of Heaven-Earth Eight-Yang* (*Tiandi Bayang Shenzhou Jing* 天地八陽神咒經) and the *Sūtra of Jizō and the Ten Kings* (*Yuxiu Shiwang Shengqi Jing* 預修十王生七經), which shows the editor of the Additional Canon might have intentionally place suspicious sutras in this category (The Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association 2005). In addition, Buddha-Pāla (*Fotuo Boli* 佛陀波利) — the claimed-to-be composer of the *Longevity Sutra* — is a well-known sutra interpreter, but he has never been reported in any records or sutras for translating the *Dharani Sutra of Buddha on Longevity, the Extinction of Offences and the Protection of the Young*. Furthermore, this Sutra has never been found in any Buddhist record or canon in Sanskrit, Tibetan or Pali (The Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association 2005).

Masters Yinshun and Shengyen, two of the most well-known Buddhist scholar masters in Taiwan, argue that the *Longevity Sutra* sutra could be a forged classic. According to the two, the *Longevity Sutra* and several key ideas the Sutra are in keen conflict with the teachings of orthodox classics. Master Yinshun published an article affirming the term *Yingling* and the idea that the spirit haunts the mother do not exist in orthodox Buddhist classics:

It conflicts the Dharma to assume the fetus spirit haunts the mother. The five precepts (wuni 五逆) include patricide, (2) matricide, (3) killing an Arhat, (4) shedding the blood of a Buddha (including maligning His Dharma), and (5) destroying the harmony of a Saṅgha. However, the Sutra replaces the sin of killing an Arhat with abortion. This sutra is possibly forged by the Japanese. (Master Yinshun, 1993)

Moreover, even the *Longevity Sutra* does not identify a *Yingling* nor present a horrifying image of a haunting fetus. Dead fetuses or babies are not fierce ghosts. Master Yinshun and Master Shengyen clearly demonstrate that it is not the Buddhist belief that the fetus spirit haunts the mother (Master Yinshun 1993; Master Shengyen 2002, 116). Instead, in Buddhism, when a fetus dies, his/her destination is determined by his/her past karma. Master Shengyen affirms that according to Buddhism, despite of the different length of life, all souls are equal because they turn

to *kosha/bardo* (*zhongyinshen* 中陰身) and reincarnate in the Six Realms (Master Shengyen 2002, 114). It is impossible that they haunt the mundane world in a baby's shape (Master Shengyen 2002, 114). It is also impossible that the spirit takes vengeance and makes his/her mother, father or siblings suffer. The soul of an aborted fetus has not developed sense of revenge or grudge (Master Shengyen 2002, 114).⁶⁵

Furthermore, Master Shengyen stresses that the *Longevity Sutra* only urges people who have abortions to eliminate their sins by chanting sutras instead of performing an abortion ritual. The *Longevity Sutra* does not propose an abortion ritual particularly serving the *Yingling* (Master Shengyen 2002, 115). Master Shengyen argues that a *chaodu* (超度) ritual in Buddhism should be performed on an equal basis. To perform a *chaodu* ritual particularly for one type of spirit — the *Yingling* — is a new invention (*Dishui Huofeng* 2012). Moreover, differently from religious institutions which claim a bad karma can be solved through abortion rituals, Master Shengyen stresses that, in Buddhism, causality is a long ongoing process. It is not Dharmic to suggest that bad karma following an act will affect reality right away (*Dishui Huofeng* 2012).

However, Master Yinshun asserts that, in spite of the haunting images of the fetus spirits being illusionary (*xuwang* 虛妄), the sin of abortion is authentic (Master Yinshun 1993). In the Buddhist definition of killing, to kill a human or a human-like being (*siren* 似人) are both serious crimes of killing. The term “*siren*” refers to a fetus still in development of a human shape (Master Yinshun 1993). Their life is no difference with a human who is born in spite of an incomplete shaping process. Abortion is a serious sin no matter how it is defined in secular laws. Sex is to carry on the human species rather than for the sake of desire or pleasure. He then argues that modern men and women have sex only for desire and pleasure, which is a violation of natural law (Master Yinshun 1993). According to Master Yinshun, the reason that women claim that they are haunted are because of their sense of guilt and pricks of conscience. It is similar to those butchers who dream of the livestock haunting them before death (Master Yinshun 1993). Similarly, Master Shengyen suggests that the popular imagination of the fetus spirits could have been shaped by people's general understanding of the babies: unreasonable, ignorant, whining, requiring care all the time (Master Shengyen 2002, 114). The fear is “the psychological burdens (精神負擔)” following an abortion (Master Shengyen 2002, 114).

⁶⁵ For a more detailed analysis of Buddhist embryology, please consult Chapter 3: Historical Accounts.

11-4-2 Part 2: Longevity and Protection of Children

I [the Buddha] have a Dharani Mantra which can help to increase the lifespan of a child. If the child is infected with diseases, and undergoes great sufferings, once he has heard the Dharani Mantra, the diseases will immediately be cured. This Mantra will chase away all evil ghosts. Then He said the following Mantra.

*"Bo-Tou-Mi-Bo, Tou-Mi-Ti-Pi,
Xi-Ni-Xi-Ni, Xi-Mi-Zhu-Li,
Zhu-Luo-Zhu-Li, Hou-Lou-Hou-Lou,
Yu-Li-Yu-Luo, Yu-Li-Bo-Lou-Bo-Li,
Wen, Zhi-Zhen-Die, Pin-Die-Ban-Tzi-Mo-
Die-Chi-Na-Jia-Li-Su-Bo-He."*

The Buddha said, "If good men and good women are able to accept, uphold, read and memorize the words in this Dharani Mantra, or speak the Mantra for the fetus that dwells in the womb, the babies who leave the wombs, or sick children for seven days and seven nights, besides making offerings by burning the incense and showering with the flowers. They must also write down, listen, accept and uphold the Mantra wholeheartedly. Then all the serious diseases and the former offences will be eradicated."

At that time, the Medicine King Bodhisattva, Qi-Po went forth to The Buddha and said, "World Honored One! I am known as The Great Medicine King, and I am able to cure all diseases. The small babies may be infected with nine kinds of diseases, which will cause them to die young. What are the nine kinds of diseases? The first is that the parents have coitus at wrong hours."

"The second is that the place where the baby is delivered is defiled by the blood. So the earth spirits leave the home, and the evil ghosts get the chance to enter the household. The third is that during the delivery, the navel of the baby is infected with bacteria, as it is not properly cleansed with antiseptic. The fourth is that during the delivery, cotton wool with no antiseptic is used to wipe the defiled blood from the womb which envelopes the baby."

"The fifth is that animals are killed in the preparation of a feast for relatives and friends. The sixth is that during the pregnancy and the period for feeding, the mother partakes of all kinds of raw and cold fruits and food. The seventh is that when the child is sick, he is fed with all types of meat."

"The eighth is that during delivery, an evil state appears in the delivery room. If the umbilical cord is still attached to the mother, the mother will die. If the umbilical cord is already cut off, the baby will die."...

"The ninth is that the baby is beaten by the evil ghost when he is brought for a walk at night. All newborn babies should be taken care of properly in order to avoid the above situations. Then he will not die young." (The Dharani Sutra of Buddha on Longevity, the Extinction of Offences and the Protection of the Young) (BuddhaSutra.com)

For the origin of the *Longevity Sutra*, Hsin-Yi Lin points out that the Sutra was compiled

around the 10th Century (Lin 2015). Moreover, instead of being Indian or Japanese, Lin believes this sutra was compiled in China, which is an indigenous sutra (Lin, personal email, July 3, 2015). Lin divides the *Longevity Sutra* into two sections (Lin, 2015). As the analysis above shows, the first focuses on Confusion's sin and punishment, which is taken advantage of by many Buddhist institutions to legitimize abortion rituals in Taiwan nowadays. The second, as shown above, focuses on how blood resulting from miscarriage, stillbirth and childbirth pollutes, as well as how specific skills can be used to protect a child and a fetus from that pollution. Signs of being "Chinese" can be seen in the second half of the Sutra. The idea that a woman's blood is polluting and threatening can be seen in the Chinese perception of femininity and a woman's state within a family.⁶⁶ Therefore, according to Lin, the *Longevity Sutra* "preserves a misogynistic attitude toward female reproductive bodies" (Lin 2015), which differ from Indian Buddhist discourses which very often "highlight the horror of both fetal and maternal existence" (Lin 2015).

The spiritual contrast between motherhood and childhood can be seen in the appreciation child-mediums in Chinese magical medicine. Michel Strickmann claims that both Buddhism and Taoism embrace the image of "divinely inspired children" (Strickmann 2002, 110). Children are "innocents whose casual words and ditties might well prove prophetic, even for great affairs of state" (Strickmann 2002, 110). Based on the above, the mantras and rituals prescribed by the *Longevity Sutra* could be seen as a means to resist women's reproductive sin and to protect the purity of children. The contrast between the sinful women and innocent children may still be embedded in the popular discourses surrounding the abortion ritual.

The term "dhāraṇī" is key to examine the esoteric tradition in medieval China (Strickmann 2002, 103). According to Strickmann's investigation of the rich texts in Buddhism and Taoism, "dhāraṇī" is a form of mantra particularly used for Buddhist rituals (Strickmann 2002, 103). Mantras are in Sanskrit, and dhāraṇīs are "unintelligible gibberish" (Strickmann 2002, 103) as this form of incantation was "sequences of disjunct syllables" compiled based on memory (Strickmann 2002, 103). Strickmann scrutinizes how the tantric tradition of Buddhism and Taoism intertwined and intersected in various "dhāraṇī" texts. "Dhāraṇī" functions as a method of healing and therapy, which attempts to control and exorcise demons which cause illness (Strickmann 2002, 110). The phonic device is employed as a means to recall "highly technical doctrinal categories" (Strickmann

⁶⁶ For a more detailed analysis of women's polluting reproductive body, please consult 6-1. Background Notes on Traditional Chinese Image of Women's Bodies: Blood, Power, and Punishment.

2002, 103). Consequently, Strickmann labels these Buddhist texts as “proto-Tantric” (Strickmann 2002, 103). Moreover, the Taoist term “spirit-spell (*shen-chou/shenzhou* 神咒, which recalls the *Buddha Speaks the Sacred Mantra Sutra of Heaven-Earth Eight-Yang (Tiandi Bayang Shenzhou jing* 天地八陽神咒經) mentioned above, which is also regarded as a forged classics)” is often employed as a synonym in order to attract popular readers (Strickmann 2002, 103).

Master Haitao encourages his disciples to recite the names Namo Amitabha Buddha and the Bodhisattvas, to recite mantras and to sing in order to cancel out the sin of abortion and confess. Indeed, reciting and singing as oral activities are powerful in spite of the fact that the ritual participant may not be aware of what he/she is reciting. Sthaneshwar Timalisina examines the efficacy of speech in his study of tantric healing: “[t]he speech act of uttering mantras and their ritual application is an instrument that binds the mental and the physical. Whether through ritual installation (*nyāsa*) of the syllables, or invoking various deities to protect the limbs through ritual shielding (*kavaca*), the immediate bodily awareness is transformed to meet the envisioned body” (Timalisina, 2012, 33).

Reciting or chanting as a bodily act directs bodily awareness and cognition. Hence, mind and body come into one entity. Timalisina claims that tantric healing is not about acquiring concepts. Instead, it is to visualize and to materialize the teaching by means of transforming the body and consciousness (Timalisina, 2012, 33; 35). Since speech, an aspect of language, is so powerful, Timalisina claims that “the deities...are speech” (Timalisina, 2012, 35). Timalisina challenges the authority of the written text in healing. According to him, there is a fluid relationship between text and speech in the tantric healing process (Timalisina, 2012, 30).

As a result, it is very possible that the *Longevity Sutra* was constructed to serve as a healing and correcting tantric text. Nonetheless, Master Haitao tends to focus on women’s sin and confession of abortion. Kan Zhengzong claims that the popular needs trigger the prosperity of the ritual and the *Longevity Sutra* (Kan 2008, 393). Moreover, the introduction of a new ritual and a new scripture clearly demonstrates the ritual complexes Douglas M. Gildow describes, as they are “incorporated into new settings and evolve over time” (Gildow 2014, 61), and individual rites are “extracted from source texts or newly created, combined and ordered into larger sets, expanded and pruned, imported and exported, reshuffled and reinterpreted” (Gildow 2014, 61).

11-5 Analysis

Master Haitao's school claims to be Buddhist; however, it is obvious that Master Haitao also employs various strategies used by New Religious Movements (NRMs), including his charisma, profound but simple teaching and methods, and, most importantly, his ability to satisfy disciples' needs for the sake of the benefits in the present life.

