

# The Construction of Fundamentalism in I-Kuan Tao

Ting Jen-Chieh 丁仁傑

## Abstract

Following the paradigm of the sociology of sacred texts and through an investigation into the functions and contexts of sacred books studied within the sectarian group I-Kuan Tao in Taiwan, this study explores the issue of fundamentalist scripturalism. In monotheistic traditions, fundamentalism is based upon the interpretation of revealed texts. In the Chinese context, because of the bifurcation between sacred books and revelation and because sacred books are generally more accepted than revelations, we conclude that Chinese fundamentalism follows a revitalisation of the textual tradition, which epitomises the moral and social order. Additionally, I offer a discussion of how the notion of 'syncretic fundamentalism' can exist within Chinese religious traditions, despite its suggestion of an inherent divergence between orthodox scriptures and revelation.

**Keywords:** Sociology of Sacred texts, Fundamentalism, I-Kuan Tao, Syncretism, Scripturalism

This study explores fundamentalist scripturalism, investigating the functions and contexts of sacred books studied in the sectarian group I-Kuan Tao (*Yiguan dao* 一貫道) in Taiwan. I-Kuan Tao can be translated as “The Unity Sect”: I-Kuan meaning “the unity” and Tao (or *dao*) meaning “the way” or “the sect”. In monotheistic religions, fundamentalism is based on the interpretation of revealed texts in their scriptural tradition. Since sacred books are not generally revealed in the Chinese context, and because sacred books are generally more accepted than revelations, I conclude that Chinese fundamentalism follows a revitalisation of the textual tradition, which epitomises the moral and social order. Additionally, I offer a discussion of how the notion of ‘syncretic fundamentalism’ can exist within Chinese religious traditions, despite its suggestion of an inherent divergence between orthodox scriptures and revelation.

The ‘sociology of sacred texts’ is a term introduced by Davies & Wollaston (1993), who argued that:

*Words of God are not like any other text: but they have to be constructed—printed, edited, proof-read, authorized, reviewed—like any other text. They are, that is to say, timeless and transient, transcendental and mundane, declared and debated, universal and particular, ancient and contemporary, dead and alive. Human beings have sought to understand sacred texts in various ways (Davies & Wollaston 1993:15).*

Therefore, we can understand that “sacred texts *in the making*, as enacted ritual dramas or myth-making, where ordinary people, operating perhaps within a broader culture, construct their own versions of the sacred in order to be able to live with and make some kind of sense of the troubled worlds they live in” (ibid.:17, emphasis in the original). Following the paradigm of the ‘sociology of

sacred texts', this study investigates how I-Kuan Tao constructs fundamentalism through the ways it uses traditional scripture.

However, the concept of fundamentalism and the examination of I-Kuan Tao's attitudes towards scripture are used in this paper only as a heuristic device to stimulate a cross-cultural comparison. An overall review of existing scholarship on fundamentalism and I-Kuan Tao is not my intention here. Rather, based on data collected from the I-Kuan Tao Fayi Chongde branch (Promoting Unity and Exalting Virtue, 發一崇德), we show that re-editing traditional scriptures, generating new scriptures through magic, and requesting deities and patriarchs to descend to this human realm, all are parts of a quasi-fundamentalist project within Chinese culture. We will see that when a sacred text lacks a revelatory tone, and the cultural core is not defined by transcendence, new sacred texts must emerge to bolster this form of fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism can be understood as a specific kind of religious and political orientation. Marty & Appleby (1991:ix) describe a variety of religious fundamentalisms that appear in divergent cultures, generating a "family resemblance." These similarities include, in particular, a reliance on religion as a source of identity, boundaries that determine who belongs and who does not, dramatic eschatology, and the dramatisation and mythologisation of enemies (ibid.:819-821).

The modern fundamentalist position that developed in the United States in the late nineteenth century was a reaction to liberal Protestantism. The Niagara Bible Conference in 1895 issued a statement of belief affirming what were later called the five points of fundamentalism: the literal inerrancy of the Bible, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the virgin birth, a substitutionary theory of the atonement, and the physical resurrection and bodily return of Christ (Marsden 2006:117). Fundamentalism soon became a general term that could be applied to similar

attitudes and orientations across all religions. In their Fundamentalism Project, Marty and Appleby (1991) explore the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism from North America to Iran, and even to Confucian East Asia.

Globally, fundamentalist influences can be found almost everywhere. There exist Islamic fundamentalisms in North Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia, and fundamentalist conflicts between Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism in India. South America has seen the rise of large Protestant evangelical fundamentalist movements in what has traditionally been a Roman Catholic region. In the United States fundamentalist parties, linked with political conservatism, have formed movements such as the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition. Today their influence is primarily felt at the local level through anti-abortion, anti-pornography, pro-censorship and pro-family activities.

Marty & Appleby explain the phenomenon as a reaction to modernity. Fundamentalists “no longer perceive themselves as reeling under the corrosive effects of secular life: on the contrary, they perceive themselves as fighting back, and doing so rather successfully” (Marty & Appleby 1991:ix). In short, in the context of international political conflict and racial confrontation and in the name of counteracting the influences of modernity, some people may become interested in using religious symbols to attain specific political goals. As a result, they may enter the public sphere in the name of traditional religion. Therefore, even though fundamentalisms appropriate symbols from established religions, they should properly be understood as a late modern or postmodern phenomenon (Hinnells 1995:178).

Fundamentalism can appear in any religious tradition. It can be seen most obviously in Qur’anic Islam, biblical Christianity and Judaism, which rely on standard texts and belief in a single God. Fundamentalism may be harder to find in other religious traditions, such as non-monotheistic Buddhism and Hinduism.