New Religious Movements (新興宗教 *Xinxing zongjiao*) have been growing rapidly in Taiwan particularly since the 1980s. Along with political and social liberation, the Law of Civil Organizations in the Period of National Mobilization for Suppression of the Communist Rebellion (*Dongyuan kanluan shiqi renmin tuanti fa* 動員戡亂時期人民團體法) in 1989 allows religious groups to register with the government. According to Hei-Yuan Chiu's statistics, there were only twenty-three legal religious organizations in Taiwan in 1989 (Chiu 2002, 106). Since then, the number of religious groups in Taiwan increased in average by 24-103% yearly; from 1989 to 2000, the number of legal religious groups increased by 1,304% (Chiu 2002, 106). Fung-Wan Dong divides NRMs in Taiwan into three categories: new religions arising in post-WWII Taiwan, which attempted to meet people's psychological needs; religions introduced from China and other countries during the post-WWII period; as well as new religious phenomenon in post-WWII Taiwan (Dong 1986, 320–321). Similarly, Hei-Yuan Chiu defines new religions in Taiwan as “newly created religions” as well as “newly arising phenomenon of pre-existing religions” (Chiu 2002, 103). According to Chiu, before the lift of martial law, Taiwan had been a land for religions from China, Japan and the early Christianity brought by western missionaries to grow (Chiu 2002, 103). These religions interacted with each other in Taiwan and resulted in new practices, such as the conflicts between folk belief and Japanese Buddhism during Japanese rule (Chiu 2002, 103). Since the KMT retreated to Taiwan, more schools, such as I-Kuan Tao, moved in and took root in society (Chiu 2002, 103). According to Chiu, NRMs in Taiwan normally covers the whole region but focuses on urban areas, inciting and efficacious, communicative, disciple-oriented, worldliness, as well as re-creating traditional religion or culture (Chiu 2002, 104).

According to Chiu, liberation from the authoritarian rule was the opportunity for religious groups to be enlisted and visible to the government and society. There are other crucial factors which triggered the growth (Chiu 2002, 105-106). Socioeconomic conditions during the post-martial law period allowed NRMs to flourish (Chiu 2002, 105). Jen-Chieh Ting suggests that the prosperity of NRMs in Taiwan results from the rise of local culture and the decline of western

hegemony (Ting 2014 10). Religious organizations were able to expand and transform. In addition, within the organizations, new leadership and membership triggered new styles of practices. The collapse of authoritative power (the KMT power) allows for a new power, such as gigantic NRM groups, to step in (Ting 2014, 12).

At the same time, scholars analyze how the desire of individuals provoked the emergence of NRMs. Chiu asserts that, along with the market liberation in Taiwan, capitalist logic permeates in religions, which results in the commodification of religions. Religions prioritized profit and religious institutions compete with each other by means of launching products. In addition, very often religious markets are run in urban areas and the major consumers of religious products consist of the urban population (Chiu 2002, 107). Scholars also analyze the social and psychological factors which allow NRMs to flourish in Taiwan. Dong suggests that social crisis, sense of nationalism, yearning for happiness, reactions against the pre-existing churches and temples, emergence of religious charisma (Dong 1986, 337-342). Chiu suggests that psychological needs, belief in mysterious experiences, charisma, as well as family relations and life of the people call for the introduction of NRM ideas (Chiu 2002, 105).

11-5-1 A Charismatic Leader

Charisma is defined by Max Weber as "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least especially exceptional powers or qualities" (Weber, Roth, & Wittich 1978, 241). Weber further defines charismatic authority as "the entirely personal devotion to, and personal trust in, revelations, heroism, or other qualities of leadership in an individual" (Weber, Lassman & Speirs 1994, 312). Nonetheless, this extraordinary personality requires responses and agreement from the followers. The charismatic personality and messages delivered by the leader forms a "call", a "mission" or a "spiritual duty" (Weber, Roth, & Wittich 1978, 244). Here is how Lorne L. Dawson (2006) demonstrates the three features of a religious charismatic figure: (1) it is grounded in the perceived display of exceptional or extraordinary abilities by a person; (2) "in its historically most prevalent form, these abilities are thought to be divinely (or supernaturally) granted or inspired"; and (3) it is "highly personal in nature, even in instances where there is little direct contact between a leader and his or her followers. It rests on a relationship of great emotional intensity, which typically leads followers to place an extraordinary measure of trust and faith in their leader" (Dawson 2006, 9-10).

In NRMs in Taiwan, a charismatic leader very often plays a key role in promoting the theology (Chiu 2002, 108). These leaders are believed to enjoy supernatural power, which even makes them equivalent to powerful gods/goddesses/Buddhas. Moreover, these charismatic leaders teach a straight-forward method of cultivation which can be easily learned by the disciples (Chiu 2002, 108). The charismatic leaders' exceptional supernatural power is able to spread through the dissemination of the teaching. Hence, disciples often share how the teaching helps them improve their quality of life and benefits their mental health (Chiu 2002, 109). Chiu argues that the worship of these charismatic religious figures functions to satisfy the popular needs for submission rooted in the authoritarianism before the lifting of the Martial Law (Chiu 2002, 109). Meanwhile, while analyzing the authoritative nature of charismatic figures in NRMs, Ting reminds us that charismatic figures embody the new characteristics of the NRMs. First of all, the charismatic leader's absolute authority dominates all other classes within the NRMs, which shapes a more equal relationship between the disciples. Secondly, theology constructed by the charismatic figure allows teachings to be flexibly connected with popular teachings in society and global popular religious traditions. Thirdly, a charismatic leader creates a transcendent authority, which shapes the NRM's universality and allows it to expand globally beyond the local cultural tradition (Ting 2014, 16).

Master Haitao plays the key role in his religious organization. He transformed from an inhibited young man to a devoted Buddhist monk due to what he experienced ("the Buddha statues' low brows and gracious eyes; as well as the relaxing manner of the monks") (*Haitao Fashi de Hongfa Beiyuan*). His bodily experiences, instead of the knowledge acquired from the sutras, enabled him to transform. As Paul Joosse observes, performative skills and regular visibility of the leader reinforce the powerful impressions of the charismatic figure which is inscribed in the belief system (Joosse 2012, 179-181). Master Haitao's images, voice and teachings are spread by means of media, including publications exhibited by his Taiwan Buddhist Publication Association, website, and the Life TV station. His extraordinary personality is represented by images and voices of him, which can be downloaded by followers via the website of his Taiwan Buddhist Publication Association. The media content highlights the magnificent power of Master Haitao, and at the same time, the content is enjoyed and supported by the followers.

11-5-2 Profound but Simple Theology

Hei-Yuan Chiu summarizes the strategies of NRMs' into two features: profundity and

simplicity (Chiu 2002, 109). The teachings were obtained by the leaders through mysterious inspiration, but the teachings are able to be delivered to the disciples in simple language and can be practiced with simple methods. He further argues that the profound but simple teaching makes NRMs “religious fast food” which meets the needs of modern lifestyle (Chiu 2002, 109). This agrees with Chih-Ming Cheng’s outline of the four characteristics of NRMs:

1. A religious group claims that it represents a deity descended to the mundane world to save the people. This message may be delivered through mediums.
2. A religious group claims that its founder is the embodiment of a deity and acts as a saviour to the world.
3. A religious group creates a new set of cultivation skills and promotes its exceptional efficaciousness.
4. A religious group creates its own theological structure. The groups very often modify traditional religious teachings through mysterious experiences. Or, the groups participate in social movements or religious reform enthusiastically. (Cheng 1995)

The strategy of re-interpreting conventional theology can be seen in numerous NRMs. Very often, these strategies transform the theology into a syncretic body of diverse religions. For example, Hugh B. Urban describes some NRM schools as an “amorphous, diverse and decentralized network of beliefs and practices” (Urban 2015, 5). These movements may be inspired by alternative spiritualities or Eastern religions (Urban 2015, 5) or primitive wisdom before Christianity (Urban 2015, 6). Or, as some scholars demonstrate, these groups may also include concepts of “pseudoscience” or “pseudotechnology” in the theology (Bigliardi 2016, 674). Stefano Bigliardi argues that some groups attempt to present a seemingly scientific teaching through rhetorical strategies (Bigliardi 2015, 79). By doing so, James R. Lewis claims, these religions can be legitimized and serve as reliable and rich sources of knowledge (Lewis 2010, 7-8).

Master Haitao’s extraordinary power allows him to create and articulate his own interpretation of Buddhist teachings. Despite disagreements from other Buddhist groups, he insists that *Fangsheng* is the right thing to do. He is at every ritual to cheer up the disciples. In spite of the fact that abortion ritual has been criticized by various Buddhist masters, he asserts that it is necessary to appease the haunting *Yingling*. He employs ideas from several Buddhist sutras, such as the *Garbhāvākṛāntisūtra* (*Rutaijing* 入胎經) and the *Dharani Sutra* (*Foshuo changshou miezui*

huzhu tongzi tuoluonijing 佛說長壽滅罪護諸童子陀羅尼經). However, he “adds” and “edits” the Sutras into stories of horrible haunting fetuses, which are straight-forward and easily learned. Master Haitao appeals to the magnificent power of karma instead of science. For the *Fangsheng* ritual, he clearly denies ecologists and environmental activists’ critiques. For the abortion ritual, he denies “authentic” Buddhist teachings. As Moskowitz claims: “the vast majority of people in Taiwan believe in ghosts” (Moskowitz 2002, p. 9). The popular belief in ghosts serves as an equally powerful source of knowledge as science in this context. Master Haitao nicely integrates popular imaginations of ghosts and teachings in Buddhist sutras into his own.

While analyzing the “survival strategies” of NRMs in Taiwan, Jen-Chieh Ting shows that very often NRM’s teaching may seem to be “nonsense” or “not logical,” which is called the “fragility assumption (*cuiruoxing jiashuo* 脆弱性假說)” (Ting 2014, 7). However, there must be a solid “plausibility structure,” such as spiritual bond amongst the followers or other strategies, which defend the belief successfully (Ting 2014, 7). In Master Haitao’s case, he is able to employ empirical evidence to support his arguments; i.e., women’s sickness, misfortunes and observable signs of *Yingling*’ presence in the ritual space. As scholars have noted, efficaciousness strongly ties religious leaders and disciples together (Chiu 2002, 109). The focus on the experiences in the present life is what is different between NRMs and traditional religions. Jen-Chieh Ting observes that NRMs’ teaching very often guarantees an immediate salvation in the present life through a direct insight of the truth. The NRMs employ the empirical facts in the present life as evidence. Meanwhile, truth is embedded in life (Ting 2014, 16). Also, religious forms has transformed from retrospective styles of exchange between humans and deities in peasant life to a more bourgeois style, which includes: work ethics embedded in religious attitude, the emergence of the concept of an universal saviour, affirmation of daily life in reality, more precise discussion of theology, and higher expectation of the outcome of one’s cultivation in the present life...etc. (Ting 2014, 11).

11-5-3 Individual-Oriented Rituals: Self-Empowerment

On the one hand, new religious movements are described as decentralized and focused on the benefit of the self. On the other hand, the individualistic tendency in society also allows small and intimate cultivation groups to flourish. The authoritarian power of conventional theology has been replaced by the needs of the self. James Tucker claims that New Age religion often self-identifies not as a religion at all, but as an “alternative spirituality” (2002, 47). On this subject,

Tucker states:

Modernity fosters individualism and a gradual weakening of traditional social institutions, including, most importantly, religion. As religion weakens, people increasingly have no overarching spiritual framework to help them make sense of the world. As a result, many individuals turn to New Age religion to fill the spiritual void left by secularization. (Tucker 2002, 50)

Tucker (2002) states about New Age religion in general, “most notably, the self is considered to be divine but incomplete and in need of help” (47). The therapeutic functions of NRMs can be seen in the *Fangsheng* rituals analyzed above.

Master Haitao’s rituals suits modern lifestyle nicely. The abortion ritual commits to the protection of privacy and facilitates the ritual process through the use of internet technology. There is efficiency as well as aesthetics and music in soft tones. Participants can participate in a simple and low-profile manner. It is possible to appease the fetus spirits without exposing his/her identity to the public since he/she does not need to be in the temple in person. All the steps of the ritual process are convenient, easy, and efficient. No extra time, energy or money is spent on taking part in the ritual. Moreover, there are no signs of financial manipulation. Furthermore, the ritual process is understandable — there are no difficult sutras or liturgies to learn, which create a distance between the participant and the religion. This style makes the participant feel “this ritual is done by me,” which boosts the sense of autonomy. In addition, there is a sense of virtual reality achieved by the ritual. Despite the fact that the ritual can be done online, actual rituals are taking place somewhere else — the monks and nuns are chanting for the fetus spirits in the Dharma Assemblies. The participant can be there via the internet. Finally, the aesthetics and music in soft tones help the participants relax and feel relief. It is not new to Buddhist music and chanting to adopt local Chinese musical forms. According to Pi-Yen Chen’s investigation, Buddhist chanting early on adapted Chinese musical characteristics (P.-Y. Chen 2010, 2). Master Haitao’s innovation is even more radical: it shifts from a cultivation of the mind to taking pleasure in familiar melodies and straightforward lyrics. This trend can be seen in some Christian churches and in the I-Kuan Tao. The purpose is to attract more disciples, especially members of the younger generations.

Secularization in Taiwan does not indicate the separation between religion and state. Instead, Ting claims that secularization in Taiwan specifically refers to the emergence of new styles of religious behaviours. The new religiosity is able to fit new praxis during the modernization

process (Ting 2014, 3). For example, Yih-Yuan Li observes how “traditional” practices react to modernity through ritual changes and these strategies assist religions in growing stronger. They can better respond to people’s individualistic utilitarian needs, such as mediums (Y-Y. Li 1985, 77), or, they can better respond to the consumeristic tendency with appeal to moral revival (such as I-Kuan Tao and *Enzhugong* worship complex) (Y-Y. Li 1985, 82-84). Chih-Ming Cheng further argues that the Durkheimian binary model, which draws a line between the sacred and secular, may not be valid in explaining NRMs in Taiwan. Instead, the sacred and the secular are intertwined with each other in conflicts and negotiations, which allows for the prosperity of NRMs. During this process, social needs are satisfied and new behaviours are created (Cheng 1995).

Master Haitao’s rituals reveal a new style of religious belief in modern Taiwan. Based on Master Haitao’s specific interpretation of several Buddhist sutras, the *Yingling*’s origin is explained and useful techniques to overcome the consequences are prescribed. The *Yingling* can be scary and the supernatural world can be mysterious to us. However, we ritual participants can be powerful and autonomous. Through the efficacy of rituals, lives are saved and transcended. These ritual processes are not made distant. Instead, they employ technological tools that everyone can access and comprehend. Such a discourse is made reliable through Master Haitao’s charisma and his followers’ trust. The discourse satisfies the utilitarian needs to relieve from anxiety with the appeal for morality. This case shows that NRMs in Taiwan do not necessarily indicate the separation between the sacred and the secular. Instead, the two regimes integrate and trigger a new style of religious practice within modernity.

11-6 Conclusion

Master Haitao’s compassionate career has the characteristics of a New Religious Movement for three reasons. Master Haitao acts as a charismatic leader who guides disciples to cultivate Buddhism with his lively teaching. Second, he demonstrates a profound but simple theology that is easy for his disciples to understand. Rituals such as releasing animals and Yingling appeasements can be done in a user-friendly manner. Master Haitao’s teachings straightforwardly justify these practices, focusing on the well-known Buddhist doctrines of karma and merit. His re-interpretation of the Dharani Sutra of Buddha on Longevity, The Extinction of Offences, and the Protection of the Young highlight how abortion results in

negative karma and how compassion and compensation result in merit.

These concepts lead to the next quality of New Religious Movements, which is to provide disciples with individual-oriented rituals to achieve self-empowerment. The abortion ritual is free of charge and it fully protects the patron's privacy. The use of mantras to solve trivial problems in daily life is another example of strategies used to reassure disciples of a good quality of life. Through the re-interpretation of an old sutra and the re-design of rituals, spiritual seekers — including many middle-class followers in Taiwan and other countries — can find the teaching satisfying for their needs in the overwhelming modern life.

Chapter 12

Conclusion

In Taiwan from the 1980s onwards, a broad range of rituals emerged, designed to appease or rescue *yinglins*, the spirits of fetuses that died from abortions or miscarriages. The emergence of these abortion rituals may have been triggered by various social, political, and economic factors in the post-martial-law context. These factors include religious commercialization, the legalization of abortion following the Eugenic and Health Protection Law in 1982, the evolution of reproductive technology, and changes in gender relations and lifestyle.

Moskowitz (2001) investigates the possible sources for the rise of abortion rituals in Taiwan, claiming that these rituals might have been imported from Japan. However, he noted that the cosmological framework of these rites conforms to the belief in ghosts embedded in Chinese religious tradition. Moskowitz surveyed the narratives conveyed by religious practitioners, popular media, and ritual patrons and participants to examine the diverse images of *yingling* found in these accounts, reflecting the narrators' ambitions, needs, and desires. Furthermore, Moskowitz affirms both psychological and physical healing functions in abortion rituals while admitting the institutions might be manipulative due to their pursuit of profit. Moskowitz's research serves as an introductory study to abortion ritual in Taiwan based on a functionalist approach.

In contrast, this thesis hypothesizes that a ritual is a vividly staged social drama that parallels and at times transforms reality. A ritual does not function as a safety mechanism that maintains the current social and gender hierarchy. Instead, ritual has its own autonomy, and a ritual patron can exercise her agency. Based on extensive ethnographical study of a broad range of these abortion rituals, this thesis answers the following questions: Who promotes these rituals and who are expected to patronize them? When should such rituals be performed? Where are they performed? How are rituals performed? What happens in the ritual space? Why is the ritual necessary? Applying Victor Turner's ritual theory, this thesis scrutinizes the ritual process's semantic meaning and ritual symbols to demonstrate how a *yingling*'s personhood is visualized during the ritual process. Personhood is defined anthropologically as: "A quality thought to be constituted through-out the life course through rituals, exchanges and interactions, moral bearing, and so forth" (McIntosh 2018).

Methodology

In order to fully explore the scope of the agency of the ritual patrons, this thesis analyzes:

1. Two individualized rituals which represent two extremes of the participant's experiences;
2. Two popular collective rituals, each employing Taoist mortuary liturgy related to Lord Taiyi but in different discursive constructions;
3. One multifunctional ritual linked to the cult of the Lady of Linshui Chen Jinggu;
4. Two supplementary rituals that evolved from the Hungry Ghost Festival tradition: the first in Buddhist style and the second in Taoist style;
5. One Buddhist ritual embedded in the worship of Kṣitigarbha Dizang Bodhisattva hosted by a priest who is a Humanistic Buddhist and feminist scholar;
6. One Buddhist ritual embedded in the worship of Kṣitigarbha Dizang Bodhisattva performed in a "New Age" style.

The findings of this research were collected based on a close observation of ritual components, including ritual procedures, body language, bodily movements, the use and deployment of space, narratives, and objects, and the actions of priests and participants. In addition, ritual patrons/of and participants in the abortion ritual were interviewed. Their feedback helped explain how they exercised their power and agency before, during, and after the ritual as a rite of passage. These participants' complex life experiences and their reasons for attending the rituals were traced through the interviews. The findings help reveal how the emerging range of abortion rituals inherits, transforms, or invents meanings.

The Power of Narration, Conversation and Chanting

The patrons' vocal involvement, such as speaking and singing, is necessary for the ritual process. In Chapter 7, in the ritual at the Dragon Lake Temple, after the patron arrives at the temple for the Spring and Fall Rituals, they read the "The Deliverance of the *yingling* and siblings' spirits and the Settling of Injustice and the Unraveling of Enmity Red Text" in front of the *yingling* tablets and the deities' statues. This is a reaffirmation of the contract between the patrons and the *yingling*. In Chapter 12, Master Haitao guided all ritual attendees to sing soothing songs to express the *yingling*'s longing for love and happiness after being loved. In Chapter 11, in the Dharma Assembly at the Buddhist Hongshi Academic Institute, the power of voice is even more intensively demanded since the Dharmic merit of the *Sutra of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha's Fundamental Vows* can only be spread to all sentient beings through the sound of chanting. Here ritual patrons act as the creator of ritual efficacy through their bodily actions and their personal devotion.

The Power of Bodily Movements

Ritual patrons' bodily movements, such as going on a journey (spiritually or physically), creates meaning in the ritual. In Chapter 9, in the ritual at the Temple of the Lady Linshui, the patron's family follows the priest circulating in the ritual space, representing a therapeutic journey in the astrological sphere. In Chapter 6, in the *Guanluoyin* ritual in the Hall of Complete and Virtuous Eternity, the patron visits the underworld with Jigong as her guide and sees her three *yingling*. This encounter provides her with the opportunity to negotiate with her past and revisit her familial relationship. In Chapter 7, the patrons travel to the remote Dragon Lake Temple from cities and towns across Taiwan. This is a pilgrimage for the patrons to pursue a different supernatural experience beyond his or her place of residence. The patrons escape from the old social structure and enter into a new *communitas provided by the ritual community*. The divisions of the old social structure were replaced by renewed intimate emotions, such as revisiting the memory of the *yingling*, and conversation with other women who shared similar experiences and moral values.

The Power of Ritual Objects

Ritual objects deployed in the ritual space identify the presence of *yingling*. In Master Haitao's Place for Redeeming the Baby Spirits (Chapter 12), a temple space was designated to store all toys and clothes donated by ritual patrons and participants. In most rituals researched in this thesis, snacks, powdered milk, spiritual money printed with images of children's clothes, and toys were offered to entertain the infant spirits. In Chapter 5, divine blocks were used as crucial communication equipment for the patron to converse with the *yingling*. The conclusion of the conversation determined how she proceeded to the next step in the ritual process. One of the most noteworthy ritual objects employed in abortion ritual is a memorial tablet, which serves as a symbol of settlement and acknowledgment. Almost all temples researched use this object despite it not being a Chinese tradition, as formerly deceased children are not given the privilege of being worshipped in this way. This change shows how rituals evolve, along with the growing needs of patrons. In Chapter 11, Master Chaohwei of the Dharma Assembly at the Buddhist Hongshi let the ritual participants place the objects being offered because she recognized their psychological need. In Chapter 8 (Temple of Zhao Gongming, the God of Wealth) and Chapter 10 (Hungry Ghost Festivals in a temple in Taipei and the other in Hsinchu), the paper tablets were burned immediately after the ritual, symbolizing that the *yingling* were sent on to reincarnation after the completion of

the ritual. On the other hand, in Chapter 5 (the Great Prophet Yang's *yingling* Palace) and Chapter 7 (the Dragon Lake Temple), a tablet made of solid material and painted in colors is placed in the temple after the ritual so the spirits can enjoy the continuous care of the temple and the family. Moreover, the duration of this ritual care can be decided by the ritual patrons. As a result, the material of the tablets made of and the way the tablet is disposed of represents the diverse future of the *yingling*.

Exploration of Ritual

The rituals examined in this thesis differ from each other sharply in terms of doctrines (vernacular to transnational; sympathetic to disciplinary), forms (simple to elaborate; free-of-charge to very pricy), and level of involvement (distanced to fully engaged). It is noteworthy that these styles of rituals are rarely “brand new” in the religious context in Taiwan. In fact, familiar liturgies, gods/goddesses' authority, and ritual objects are still employed and comprise the ritual's fundamental frame. Nonetheless, new elements and meanings are introduced. Abortion rituals in Taiwan clearly evolved from traditional practices towards aborted fetuses, but Western legal and medical understandings, in turn, influenced cosmological and ritual understanding throughout the 20th century. Some abortion rituals in Taiwan were imported or adapted from abortion rituals in Japan. In addition, the elaboration of new rituals or extension of existing Buddhist and Daoist and spirit medium rites to include the category of the fetus spirit gave further strength to the elaboration of abortion rites. Finally, the spread of new conceptualizations of the “image” of the fetus spirit in modern media popularizes the ideas behind abortion ritual. This thesis's findings show that Chinese religion can bring in “foreign” concepts but transform them into its indigenous practices (such as occurred after the arrival of Buddhist mortuary rites in medieval China). This conclusion confirms that Chinese religion has been situated in a constant process of adaption, integration, and evolution. Furthermore, in order to include the “new” category of *yingling* spirit in the cosmology, the forms and mechanisms of “old” ritual traditions evolve and expand. As well, in order to accommodate the *yingling*, myths or scriptures are “appropriated” in new ways.

Ritual Mechanisms Explored

The parent-child hierarchy embedded in Confucian tradition was seen as one of the reasons why the parents should not worship *yingling*. However, appeasement is made possible since the two counterparts can communicate via the power of a deity. Children can now be visited during the journey to the underworld (*guanluoyin*) (Chapter 6). *Yingling* can be appeased, and all karma

resulting from abortions can be cut off during the *Kaiguan* ritual (opening the passes) in the cult of Lady Linshui (Chapter 9). Through the Kaiguan Ritual (opening the passes), attempts to get rid of misfortune and bring better fortunes to the child's astrological fate (eight birth characters disentangling the knots), and the delivery of merit to the fetus' spirit is made possible. *Yingling* can be appeased, and all karma resulting from abortions can be cut off during the *Kaiguan* ritual.

Mythology Explored

The deities' legends shape their image as protectors and saviors of *yingling* and transform them into key roles in an abortion ritual. For example, in Chapter 8, according to the reimagination of the Nezha's legend by the founder of the Temple of Zhao Gongming, the God of Wealth—the child-god acts as the protective elder of aborted fetuses since he was also “dismembered” for the sake of his biological father. In Chapter 9, Lady Linshui is a protector of women and children, particularly because she has had an abortion. In Chapter 5 (Great Prophet Yang's *yingling* Palace), Chapter 11 (the Buddhist Hongshi Academic Institute) and Chapter 12 (Place for Redeeming the Baby Spirits), Kṣitigarbha Dizang's vow to rescue the dead and to empty all hells before he achieves Buddhahood makes him a savior of all sentient beings including the *yingling*.

Scriptures Explored

In Taoist rituals such as Chapter 7 (the Dragon Lake Temple), Chapter 8 (Temple of Zhao Gongming, the God of Wealth), and Chapter 9 (Temple of Lady Linshui), a broad range of textual material is employed by priests such as notices and reports, talismans, and scriptures. In Buddhist rituals, sutras are used as textual sources for the abortion ritual. In Chapter 11 (the Buddhist Hongshi Academic Institute), the *Sutra of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha's Fundamental Vow* is changed during the Dharma Assembly so that all sentient beings, including the *yingling*, can benefit. In Chapter 12, the *Dharani Sutra of Buddha on Longevity, the Extinction of Offences and the Protection of the Young* is even reinterpreted and expanded. The Buddhist Master cites this Sutra by focusing on the first section. The incarnation of the sinful woman Confusion as the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī tells the necessity of confession and cultivation for a woman who has had an abortion.

Ritual Space Explored

Traditional media such as tabloids and TV shows, as well as new media such as social media and online platforms, serve as an extension of ritual space. Quite a few informants chose to patronize an abortion ritual and to patronize a temple based on information they learned from media. For example, in Chapter 7, one informant chose the Dragon Lake Temple because a TV

show talked about a celebrity who patronized an abortion ritual in that temple. Moreover, due to the sensitive nature of this ritual and the convenience of patrons, ritual participation is not limited to a physical space in a temple anymore. In Chapter 12, internet tools facilitate patrons in Taiwan and those residing overseas to register, observe, and follow up after the abortion ritual in the Place for Redeeming the Baby Spirits. Media is not merely a tool for delivering messages; the virtual space where information, images, and messages rapidly circulate results in a “mediated religion.”

Agency

Victor W. Turner affirms that ritual subjects return to a new profane social status after going through an uncertain stage due to a ritual’s effects. On the other hand, as this thesis shows, the patrons’ agency can be exercised during this transformation process. The interaction between the ritual’s effects and subjects’ agency creates a new reality after the ritual. Here is a spectrum of the process measures and the outcome of the rituals that were observed:

Limited Sense of Agency

Little Butterfly (Chapter 5) had a husband who is imprisoned. She had controlling in-laws with whom she lived. She enjoyed her career, but she was required to stay at home to take care of her son. Her beloved baby daughter died because of heart disease. Although backed into a corner, Little Butterfly was provided with an opportunity to make decisions, change her situation, and take action by patronizing the abortion ritual. The messages delivered by the *yingling* during the ritual through casting divine blocks were so strong that she chose to respond promptly. She seems to have been capable and empowered. Nonetheless, at the same time, the high cost of the ritual (which she paid for with a loan from her mother-in-law) suggests that her agency was limited when facing familial authority, economic pressure, and exploitative religious practitioners.

Seeking Help

After her divorce, Ms. Liao (Chapter 8) suffered from a broken relationship with her new boyfriend and overprotective father’s control. Ms. Chen (Chapter 9) was tormented by her rebellious son, who dedicated his time to hanging out with hoodlums instead of working or studying. Ms. Liao and Ms. Chen both attributed the disturbances in their families to the unhappy *yingling(s)*. The abortion rituals’ ultimate aim was to solve the patrons’ problems in their relationships (with a partner, with parents, or with children).

Traditional Cosmology

Ms. Liu (Chapter 10) goes to the temple to *baibai* with her mother-in-law, with whom she

does not get along. While visiting the temples, she learns about *yingling* and abortion rituals. Based on these teachings, she patronizes a ritual during the Hungry Ghost Festival to appease her two *yingling*. However, at the same time, she does not regret her decision to abort. For Ms. Liu, visiting a temple or attending a ritual is seen as an individual, familial and communal routine and duty.

Creating Ritualistic and Communal Meaning

When ritual attendees in the Ksitigarbha Dizang Dharma Assembly chant the Sutra together (Chapter 11), a multilayered sense of community is created. First, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha are united. Second, all sentient beings are united, including those invisible in the cosmos. Third, it is the unity of volunteers, disciples, and students of Master Chaohwei. Finally, the residents in the village and neighborhood are united. These ritual elements transform the attendees into a united community.

Creating Narratives

After going through a life-changing journey of *guanluoyin*, Ms. Wang (Chapter 6) has been volunteering in the temple and providing women in need with counselling and support. After casting divine blocks to identify the number and attending the collective ritual, Little Ling (Chapter 10) was determined to spread positive messages to women and girls, reminding them to treat themselves with respect and confidence. Some of the patrons of the Dragon Lake Temple (Chapter 7) shared their concerns with their family and work with others in the ritual space. During the conversation, they reiterated their beliefs and values.

These different rituals realize a continuum of the presence of the fetus' spirit. Within such a dynamic, the personhood of the *yingling* is constructed, and a new sense of community and identity are generated. This alternative parallel reality is significant because it is incorporated into the material conditions surrounding the individuals and society and transforms their understanding of the self and the other (lost infants, family, and community). This thesis's case studies show the analytical value of combining the study of ritual process and symbolic analysis with discourse analysis and materialist theory. As Kenneth Dean (1997) argues, a distinct ritual form may determine a distinct set of effects on the community and bodies' movements, displaying a sense of locality and identity. Due to each event's particularity, each ritual's identity formations and power relationships are unique. A ritual can respond, contest, confront, or cooperate with other forces and break ground in a public space. Through these rituals, some women found themselves re-inscribed in patriarchal relations. In contrast, others found new rituals to create new spaces, communities,

and self-understanding—empowering themselves in new ways.

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Appendix A: Legislative Discourses: Debates on Abortion in the Legislative Yuan: 1984

Article 9, Eugenic and Health Protection Law (*Yousheng baojianfa* 優生保健法)

(Abortion is permissible) when the pregnancy or delivery of fetus will affect the pregnant woman's mental health or that of her family life.

A married woman must obtain the consent of her spouse before the abortion, unless her spouse of is of unknown whereabouts or mentally deranged."

Source: *Lifayuan Gongbao* 立法院公報 (The Legislative Yuan Gazette) Volume 73 No. 32

Part 1: Voices from the Tenured Legislators

On Value of Life

Legislator Lin Dong 林棟

This law is called 'Eugenic and Health Protection', but the content is the complete opposite... If you kill the fetus while it is still in the mother's body, it is murder. ... This law is problematic in terms of subject of life and the maintenance of life dignity. (p. 16-17)

According to the Chinese idea, life begins at the moment of conception. That is why a new-born baby is a year old. Life exists when it is in its mother's body. (p. 17)

Legislator Han Tong 韓同

I am a religious person. I have participated in the funerary rites (*duwang* 渡亡) innumerable times and I deeply understand how a woman who has had abortion suffers after her death. (p. 15)

On Chinese-ness

Legislator Wang Xiuduan 汪秀瑞

I thought this law aimed to protect the health of the citizen as early as he/she is in the mother's womb (our country was an advanced country in terms of fetal education promotion. The history can be traced back as early as the Zhou Wenwang (周文王).) I thought the law was a benevolent act practicing the "humaneness (*ren* 仁)" root of Chinese culture! However, after reading the bill, I realized that the law will sacrifice numerous lives of fetuses at the name of Eugenics and health protection!" (p. 17-18)

Legislator Hu Qiuyuan 胡秋原

Nowadays, the Mainland is harshly performing massive abortions in order to achieve of the goal of the one-child policy. Girl babies are killed immediately after being born. China has become a country of baby killing. As the liberal China (referring to Taiwan), we should not have a competition of abortion with the Communist China. (p. 22)

Between the U.S. and China/Taiwan

Legislator Wang Xiuduan 汪秀瑞

(Quoting a letter from an American student, Lan Kaile, (藍凱樂) which urged the Legislative Yuan not to pass the law) "The moral corruption in U.S society has already ruined the population's patriotism and willingness to protect their country... One of the reasons accelerating moral corruption is abortion legalization, which drives youngsters to indulge sexually ... I sincerely hope that the country's leadership can always follow the ancestors' spiritual heritage." (p. 20)

Legislator Han Tong 韓同

Nowadays the U.S. President Ronald Wilson Reagan is taking action to control the number of abortions. On the other hand, the communist China is exerting great efforts to promote abortion. Are we willing to follow Reagan's slogan or learn from the Communist Party? (p. 15)

Part 2: Voices from the New Legislators

On Value of Life

Legislator Chung Jung-Gi 鍾榮吉

I heard some colleagues talking about the fetus' right to life, but don't women have more important human rights and personhood? If the woman loses her freedom of choice over her body, how can we talk about the human right of the fetus? In my opinion the woman's right of choice has priority over the fetus' right to life. (p. 28)

Between the U.S. and China/Taiwan

Legislator Lin, Lianhui 林聯輝

A lot of our colleagues presented a letter from an American friend. I can also tell you a story of thousands of women in the U.S.. I visited the U.S. congress in 1978, when thousands of women were protesting outside about health issues. One of the signs was very clear: 'if a man could get pregnant he would never object to abortion.' (p. 37)

Appendix B: Legislative Discourse: Debates on Consideration Period: 2006

Article 11: the Reproduction Protection Law,

When the pregnancy or delivery possibly affects the pregnant woman's mental health or that of her family life, the medical institution can perform an abortion according to her will. Before performing such an abortion, a medical institution should provide the woman with counselling. In addition, the abortion should be performed when the woman signs her consent after a three-day waiting period.

A married woman should inform her spouse of her decision before she signs the consent form. However, if, before the abortion, her spouse is of unknown whereabouts or mentally deranged, or if to inform her spouse can obviously result in danger to her safety, there is no need to inform her spouse.

Source: *Lifayuan Gongbao* 立法院公報 (The Legislative Yuan Gazette) Volume 95 No. 28,

Part 1: Voice from the Feminist Camp

On Women's Autonomy

Legislator Lee Yung-ping 李永萍

Are those women who are considering abortion so stupid that they do not consider all the pros and cons before going to the hospital?...It is unfair to a child to be born into an unfriendly environment with lack of support, education and economic aid.” (p. 82)

I, as well as a lot of feminist activists, believe that the mentality against abortion is mainly patriarchal ideology. You regard women as a machine to reproduce. If she cannot accomplish this duty, she is a whore. (p. 82)

The design of a waiting period is discriminatory towards women. You believe that women do not have the ability to make a decision by themselves and that they are reckless and confused. You want to impose another value and belief on them, hoping they can change their minds. To me, this is a design short of respect for free will and social diversity. (p. 82)

Religious groups, if you are pro-life and against all kinds of abortions, like that of the U.S., stand out and I'm willing to debate with you. I respect this kind of religious compassion. However, you are not totally against abortion; rather, you invent a waiting period, which creates new problems. If the woman cannot have an abortion until the 3-day waiting period is finished, she possibly takes illegal medication or consults illegal medical services. Religious groups, please think carefully about this problem. (The illegal medical services) cannot only protect the fetus, but also endanger the woman's life. (p. 81)

Between Elites and the Mass Public

Legislator Lee Yung-ping 李永萍

Can anyone here deny the contribution of feminist groups to Taiwanese society? For more than two decades, these people have made efforts to improve women's life quality and equality! They work with women, rather than remaining in their ivory tower! (p. 81)

Legislator Huang Sue-Ying 黃淑英

I heard the Minister of the Department of Health was visited by several representatives of the religious groups. The religious groups invited a foreign (American) conservative delegate to speak in the public hearing along with two American anti-abortionists, trying to stop the government from legalizing abortion in Taiwan. What a national shame (*guochi* 國恥)! Are the experiences of

our Taiwanese women not experiences? Are our women so stupid that we need to consult foreigners about our abortion policy? Do our national policies need to be promoted by religious groups?... Why do our national policies need to practice the doctrines of certain religions? (p. 74-75)

Part 2: Voice from the Religious Camp

On Women's Autonomy

Legislator Yang Li-huan 楊麗環

Pregnancy should not be regarded as a shame. The most important thing we should do is face the situation and figure out the best protective solution for woman. The best protective solution, in my opinion, is to give her the best social support and let her decide if she wants to keep the baby. Hence, we suggest that there should be a 6-day waiting period before the abortion is performed. In addition, the six-day waiting period allows her to seriously consider if she can have peace of mind after “getting rid of (*qudiao* 去掉)” a life. (p. 60-61; 69)

Feminist groups believe the waiting period is an action belittling woman's ability to make a decision. I want to point out that it is backward to always strongly boycott male chauvinism. We adopted the waiting period program from Northern Europe. (p. 60)

Legislator Lin Daihua 林岱樺

The religious group asserted that, since an advanced country with an advanced level of gender equality adopted a waiting period for abortion, the proposal for a waiting period was not a patriarchal mechanism. (p. 79)

Protection and Safety of women's bodies

Legislator Lin Daihua 林岱樺

The feminist groups keep stressing that it is a painful thing for the women to give birth to a child when the pregnancy is not expected and blessed. I want to ask a question, so are those women who chose abortion or promote abortion any happier? It is known that abortion results in pain to the woman's body, her family and her social relationships. We should stand in their shoes. (p. 79)

Between Feminist elites and the mass public

Legislator Lin Daihua 林岱樺

The proposal raised by the Department has been always intervened by the Committee for the Promotion of Women's Rights in the Executive Yuan (Fuquanhui 婦權會, CWRP). I am very unhappy. Why can these feminist groups have so much power to control our policies? We know that the CWRP is composed of social elites, but I strongly ridicule their arrogance! Our laws aims to take care of the majority of the society...it is for the welfare of a pregnant woman if she is able to access all the information and resources she needs in order to make her decision... (p. 79)

Legislator Yang Li-huan 楊麗環

Why do you say that the waiting period is a measure regarding women as stupid, without the ability to think? A lot of us (in the meeting room) are powerful in society. However, a lot of women cannot even think or strive for their own rights. The waiting period is a mechanism to assist her! (p. 70)

Some people argue that our proposal were led by religious groups. So what? Religious compassion is like the character of a mother. A mother does not punish. Instead, she helps and supports. (p. 70)

On the Population

Legislator Hou Tsai-feng 侯彩鳳

Our population is shrinking. Our government should try all means to encourage people to have children. The waiting period should be 6 days rather than 3 days! Regardless whether or not the woman is in a weak position (*ruoshi* 弱勢) or ignorant (*ruozhi* 弱智), the waiting period is a means to maintain our generation! (p. 72)

Appendix C: Popular and Social Media Discourses of *Yingling*

Source 1: Pocket Fiction: *Killing the Fetus* (*Shatai* 殺胎)

Quanyangren 圈羊人 (2009), *Killing the Fetus* (*Shatai* 殺胎). Taipei: Mingri gongzuoshi gufen youxian gongsi 明日工作室股份有限公司 (Tomorrow Studio.)

This pocket fiction was sold in convenient stores at NT 49 (2 CAD).

The main character, Zhuang Wenyi, is a housewife who has a loving husband and two lovely daughters. Not able to endure the loneliness when her husband is away for business trips, Zhuang was pregnant with a man she has affair with and then has an abortion with the assistance of an OB/GYN Zhang Hao. Her husband returns and insists in adopting Qiqi, a homeless girl they found on the street. Since Qiqi moved into the house, the family has fallen in to chaos and terror. Qiqi was gloomy and quiet, and she sometimes smiles strangely. She mutilated Barbie dolls and stuffed it into an entire fish in the fridge. She first killed Zhuang's smallest daughter, Xinxin, and possessed her body. Then she killed Zhuang's big daughter by crushing the body in a laundry. She finally killed Zhuang's pet dog by cut and cook it. The girl did not only revenge to the mother. She also revenge to the OB/GYN doctor Zhang Hao. She killed the him with a knife and mutilated the body. However, Zhuang's husband, Lin, understood the story from a totally different perspective of view. He believed that his wife had mental disorder because she has to take care of the 2 daughters by herself when he was away. Due to the disorder, His wife killed their 2 daughters and the dog. He can't face his wife and continue their relationship anymore. He was struck by sorrow and stress, Lin committed suicide due to the tragedies in the family. Zhuang also killed herself after staying in the rehabilitation. The police found muddy flesh on her body which doesn't belong to her. After a serious investigation they concluded that it was a corpse of a fetus. The nurse of the rehab then quit her job due to the stress. She worked in a restaurant. One day she encountered a costumer and her child, who looked the same to Zhuang and Qiqi. They only left paper money to her.

The title of the fiction clearly tells that this story represents abortion and *Yingling* in a horrifying manner. In the Preface the author Quan Yangren discusses the issue of abortion from his/her point of view. Adults very often complain that the youth does not behave so they had unsafe sex and unwanted pregnancy. However, Quan Yangren argues that adults in the society are not behaving any better due to excessive abortions. A fetus has the right to live in spite of the fact the world is ugly. The author stresses that a child is a precious gift: "If you take away his opportunity of survival, he can also take away your everything, too." (cover page). According to him/her, the fetus is a complete and spiritual (*lingxing* 靈性) life. If the fetus cannot grow up in this world, he/she would grow up in another world, and eventually show up in front of us and take back what originally belong to them.(p. 3) So he/she warns: "Be careful! Maybe they're right beside you!" (p. 3) Based on the arguments above, it is possible to categorize *Shatai* as a narrative which attempts to alert the society and prevent people from performing selfish abortions. The *Yingling* in the story is fierce, harmful, but at the same time, longing for love. Very interestingly, the gender roles observed by Moskowitz is reversed in *Shatai*. Women seem to be active and powerful (Zhuang made the decision of abortion; she is distanced from Qiqi), when men are passive and emotionally attached (Zhuang's husband Lin adopts Qiqi; the OB/GYN doctor is killed;) This fiction may represent the social changes in Taiwan over the last 2 decades. Nonetheless, in spite of being powerful, the woman is regarded as the sinful figure who deserves the tragic consequences.

Source 2: Newspaper: *Apple Daily Taiwan* and *Liberty Times*

Apple Daily Taiwan and *Liberty Times* were chosen to present the popular perceptions of the *Yingling* and highlight the harming effects on women due to the discourse of haunting fetus. *Liberty Times* is the best-selling newspaper in Taiwan (accessibility rate of 12.8%), and *Apple Daily Taiwan* is the second best selling newspaper in Taiwan (accessibility rate of 11.3%). Consult: 2017 年台灣媒體白皮書 Year 2017 Taiwan Media White Paper by Media Agency Association Taipei (台北市媒體服務代理商協會), p. 29. Retrieved from: <http://www.maataipei.org/upload/1500286184.pdf>. Apr. 2, 2018

A Letter to the Editor

Su Lika 蘇力卡, 2006/07/27. *Kao Yingling zhuanqian, duotai'nu bengkui* 靠嬰靈賺錢,墮胎女崩潰 (Making money with Yingling. Woman who has had abortions Collapsed). *Apple daily Taiwan*. <https://tw.sports.appledaily.com/forum/daily/20060727/22776417/>. Retrieved: Apr. 2, 2018

In this letter the author describes her friend's experience. The author's good friend, Fengling, used to be a nurse in a hospital, and is working as a copywriter. She makes a lot of money. She has a boyfriend who works as a news reporter. Everything in her life seems perfect. However, on a typhoon night she rushed into the author's house with a luggage in hand. Being frightened and panicking, she told the author her secret: over the last 10 years she had dated numerous guys, including married men. She had numerous pregnancies and abortions. She was not worried until she signed a work contract six month ago. The employer was a temple, and Fengling's job was to advertise the temples' abortion ritual by writing stories about revenging *Yingling* so that the temple may attract customers to attend the ritual. Due to her working experiences in the hospital Fengling's wrote vivid good stories, which pleased her employer. However, Fengling admitted the she was getting stronger and stronger sense of guilt. She knew she was fabricating ridiculous ghost stories, but her feelings were real. Sometimes in the mid of night, she felt a chill running down her spine, and she had frequent nightmares. Sometimes she even felt that there was shadow wondering in the room. Due to the emotion chaos, her boyfriend broke up with her. Fengling believed all of the chaos resulted from the mistake she had made before. She believes that the children she had over the last 10 years must have been resented so they cause her headache and sleepless nights. She is sad that the karma now comes to her. In the end of the letter the author said she/he contacted Fengling's boyfriend. He said he did not like his girlfriend's work content. He will be with Fengling again, bringing her to see doctor or attend rituals in the temple.

A Celebrity's Image

Li Qianna zicheng "Muzha Qiuli", kui younian "xiang Yingling" 李千娜自稱「木柵裘莉」虧幼年「像嬰靈」 (Lee Chien-Na Calls Herself "Muzha Angelina Jolie " Laughing at Her Childhood"like a Yingling") --蘋果日報 20141104

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDrJLAcwtBc&itct=CA5QpDAYByITCNW9kpHNmdgCFQIXAwodJg4ChzIHcmVsYXRlZEjh1Yqzwfeu9qoB&app=desktop>

Celebrities may also describes *Yingling* in a negative manner. In an interview with *Apple Daily Taiwan*, Chien-Na Lee, a young Taiwanese singer and actress, described herself in a childhood photo "just like a *Yingling*!" In the photo she was wearing thick makeup, face was white and lips were red. Apparently it does not look appealing in Lee's eyes: "This is a combination of an adult's face and a child's body. This person looks disgusting!"

A News Report: a Psychologist's Concern

Yingling Wenhua Rang Shaonu Beifu Yinying 嬰靈文化 讓少女背負陰影 (Yingling culture makes young girls carry darkness) (2017/07/09) *Apple Daily News Taiwan*. Retrieved from:

<https://tw.appledaily.com/headline/daily/20170709/37709557/>

Scholars claim that the “*Yingling* culture (*Yingling wenhua*)” resulted in tremendous pressure on women and girls. According to psychologist Yu-Chan Lee, 90% young girls have sense of guilt and regrets after abortions. Moreover, they do not have the courage to seek help. “This type of girls are more prone to have multiple abortions.” Lee has a case who has had 11 abortions. The girl does not know how to deal with the difficult situations and how to prepare for the future. They are short of the ability to “learn from the experiences”.

News Report: Women’s Fear to the *Yingling*

Xiang, Chengzhen 項程鎮 *Qu Yingling xingqinfan guanbupa zaifan zhongxing sinian 驅嬰靈性侵犯 關不怕再犯重判4年* (Sex Assault Offenders Performing Exorcism of Yingling, Not being Afraid in Prison for another r Four years). (Oct. 28, 2015) Liberty Times: <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/society/breakingnews/1489761>. Retrieved Apr. 2, 2018

The search results of “*Yingling*” on the Liberty Times’ website show numerous criminal news on how phishing scammers target on women with the bait of efficacious abortion rituals. One of the cases took place in Taoyuan borough in 2014. A guy drove a car by a woman walking alone. He told her that she was followed by a *Yingling*, which caused the woman panicking. Deceiving that he can perform exorcism, he drove her to a remote place. He uttered random spells on the car, then he touched the woman’s breast with his hand. He made signs on the woman’s body with a red envelope in hand, pretending that he was performing a ritual, then he sexually harassed the woman. Rushing out the car, the woman called police and the man was arrested. He admitted that he has sexually harassed 4 women with the same trick. He was sentenced to four years in prison.

Source 3 A Youtuber’s Video Clip Shared on Facebook: Inviting *Yingling* to the Park

Liann, (Sep. 21, 2017) “*Gongyuan shaoxiang chang erge zhao “Yingling”, xiaoma yaoyi cong jingzhi bian jilie yaohuang 公園燒香唱兒歌招「嬰靈」 小馬搖椅從靜止變激烈搖晃*” (The calm before the storm: Burning incense and singing children's hymns in a park to summon Yingling). ETtoday SHARE. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/ETtodaySHARE/videos/vb.238008506256087/1591333037590287/?type=2&theater>

News channel ETtoday shared a video in which a Youtuber- Liann- did an experiment based on an urban legend of *Yingling* on its Facebook page. It is said that that if someone sings nursery rhyme in a park in the mid of night, *Yingling* would be attracted and appear. In this video clip Liann prepared half cup of rice and a burning incense (only 1 since it is for ghost, according to him), as well as candies, hoping it can works for the *Yingling* more efficiently. Placing all the offerings below a banyan on the ground, where there are street lights and a rocking horse is placed, Liann read his invitation:

“Inviting the children here to enjoy these candies.”

Then Liann sings a child’s song “The younger sister carries a doll on her back”:

The younger sister carries a doll on her back; (meimei beizhe yangwawa 妹妹背著洋娃娃)

Walking to the garden to see the flowers; (zoudao huayuan laikanhua 走到花園來看花)

The doll cries and calls Mother; (wawa kule jiaomama 娃娃哭了叫媽媽)

Birds on the trees are laughing hahaha. (shushang xiaoniao xiaohaha 樹上小鳥笑哈哈)⁶⁷

⁶⁷ This song has been described in several online forums in Taiwan and China as stories about deceased girls. For

Nothing happened after he sang for the 1st time, so Liann tried again. Finally, in the end of the video, the rocking horse started shaking. Liann screamed: “Shxt! Shxt!” (in English).

Up to April, 17, 2018, This shared video gained 308,000 views, 482 shares and 632 comments on ETtoday’s Facebook page. Here are several of the comments acquired:

“Shxt your mother. There is a wire connecting to the horse and rocked it. You’re an idiot who wants more clicks.” (Wie-cheng KE) (189 likes)

Indeed, most commenters were critical, claiming that they saw a wire in white tied to the horse so this video cheats. At the same time, there are comments sympathetic about the *Yingling*:

“Whether this video is truthful or not, you don’t want to be bothered by them, why did you bother them? If (you made this video to boost) views, why didn’t you make more meaningful videos? If spiritual beings (*lingti* 靈體) really exist, they should not be teased by you this way, no matter they are children or adults.” (Xie Yuxuan 謝雨軒) (33 likes and tears)

“Those *Yingling* long for father and mother’s love. They do not have time to enjoy the human’s life. You summoned them only because of making videos. I’m sad for them.” (Wendy Tsai) (78 likes, tears and surprises.)

The emergence of social media has enriched the images of *Yingling*. Facebook provides the users with a platform to articulate. The viewers are not passive subjects anymore. Instead, they are able to respond to the manipulation of horrifying images of *Yingling*. Based on the comments, *Yingling* can be lonely and vulnerable, and they require respect. At the same time, it is more reasonable for humans to keep distance with them. More critical voices against manipulations can be heard in PPT BBS, the media examined below.

Source 4: PPT BBS: *Users’ Experiences of Witnessing an Yingling*

Bulletin Board Systems (BBS): PPT⁶⁸. Haphazard sampling is employed; the top 3 messages pop up in the results of search “*Yingling*” in the forum are analyzed. Messages critical to the existence of *Yingling* and abortion ritual are screened out since they do not portray the images of *Yingling*. Moreover, critical voices have been analyzed in previous sections.

example, an author on the Forum, Baby Home, where mothers share their parenting experiences, forwarded a story of a Japanese girl died of epidemic disease and a Taiwanese girl died of sexual violence: <https://forum.babyhome.com.tw/topic/2437661>. Retrieve: Apr. 2, 2018

⁶⁸ PTT was founded in 1995 and is currently the most popular Bulletin Board Systems in Taiwan. According to the homepage of PPT, the aim of this BBS platform is to provide the users with a “fast, instant, equal, free-of-charge, open and liberal space for speeches” (Retrieved from: <https://www.ptt.cc/index.html>)

According to Wikipedia: “PTT has more than 1.5 million registered users, with over 150,000 users online during peak hours. The BBS has over 20,000 boards covering a multitude of topics, and more than 20,000 articles and 500,000 comments are posted every day.” (Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PTT_Bulletin_Board_System). Research articles have been published on the users of PPT. For example, Barry Lee Reynolds and Siou-Lan Wang do a research on the knowledge construction of PPT heavy users (Barry Lee, Reynolds, and Wang Siou-Lan. 2014. “An investigation of the role of article commendation and criticism in Taiwanese university students’ heavy BBS usage.” *Computers & Education* 78, 210-226). Feichi Chiang studies the BL (Boys’ Love) fandom in Taiwan via the analysis of PPT content. (Chiang, Feichi. “Counterpublic but obedient: a case of Taiwan’s BL fandom.” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 17, no. 2 (June 2016): 223-238).

Users of PPT BBS had several keen debates on *Yingling*. These debates based on religions, philosophies, logics and personal experiences barely reached clear conclusions.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, users do share their (or their acquaintance's) experiences of witnessing *Yingling*.

Post 1: a Dismembered *Yingling*

Unknown author, 14:29, July 6th, 2000. (Retrieved from https://ppt.cc/_z0E):

This morning when I was buying breakfast at a breakfast place, I sensed it. (He/she saw a young woman entering the store followed by a child).

That child's leg on the right hand side was missing. There are many holes on his body. His right hand and his chest on the right side were both missing. His body was like propped up by glue. His left eye was empty. The right eye- his only eye left- gazed at the face of the young woman. I saw his eyes. There was no resentment, only a child's attachment to the mother. Then the young woman paid her bill and left. The baby crawled and followed. When they were about to leave the baby seemed to know that I saw him. He turned and took a look at me. He left with the young woman right away. I rode motorcycle home crying.

Comments:

I'm crying. R.I.P. (wusau, 17:16, July 6th, 2000)

If the author meets the lady again, please courageously ask her to deal with the situation properly. (ahiiy, 18:27, July 6th, 2000)

This is probably because the lady made the decision without serious consideration. (leokind, 14:31, July 6th, 2000)

Why do people always question women when hearing of this kind of stories? (turtledove, 14:54, July 7th, 2000)

How about if she was raped? If the fetus had disease? People who have had abortions should be punished? None of us know what's going on there. (inego, 22:50-51, July 6th, 2000)

Yingling is gentle in Buddhism. Religious swindler collect money by creating the image of haunting *Yingling*. (iehow, 17:18, July 7th, 2000)

Post 2: Auntie's Two *Yingling*

Iphigeniyu (Poisson), June 6, 2016. (Retrieved from: <https://www.ptt.cc/bbs/marvel/M.1465218780.A.B6A.html> . Retrieved on Apr. 4, 2018)

Once my mother visited the temple and the staff asked her if she has had abortions before. My mother said no. Then the staff asked if she has ever advise or agree people to have abortions. The staff said she can see many children following my mother. Being wondered, after going back my mother asked and realized that my aunt had 2 abortions when she was young... According to the priests in the temple, the two *Yingling* prefer to follow my mother instead of my aunt, because my mother is a devoted Buddhist. I asked my mother: "Since he/she is following you, (can you tell me) where does he/she sleep?"

"At the foot of the bed."

My mother tried to bring the *Yingling* to Dharma assembly in Nantou in order to have him/her to go to salvation. However, it did not succeed at the first time, which made my mother believe that was a deceptive ritual. The reason was because she said to the yingling in the end of the ritual: "Ok, let's go home". The priest said she should not have said anything in the ritual....

So my mother participated the ritual again. This time the priest told her the yingling was having

⁶⁹ For example, a debate on the Marvel Board titled "你相信嬰靈的存在嗎?" was launched by user Eiyuu on Oct. 31, 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www.ptt.cc/bbs/marvel/M.1446221311.A.255.html> Another debate on the Marvel Board titled "‘嬰靈’說根本是捏造的" was launched by user NEWAZEL on Apr. 2, 2009. Retrieved from: <https://www.ptt.cc/man/marvel/D2C/DB31/D3A1/D546/M.1243612251.A.223.html>

fun playing, so “you can go now.” Hence, the ritual succeeded.

Comments:

It was creepy. (LisaLee, 21:38, June 6, 2016.)

It was touching. Child please be reincarnated in a good family. (vuvu000, 12:59, June 7, 2016)

The staff just say there are *Yingling* as long as they see a woman. If they are wrong they’ll just find a reason to justify. (investment, 21:41-42, June 6, 2016)

According to the official data, abortions are popular in Taiwan: 1 of 4 women in Taiwan has abortions. So whenever you see a woman it is logical to contribute all her problems to abortions. (loveve5566, 11:03-04, June 7, 2016)

This industry (religious institutions) have been evolving...” (rurucat, 13:25, June 10, 2016)

Post 3: Do *Yingling* Grow Up?

Iris945, Gougou, 16:23, Oct. 19, 2016. (Retrieved from: <https://ptt.jimpop.org/5f8632473afc>)

My friend lives with her boyfriend’s family. One night she waked from sleep, and she saw a guy floating under the ceiling, looking at her and her boyfriend. My friend was confused (there is nothing confusing. That is a ghost, ok?) She was not scared. She looked at the image very closely because of being confused. According to her description, that man’s face was blurred, and he was naked except a boxer (she really looked very closely). He would just look like a human if he had not been floating in the air. After looking closely, she was not scared. Then my friend fell asleep again.(She can fall asleep.) Next day her boyfriend told his mother about this experience, and he was told he mother had a miscarriage (of his elder brother) before having had him. ()

Comments

My deceased twin brother also grew up with me until my junior high age. (minikitty322, 21:57, Oct. 19, 2016)

My 4-year-old sister did grow up, but she didn’t let me see her face. (wallachia, 02:28, Oct. 19, 2016)

Another comment seemed to more convincing to the readers and even made one of them tear up:

When I was a child I had a dream. In the dream, there was a short-hair junior high school girl standing on the ridge between two rice farms. Her voice was far but clear: “is mother fine?” After I got up (and asked) I realized that I had a big sister who was aborted. (Lilian3, 17:07, Oct. 19, 2016. Retrieved from: <https://ptt.jimpop.org/5f8632473afc>)

This (ghost) is not necessarily the same one to the aborted older brother. (alwaysstrong, 20:24, Oct. 19, 2016)

If she sees a female ghost another day, would the mother said she has had aborted an older sister? If she sees a dog another day, would the mother said she has had aborted a dog? (DrunkInDreams, 20:45-46, Oct. 19, 2016)

I am curious about who made the boxer for him? (rogudan, 23:50, Oct. 26, 2016)

The mother was probably thinking “It’s been a long time; let me burn some boxers for him (referring to the ritual of burning paper money and offerings to the ghosts.)” (dsa3717, 22:48, Oct. 19, 2016)

Source 5 The *Yingling* Tank (*Yingling Zhanche* 嬰靈戰車)

An electronic gamer impregnated one of his fans. This story triggered the term “the *Yingling* Tank” which has been employed to label those gamers with sex scandals.

The Story

Pangding Jiamian 胖丁呷麵. *Ganshuo nimei neishe? Tongshen zhibo “biqiang Dinter”*: you

chaoyinbo haishuo meiduo? 敢說你沒內射? 統神直播「逼嗆丁特」: 有超音波照還說沒墮 (How dare you say you didn't ejaculate inside her?!) Tongshen's livestream disses Dinter - even with an ultrasound, he denies she had an abortion). ETtoday新聞雲, ETtoday, Oct. 02 2017, <https://www.ettoday.net/daemon/post/30422#ixzz58XavEA37> Retrieved on Apr.2, 2018

An electronic gamer Dinter of the League of Legends had a scandal in 2015. A fan claimed that she was pregnant with him. In a Youtube video Dinter said in tears that he was set up. He has never seen the (ultrasound photo of) the fetus nor witnessing the abortion. He said he was threatened by mafia and almost attempted suicide. He survived through the encouraging messages from his fans. Soon after the video was posted on Youtube, the fan posted a message as well as a diagnosis and an ultrasound photo on PTT. According to her, she was pregnant with Dinter, and she did not understand why Dinter told lies constantly and hurt her. Then Dinter said that the fan was indeed pregnant, but he is not sure if "that is my child". Netizens, including live streamers, were not very happy with Dinter's answers. Some argue that people have a higher expectation toward celebrity, such as an electronic gamer "How can parents rest assured and allow their children to play electronic games?"

The Image

Mimi 咪咪. (2017/11/21) *You Gaitu Gaoshou ma (Tefen buyao Rulai)* 有改圖高手嗎? (特粉不要入來) (Anyone good at photoshop? (Dinter's fans don't enter here)) (Retrieved from: Bahamute 巴哈姆特: <https://forum.gamer.com.tw/Co.php?bsn=60076&sn=47481387>)

Bahamute 巴哈姆特 (<https://m.gamer.com.tw>) is one of the biggest forums of ACG (Animation, Comic and Game) in mandarin.

Netizens created various images with of the "Yingling tank". A crying baby's face was pasted on the top of a tank. The image of Yingling tank was edited into various versions. The tank can be in different colors and styles. Multitudes of baby heads become cannonballs or bullets.

Netizens ask questions:

Does the Yingling go back to reincarnation when Dinter retires? (ru04ul4, 10:21, Jun. 28, 2017)

Does Dinter celebrate Father's Day? (a58805082, 02:14, Aug. 4, 2016. Retrieved from PTT: <https://www.ptt.cc/bbs/LoL/M.1470248077.A.A85.html>)

Comments:

Papa I feel so cold (referring to the common belief that Yingling are suffering from coldness and hunger). (maime55, 08:04, Aug. 4, 2016.)

Father's Day + Hungry Ghost festival (Zhongyuanjie 中元節) (Jlee5566, 08:11, Aug. 4, 2016)

(He) definitely celebrates it because this is his first Father's Day. (chrisdddd, 02:50, Aug. 4, 2016)

Labelling gamers' sexual scandals

Yingling Zhanche Kaiqilai! LOL Dianjing Xuanshou zaobao yao "Nufensi Duotai Sanci" Wang kuangsuai: Baba wo hao leng 嬰靈戰車開起來! LOL 電競選手遭爆要「女粉絲墮胎 3 次」網狂酸: 拔拔我好冷! (The Yingling Tank sets in motion! LOL Electronic gamer is revealed to "request female fans to have 3 abortions" Netizen mocked: Papa I feel so cold.) Retrieved from: COCO01 Forum. <http://www.coco01.today/post/766698>)

When reporting the sex scandals of a Korean electronic gamers' Spirit of the Afreeca Freecs League, the news article reviews the fans' story and Spirit's indifference to the fan and the pregnancy.

Appendix D: Excerpt from Interview Transcript:
Religious Activists, Feminist Activists, and OB/GYN Doctors

Interviewees

Religious Activists

Father Louis Aldrich: professor, Faculty of Theology and founder of the Center of Bioethics at Fu-Jen Catholic University, Oct. 2, 2008

Mr. Chen Qinglong: spokesperson of the Great Coalition of Respect for Life and People's Movement, Oct. 2, 2008

Feminist Activists

Ms. Jian: Taipei Association for the Promotion of Women's Rights (TAPWR, *Taibeishi nuxing quanyi cujinhui* 台北市女性權益促進會) Oct. 6, 2008

Dr. Jia-Yen Lee: Feminist physician, Dec. 15, 2008

OB/GYN Doctors

Dr. Lee: New Taipei City, Jun. 21, 2008

Dr. Wang: New Taipei City, July 2, 2008

Dr. Peng: New Taipei City, July 2, 2008

Part 1: Is the Fetus a Life?

Father Louis Aldrich

Father Louis Aldrich defines the life of the fetus from a religious perspective. To Catholics, the fetus has a soul which is created by God. After being aborted, the soul of the fetus goes back God. However, people do not know the relationship between the fetus and God. The idea of a soul cannot be proven by science. People understand and perceive it through their reason. Heaven involves the loving relationship, determined by reason, between God and the person. Catholics ask: "Whom do you love?" and "How do you love?" Dr. Aldrich stressed that abortion is an act against love to the fetus, who was created by God. (Interview with Father Louis Aldrich)

Mr. Chen Qinglong

Mr. Chen asserted that their group's belief is similar to and integrated in local religious traditions in Taiwan. According to him, people recognize the fetus as a life, or as a human being, in certain conditions. For example, people believe a new-born baby is a year old, because it was already a human being in the uterus. According to Mr. Chen, the fetus as a life is a Buddhist notion, and, since more than 80% of the population in Taiwan is religious, a large number of people believe that the fetus has a life. This traditional idea shaped how abortion was defined in legal conventions; e.g., abortion was regarded as a crime in the Criminal Law. However, people's ideas have changed nowadays, and the government rationalizes abortions. If the laws allow women to have abortion, it is like a darkly hinting that illegal acts are acceptable. Mr. Chen criticized that evil law is still a law. In earlier religious traditions in Taiwan, people recognized that the fetus has a life and that fetus spirits were worshipped with other spirits. He sighed: "Nowadays we have to strive to prove the fetus has a life!" Since the fetus is a life, it should be treated equally to other lives. Mr. Chen stated, "I attended a meeting with feminist groups. During a conversation, a member of a feminist group at a University call the fetus "that object (*nage dongxi* 那個東西)". They do not think that the fetus is a life. Their way of thinking is to materialize the fetus. They are radical and extreme."

Mr. Chen argued that the feminists' idea that the fetus is not a life is arbitrary and inappropriate. He took an example: "Let us imagine, if we see a black shadow in the darkness, and you do not know it is a person or a dangerous bear. Will you shoot it right away?" Nobody knows if a fetus

spirit is a life. Since people cannot prove that, they have to be extremely careful. That is why Father Louis Aldrich urges people to respect the value of life. Mr. Chen argued that feminists in Taiwan condemned the coalition's action of screening "The Eclipse of Reason" in Taiwan because they do not believe the fetus is a life. However, people have the right to know the truth before making a decision. The feminist concealment of the truth is immoral. The woman is not threatened or harmed by the fetus's life; instead, she is the one who is threatening and harming.

Ms. Jian

Ms. Jian asserted that the embryo is not a life. Her definition of the fetus is the same as that by the Eugenic and Health Protection Law, which allows 24 months for a woman to make the decision to have a legal abortion. According to Ms. Jian, since the fetus is not mature before the 24th week of pregnancy, it does not have a life nor human rights. Since an embryo/fetus before the 24th week still relies on the nutrition supply of a woman, the embryo/fetus is part of the woman's body. The disputes between pro-choice and pro-life only occur after the pregnancy lasts for more than 24 weeks. Hence, to have an abortion is not to kill a human being. Her association does not support abortions after the 24th week of pregnancy, either. The decision to abort at this stage should be carefully examined.

Dr. Lee

Dr. Lee does not agree that the fetus has a life, either. He raises the idea of the "slippery slope": "(To Buddhism) the fetus has a life. If so, eating meat is killing, too. But a vegetable has a life, too."

Dr. Lee Jia-Yen

Dr. Lee Jia-Yen argued that to claim the fetus is a life is a vague definition: "How many cells can constitute a life? Can you call a piece of meat a life? Then to cut a piece of meat is called killing a life. The evolution of the religious meaning of the life can go on and go on forever." Dr. Lee Jia-Yen insists a doctor should define the meaning of life according to their professional knowledge, regardless of any religious doctrines. Medically speaking, the fetus is not a life. The infant can only be called a life once it is born (normally more than 24 weeks of pregnancy) and survives (including in the incubator). This is why Dr. Lee Jia-Yen claimed that an abortion is not killing.

Dr. Wang

Although the fetus is an unshaped human, it still has a life, which begins at the moment of conception, which is then followed by implantation and development in the uterus. Due to life, the embryo is able to divide and grow. Unfortunately, for some fertilized eggs, they fail to implant within the uterus and result in an ectopic pregnancy. In spite of the fact that it has signs of life, including a heartbeat and growth, it cannot survive. Hence, Dr. Wang did not agree with the popular idea that the life does not begin until the moment the fetus has a heartbeat. The fetus has its own life, which does not belong to the woman. The woman is merely to provide the fetus with an environment to grow in. As a result, Dr. Wang believed that to have an abortion is to kill. She argued that the feminists activists' definition of life are examples of "selfish one-sided (*pianmian* 片面)" discourses.

Part 2: If the Fetus is Deformed...

Dr. Lee

Even if a woman is ready to have a child, if she received a vaccine or radiation, or Tetanus, or if the fetus shows any signs of deformation or chromosome disease, he recommends that she has an abortion.

Dr. Wang

To Dr. Wang, discrimination toward the fetus happens in many Chinese families, such as sex selection. Furthermore, an unhealthy baby can be a burden on the family and society, due to the lack of social supportive programs for the disabled community. Dr. Wang complained that, compared to the active religious charity organizations in Taiwan, the government is not active enough. Recently, the Bureau of National Health Insurance has been more and more careful in the distribution of money and only extremely severe injury and disease (*zhongda shangbing* 重大傷病) can obtain funding from the government. This situation frustrates parents of disabled children and indirectly results in more abortions. Deformed babies cannot have good opportunities in future health care, education and careers.

Dr. Wang and Dr. Peng's Catholic clinic does not perform abortions for cases in which the fetus is found to be abnormal and the parents decide to terminate the pregnancy. Dr. Wang and Dr. Peng's clinic would then refer the patient to local medical centers or central medical centers. Since a fetus is a future life, Dr. Wang supported the restrictions to the practices of genetic selection and abortion in order to avoid discrimination against the fetus.

Dr. Peng

If the fetus is severely deformed, Dr. Peng does not oppose the idea of abortion. Nonetheless, according to Dr. Peng's observation, sometimes an abortion is requested by parents for less severe health issues or simply, sex selection. Dr. Peng said in fact some cases, such as cleft palate, are curable, while some deformations are not curable. According to Dr. Peng, in earlier days, some people insisted that life is the gift of God and it is born for a reason. The parents should contribute to the life. However, Dr. Peng agreed that for some severe cases, such as "brainless" or "watery brain", fetus abortion is allowed to be performed. He was not opposed to abortion under this kind of circumstances, and, if it is not taken care of, the woman will suffer from enormous mental pressure. However, the woman should be sent to a major medical center for further examinations. In the case of Down's syndrome, however, it is treatable until the child turns more than ten years old.

Dr. Lee Jia-Yen

According to Dr. Lee Jia-Yen's observation, due to the difficulty a child with disability can encounter, sometimes sad things happen at the hospital. For example, a deformed fetus has to be aborted through an induced process. However, she did not think it is a necessarily a cruel thing. It is probably cruel to the fetus, but it is compassionate to the mother if she is not forced to give birth to the child and spend all her life on him/her, or to endure people's judgments. The longer the woman delays, the more cruel the situation can become. Moreover, Dr. Lee Jia-Yen reminded that if we agree that the fetus is not a life who does not have any consciousness, then it is not a cruel thing to do. Dr. Lee Jia-Yen also asserted that considering the situation of humankind on earth, unless society is able to provide comprehensive facilities to assist in raising a baby, to terminate a pregnancy as soon as possible is more responsible. The facilities should include economic and educational support, as well as love, well-being, and relationship.

Part 3: between Religious Belief and Women's Bodily Autonomy

Father Louis Aldrich

In earlier days, abortion was not legal and the number of people who have had them was limited. The rapid growth of abortions in Taiwan is highly related to the legalization of abortion. Father Louis Aldrich affirmed that his goal in promoting the anti-abortion campaign is to remind people to use their reason and free will and learn how to love. To him, to love people is the means to reach

God's love.

Mr. Chen Qinglong

Mr. Chen did not deny that his group's ultimate goal is to transform society into one without abortions and killing. He argued that scientism dominated people's understanding of life nowadays, which has resulted in materialism and a materialized understanding of life, and they have lost their souls.

Ms. Jian

Ms. Jian's group always highlights the importance of women's rights at a personal level. As the chief secretary of the women's group and an actual member herself, she stressed that her and her association's priority is to respect a woman's bodily autonomy. On the one hand, a woman should have the right to have an abortion depending on her family economy, spousal relationship and mental status. Her power to decide to have an abortion is exactly the same as her power to decide to have any other kind of surgeries, such as plastic surgery. On the other hand, if a woman, or a single woman, needs assistance and support, if she were to decide to continue the pregnancy, Ms. Jian's association is always ready to help. For example, her association website (<http://www.tapwr.org.tw/pregnancy.asp>) provides detailed information about consultation services, health centers as well as governmental financial aids. Ms. Jian argued that whether to have or not to have abortions should be decided by the woman. However, various powers have intervened in women's rights. For example, several members of congress are proposing to regulate women's behaviours during pregnancy, such as to ban them from smoking, over drinking or speeding while driving. Women should not be punished for the sake of their uterus. This type of discipline on women's bodies can also be seen in the requirement of spousal consent for an abortion. Ms. Jian asserted that we can educate everyone not to do the formerly mentioned things which can possibly harm them during pregnancy, in order to improve their and their child's health while saving the public expense on national health.

The competition between pro-abortion and anti-abortion campaigns in Taiwan is basically like that of feminist groups versus religious groups. The anti-abortion groups are composed of religious groups, such as Catholics; for example, the Catholic Sprout Foundation (*Tianzhujiao peiya jijinhui* 天主教胚芽基金會). As we read the publications, we are aware of which the institution the publication belongs to.

Ms. Jian argued that religious groups do not try to understand and care for a woman's situation when she is unexpectedly pregnant. Furthermore, politics in the Legislative Yuan made it challenging to compete with religious group: "The Legislative Yuan is the battlefield between feminist and religious groups."

Ms. Jian described that currently, more legislators are supportive of the religious groups. First, religious groups own a big number of ballots through their disciples. Second, these legislators might be actually religious, or just religious for political benefits. Ms. Jian and her group will insist on continuing the discussion while waiting for social progress. Since the foundation of her association fourteen years ago, her association has been communicating with the government smoothly. Their suggestions, including their opinions on the Eugenic Protection Law have been highly respected and adopted by the Legislative Yuan and the government. As well, they have good relationship with mass media and their ideas are often reported and published.

When being asked about the social movements surrounding the man's role regarding an abortion, such as the "Fatherhood Forever Foundation" in the U.S., Ms. Jian answered that she agreed that this kind of campaign is conducted with good will (*haode yongyi* 好的用意). However, she suggested that people should go deeper to investigate why a woman is not willing to tell her husband about her pregnancy and would rather have an abortion. The man-woman relationship has to be based on a sense of responsibility and the vision of both sides.

Dr. Lee Jia-Yen

A national law is supposed to be obeyed by everyone; it represents the common value of the society rather than the interest of any particular group. Dr. Lee Jia-Yen exemplified this idea with a patient's case of hers to show how the religious anti-abortionist discourses can create new problems for the woman:

I had a patient who was 27 years old when she came to see me. Her husband is the only son in his family and has had lots of affairs. When she came to see me, she had already been pregnant for 4 months. Religious people would ask her to endure the bitter marriage and give birth to the child. She can get divorced when the child becomes an adult. So she loses her life for the child. However, the woman eventually had an abortion. To ask a woman not to have an abortion according to religious regulations or rational thinking is simplistic. This kind of argument transforms women's womb into the means of producing a child.

Dr. Lee

Dr. Lee was strongly against the anti-abortion religious movements. He claims: "Catholic ideas about abortion sound hypocritical". In Dr. Lee's clinic, sometimes women who are not capable of rearing a child seek abortions. Dr. Lee understood the difficulties. For example, companies and governments in Taiwan still do not have parental leave; the lack of support from the government and workplace makes rearing a child challenging. In addition, many women choose not to give birth, due to economic hardship or other difficulties.

At the same time, the issue of young girls' abortions was discussed by the doctors. Dr. Lee urged the government and society to pay more attention to sex education. He observed that more and more young girls go to his clinic asking for abortions. These young girls are still like children, and their pregnancy make them look like "children breeding children", which is a social problem. They do not have any ideas of what contraception means. He often suggested that they consider alternative possibilities, including keeping the child, by talking with their parents and families and seriously estimating the pros and cons.

Dr. Wang

Dr. Wang did not agree with the feminist movement's appeal, which claims abortion is a woman's free choice. To her, the appeal is an "extremist" idea. She argued that if women can make decisions independently, they should have prevented unwanted pregnancy in the first place rather than exposing their bodies to risks. She stressed that Catholicism affirms that social assistance and treatment are much more than simply performing abortion for the woman. For example, for unmarried women, they have various social groups to support and assist with adoption. As an OB/GYN doctor and a Catholic disciple at the same time, Dr. Wang suggested that people should try their best to avoid abortions, and at the same time, the government should involve to help those women who are unwillingly pregnant.

Dr. Peng

Some women have abortions due to economic hardship. Dr. Peng called in question this reason: "In the agricultural days long time ago society was even poorer, but people still gave birth to children, and sometimes, they even had ten or twenty children." Therefore, to Dr. Peng, poverty should not be used to be the excuse for having an abortion. He believed in the traditional Taiwanese idioms of "Heave never seals off all the paths (*tianwu jue ren zhi lu* 天無絕人之路)" and "each blade of grass can have a drop of dew (*yizhicao yidianlu* 一枝草一點露)," which say that everyone has a chance to survive. Dr. Peng claimed that society as a whole is responsible for these difficult situations and needs to handle them. Society has to resolve the issues of the pregnancy of unmarried girls and rape crimes, rather than adjusting itself to these issues by means of abortion. To Dr. Peng, terminating pregnancy (abortion) is not the means to resolve the problem radically. Many women have abortions constantly and apparently their problems have never been solved.

Hence, when patients come to see Dr. Peng to consult about abortion, he encourages them not to have abortion if they just simply do not want to have the baby. Dr. Peng also urged that school education should teach girls how to take advantage of means of contraception and be careful dealing with sex.

Part 4: on Consideration Period

Mr. Qinglong Chen

According to Mr. Chen, his coalition hoped to delete the 6th article, but was rejected by the Legislative Yuan. So instead, they proposed a 6-day period of reflection. “Our strategy is not to stand against abortion, but to proceed step by step.” Mr. Chen recognized all the difficult issues a woman has to deal with that result in an abortion. He quoted the reaction of some legislators to their movements: “So you want them to withdraw from school? Studies are more important than a life.” Or, “The woman already has 8 children. How can she afford another one?” However, Mr. Chen asserted that in addition to these problems, the woman has the right to know about resources. He clarified that his coalition is not against abortion: “we have never tried to re-criminalize abortion in Taiwan.” His Coalition proposed the waiting period because “we want to urge woman to figure out the available assistance around her during the 3 days before she has the abortion, such as social security, governmental assistance and medical support”. He used the death penalty as an example: the court has to spend a long time to sentence a prisoner to death, thus the decision to do an abortion should also be prolonged.

Ms. Jian

The consideration period is a measure to weaken the role of women in decision-making. To design a waiting period shows that society does not trust women, believing that she cannot make a decision carefully. Furthermore, it shows how much religion intervenes against the autonomous power of women. According to Ms. Jian, a career woman can have an abortion, due to career concerns, but a woman who was raped can also have an abortion. These two situations are similar, as both pregnancies violate the mental and physical conditions of the woman. Women’s autonomous power over their bodies should be a universal notion.

Dr. Lee Jia-Yen

Differently from some feminists, who claim that abortion is no different than other types of surgeries, Dr. Lee Jia-Yen affirmed that it is in fact a complex decision. As it is the consequence of sexuality with another person, women should make their decision after considering all the factors. Nobody regrets an appendix removal surgery, but a woman could feel regret after an abortion. Hence, no one has the power to make such a serious decision on her behalf.

As a doctor and a feminist activist, she always supports her patient’s decisions on abortion, regardless of the reason. She reminded: “When the reason revealed by the woman sounds ridiculous, there is often an inconvenient truth behind. So we cannot simply blame the woman; rather, we should go further and discover the difficulties surrounding her.” To Dr. Lee Jia-Yen, if she has such a case, she certainly wants to spend a long time talking with the patient, even an extra hour for such work, if necessary. If the patient is married, Dr. Lee Jia-Yen would suggest that she discuss it with her husband. If she is single, she can certainly make the decision by herself. So far, she has never seen a patient have strong reactions during the surgery. The only patient she treated who cried on the operating table was a girl because she thought of her betrayal of her boyfriend, instead of the abortion.

Dr. Lee

In fact, Dr. Lee insisted on performing abortions only after the patient has made up her mind.

He affirmed that with or without a consideration period, he required his patients to visit his clinic at least twice. The first visit is for consultation, and the second for surgery. To do so is to avoid a reckless decision. Here is an example of a case in his clinic:

There was a young couple. The pregnant young woman wanted to have abortion because she worried the pregnancy can change her beauty and make her look old. But her boyfriend wanted to have the child. They had an argument in my clinic. I asked them to leave right away and come back after serious consideration.

Dr. Peng

Dr. Peng claimed that waiting period does not make much sense. The idea of a 3-day waiting period is unrealistic. He argued that even if the period is prolonged to a week, it still cannot stop a woman from having an abortion, if she insists on having it. This situation results from the liberation of society.

Part 5: on OB/GYN Doctors

Mr. Chen Qinglong

“They make money from killing.” Mr. Chen argued that OB/GYN doctors who perform abortions benefit from such surgeries. Furthermore, the Taiwan Association of Obstetrics and Gynecology (*Taiwan fuchanke yixuehui* 婦產科醫學會) has been against the religious Coalition’s proposal of extending the consideration period. The association claimed women have their right to make their own decision. Mr. Chen complained: “The OB/GYN doctors are like simultaneous players and judges of the game (*qiuyuan jian caipan* 球員兼裁判)”

Ms. Jian

Feminist activists regard OB/GYN doctors as professionals who should only use their responsibility to accomplish their duty:

They are doing their job... I remember when I was working as an assistant in the Taipei council, I had dealt with a medical dispute. I was shocked to know how stressful the environment physicians work in is. They have to make quick decisions fraught with risks. From a religious perspective, these doctors are making their karma. If so, the moment they decided to be a doctor is the beginning of karma, isn’t that right? Our association has no comments about OB/GYN doctors. They are simply providing service for people who are in need. We are against illegal medical practices, exploitation, and threats to women.

Dr. Lee Jia-Yen

According to Dr. Lee Jia-Yen, some of her OB/GYN colleagues refused to perform abortions as they aged and approached death. She admitted: “Both patients and doctors are located within the discursive regime.” However, she was by no means one of them. To her, to perform an abortion is to accomplish the patient’s intention, and she respected the patient’s will. She does not agree with some doctors who take advantage of abortion as a means of income, but she believed that to perform abortions is to help women. According to Dr. Lee Jia-Yen, most of the time, the patient has already made her decision before coming to see them. A wondering woman would not consult the doctor, either. The doctor’s professional training only allows them to say: “If you want to have an abortion, the earlier the better.” She pointed out that the doctor’s attitude can influence the decision of the patient, so it is inappropriate for a doctor to say: “You are killing a life!” to a woman who is considering abortion. A doctor can easily advise a patient not to have an abortion and keep the pregnancy, but can never teach the patient how to raise the child.

Dr. Lee

An abortion should be performed by a trustworthy doctor. Some people suggest that, after the surgery, the woman should be taken extra care of, but he does not think she needs to worry too much. Most of his patients come to his clinic with their partners. He strongly suggested that they

be accompanied. Furthermore, Dr. Lee argues that society easily stigmatizes their profession. He took Dr. Lai, an OB/GYN doctor who quitted his job and wandered in the city, as an example: “I knew Dr. Lai. He was a very nice man. He became homeless because he was suffering from severe pressure. It is unfair to say he has paid the price of the sin of performing abortions.” Dr. Lee stressed that he always practiced his profession according to the law and the instructions of the Taiwan Association of Obstetrics and Gynecology. He complained that while medical care is a normally venerated profession, a lot of people criticize OB/GYN doctors for performing abortions for the sake of money, which is an unfair accusation:

Before performing abortions, I had never felt any social pressure or difficulties. The only thing I had in mind was to solve the problem and do my work. Performing abortions is part of our job and our right. Furthermore, we have never promoted the idea of abortion to society. We perform the surgery because the patients come to us to seek for help. We are helping, rather than killing!

Dr. Peng

Abortion can harm a woman’s body depending on the skills of the OB/GYN doctors and the frequency of the surgery. Nonetheless, according to Dr. Peng, all operations, even anesthesia, are risky, and the doctor cannot guarantee that they are absolutely safe.

Dr. Peng admitted that their Catholic clinic has been losing patients. Due to its Catholic principles, their clinic do not perform abortions as well as any form of assisted reproductive technology (ARTs) including IVF (in vitro fertilization), donor sperm and donor eggs, in spite of the fact that these measures are permitted by the Eugenics and Health Protection Law and the Ectogenesis Law. Dr. Peng admitted that their beliefs can be subjective and conservative to some people in society. However, at the same time, he argued, Taiwanese society is too open these days and this results in a chaotic situation.

Part 6: On the Psychological Impact of an Abortion

Mr. Chen Qinglong

Some women could suffer from the illusion of the fetus spirits or physical side-effects after an abortion, since, as an individual, their reality is constructed by their subjectivity. Mr. Chen suggested that, compared to abortion ritual, psychiatrists are the best people to help women who suffer after an abortion.

Ms. Jian

Ms. Jian disagreed that the fetus has a life. Nonetheless, she acknowledged that some women still believe that the aborted fetus is their child. This kind of psychological effect is understandable. Ms. Jian agreed that religious priests are similar to psychiatrists for women who suffer psychologically from an abortion. However, Ms. Jian doubts the capability of a religious priest. To her, religious priests are merely human: “How can they erase the karma for another human? They cannot even erase their own karma!” Ms. Jian suggested the woman should seek help from a psychiatrist, if necessary. She also proposed that women’s groups organize workshops or seminars to help women in need.

Dr. Lee Jia-Yen

According to Dr. Lee Jia-Yen, most of her patients did not tell her about the physical or psychological illnesses following the abortion. The only exception was that one of her patients converted to Buddhism afterwards and, since then, has believed that her illness was related to her abortion. Dr. Lee Jia-Yen argued that this is another example showing how religion creates new problems for women. However, if the woman is not religious but is still suffering from atypical symptoms, Dr. Lee Jia-Yen suggests that she should seek help from a psychologist. However, in her opinion, a woman would not suffer from these atypical symptoms (such as sense of loss or

sense of guilt) if she is not religious. The pain from losing a family member is innate. But Dr. Lee Jia-Yen asked: “Where does the pain of losing a fetus come from? From religion? From the opinions of others?” For her, a woman’s sense of guilt was shaped by society. In fact, even if some people are relieved after the surgery, they cannot be allowed to show their feelings, since this can be judged by society as “shameless”.

Appendix E: Summoning Text (*Zhaoqingwen* 召請文):

The China Preserve Life Association (*Zhonghua Husheng Xiehui* 中華護生協會)

Retrieved from: 為所有應生未生胎兒祈福 <http://www.cpla.org.tw/child.htm>

Preparation: burn three sticks of incense at the entrance of the home or balcony, toward the sky, summon:

Respectful invitation: Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha (*Nawu Dayuan Dizangwang Pusa* 南無大願地藏王菩薩) (3 times)

(Parents recite their names) for the karma of abortion killing made in the past, (we hereby) request a confession sincerely

Earnestly request *Nawu Dayuan Dizangwang Pusa* compassionately assist, support and protect this intention.

Make it take refuge in the three jewels, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha (take refuge in the Buddha, take refuge in the Dharma, take refuge in the Sangha) (3 times)

The *yingsheng weisheng* fetus now has taken refuge in the three jewels Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

The conversion tablet number and conversion Dharma name is:

Tablet Number	Dharma Name	Tablet Number	Dharma Name

Now, (I) invite the *yingsheng weisheng* fetus(es) to go toward the Child Peace Hall, Great Compassion Bodhimanda at No. 20, Section 2, Sanxing Road, Sanxing Township, to listen to sutras and Dharma, to receive merit, to accumulate material and food, to leave bitterness and obtain happiness, rapidly attend the Western Pure Land.

Wishing the merit cultivated today to be delivered to all humble student's *yingsheng weisheng* fetuses.

Deliverance hymn:

We vow to be born in the Western Pure Land,

With nine grades of lotuses for a father and mother,

When the flower blooms, we will see the Buddha and awaken to non-birth,

And take irreversible Bodhisattvas as our friends.

Original Version:

準備 三柱香在自家門口或陽台對虛空召請

恭請 南無大願地藏王菩薩(三稱)

(父母親稱自己姓名) 往昔所造墮胎殺業, 在此誠心求懺悔

懇請 南無大願地藏王菩薩 慈悲加持護念,

令其皈依佛、法、僧三寶(皈依佛、皈依法、皈依僧)三稱
 應生未生胎兒現已皈依佛、法、僧三寶，其皈依牌位編號及皈依法名為：

牌位編號	皈依法名	牌位編號	皈依法名

現請以上應生未生胎兒前往宜蘭縣三星鄉三星路二段 20 號，大悲觀音道場·子安地藏殿。
 聽經聞法、領受功德、累積資糧、離苦得樂，速登西方極樂淨土。
 願以今日所修之功德迴向給弟子所有的應生未生胎兒。
 回向偈：願生西方淨土中，九品蓮花為父母，
 花開見佛悟無生，不退菩薩為伴侶。

Appendix F: “The Abhirati Baby (*Miaoxi wawa* 妙喜娃娃)” Lyrics

Retrieved from: Zhanjie fashi 湛杰法師 [Master Zhanjie]. 2008. *Cibei foqu* 慈悲佛曲 [Compassionate Buddha Songs]. Yilan: Zhonghua yinjing xiehui. 106-107.

Searching and searching,
I finally saw the hope. I walked into your lives quietly in the beautiful night.
Cannot wait anymore, I imagined Daddy and Mommy saying I am a good child.
Beautiful expectations, burning in my deep affection to my parents.

When hope leaves me, I am determined to wander alone.
Then I found myself without any place to stay in the world.
When I realize I am the unnecessary one in the world, hope does not exist anymore.
Lonely, sad, I wander in the world.

The stars in the sky do not talk, the children on earth miss their parents;
The stars in the sky blink their eyes, do you know the pain of the children on earth?
The hometown is a prosperous city, but the baby is wandering somewhere else;
Wanting to go home every night, indulging in sadness.
Ah,
Wanting to go home every night, indulging in sadness.

Finally I see the light in the Saha world.
The wonderful and pleasant land is full of calm and purity, calling me
wholeheartedly, which eradicates dark karmas.
Compassionate Buddha, spraying the world with his deep love of rescuing all living
creatures (*zhongsheng* 眾生)
When putting my hands together and pray, I am not clueless anymore.
Putting down my worries, realizing the truly permanence (*zhenchang* 真常)
Closing my eyes, feeling the compassionate ray of light,
The purifying and warm power flows freely on my heart.