Nevertheless, in the modern world both Buddhist and Hindu fundamentalists do appear, in the form of aggressive and intolerant religious exclusivists.<sup>1</sup> If we compare those fundamentalist upsurges with the religious revitalisation of Chinese traditions, is it possible to observe any modern Chinese fundamentalism or fundamentalist-like group?

After the Qing Empire collapsed in 1911, many Confucian movements arose with the goal of establishing Confucianism as the state religion and restoring traditional Chinese moral standards. However, due to a lack of leadership, weak organisation and conflicting visions of how to restore a traditional thought system as a religion, all these movements failed (Qiu 2001:57). In addition, they were top-down movements only promoted by a small group of intellectuals and they did not have a solid social base.

For more recent times, Tu Wei-ming 杜維明 (1991) has addressed the connection between Confucianism and fundamentalism in contemporary East Asia. Observing the endorsement and encouragement of Confucianism by East Asian governments after the 1980s, Tu discussed the extent to which this may have been related to rapid economic growth. He argued that:

*... the Confucian revival thus raises issues familiar to scholars of fundamentalism, even as its motivation, justification, and interpretation suggest that its overall spiritual orientation is significantly different from that in Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism. Furthermore, East Asian Confucian revivals in the twentieth century are frequently led by sophisticated intellectuals and are often supported by the central*

---

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of aggressive forms of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, see Bartholomeusz & de Silva (1998) and K. M. de Silva (1986:31). India has witnessed the development of chauvinist Hinduism, most prominently in Bharatiya Janata (see Renard 2002).

*government. While these revivals may on the surface have little to do with mass movements, secret societies, and subversive organizations, they signify a general psychocultural pattern in East Asia in its response to the impact of the West (Tu 1991:746).*

However, according to Tu, the extent to which Confucianism was actually revived in industrial East Asia is unclear, and it is difficult to determine whether the industrial boom benefited from Confucian ethics. Nevertheless, he does argue that the core values of East Asia are still Confucian in nature (1991:773). He continued:

*... the designation of East Asia as "Confucian" in the ethico-religious sense is comparable in validity to employing "Christian," "Islamic," "Hindu," and "Buddhist" in identifying regions such as Europe, the Middle East, India, or Southeast Asia. Notwithstanding the crudeness and inadequacy of such denotations, they give us a sense of the life-orientation, which can be otherwise easily relegated to the background as a residual category (Tu 1993:218).*

Thus, even though Confucianism may differ from institutionally established religions, it remains an important value system comparable to them. Given its ability to absorb the spirit of modernity and adapt to the present, there may yet be times when Confucianism is revived (Tu 2001:81-87). Indeed, in recent years the Chinese Communist Party has used it in a rather banal form as a means to promote social harmony. However, for Tu, the future of Confucianism may not be inside China; rather, its future may depend on how people in Western capitalist societies resolve what he sees as their cultural deadlock. For him a Confucian

revival is both functionally necessary and historically inevitable and will be led by intellectuals (Tu 1996:436-438).

## **Grassroots Fundamentalism**

We may understand fundamentalists as those who appropriate and renew traditional cultural symbols as a reaction to modernity. A fundamentalist response to economic difficulty or cultural frustration associated with modernity will tend to manifest in a specific religious tradition that already exists in a locality or is practiced by a particular ethnic group. A case in point is India, which has a very diffused form of traditional religion but under specific circumstances a Hindu fundamentalism has appeared.<sup>2</sup> Observing contemporary Hindu fundamentalist movements, Talbot (1991) concluded that the development of these movements is due to the majority Hindus regarding the state as favoring the interests of minorities at the expense of their own, whereas the minorities see the state as failing to afford them protection. The political alienation of some Hindus has increased support for militant Hindu organisations. Thus, even without a coherent organisational form and textual tradition, religions can develop a form of fundamentalism that serves a specific function.

The Chinese situation presents a possible parallel to this where traditional Chinese religions have neither a fixed organisational form nor a single coherent scripture on the monotheistic model. Yang (1961:294) explains that these religious traditions are pervasive and diffused. In China, Confucianism, Buddhism and

---

<sup>2</sup> Diffused religion is understood as a religion having a theology, cult and personnel so intimately diffused into one or more secular social institutions that they become a part of its concepts, rituals and structures, and thus have no significant independent existence (see Yang 1961:294-295).

Daoism were regarded as simply threads of one coherent, mainstream and diffused kind of traditional Chinese patriarchal religion. Yet the imperial order was still maintained by Confucianism, mainly through official mechanisms in the education and examination systems, the rites of heaven and most importantly, the Confucian ethical codes of the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues (*sangang wuchang* 三綱五常).

Against this historical and cultural background, how might a majority of Chinese attempt to protect their collective interests and maintain and renew their culture? What kinds of cultural symbols could be manipulated for social and political purposes? Tu's argument that an intellectual-led revitalisation of Confucianism is either functionally necessary or historically inevitable paid inadequate attention to grassroots Confucian efflorescences at a local level. If historical conditions are suited to eliciting a mass-based grassroots fundamentalism, this kind of popular cultural response to modernity may be found in China's religious traditions. However, fundamentalism in China would adopt specific forms that take account of Chinese society and culture, Confucianism's ambiguous attitudes to the spiritual, and the complicated relationships among different cultural agents in China.

In this chapter, I examine I-Kuan Tao (see Seiwert 2003:427), currently the largest sectarian group in Taiwan,<sup>3</sup> to explore these issues. I-Kuan Tao can be understood as a kind of modern cultural fundamentalism that people in particular

---

<sup>3</sup> An over-estimate presented by I-Kuan Tao claims it had 3,000,000 followers in 2007, see The Republic of China I-Kuan Tao Association web-site: [www.ikuantao.org.tw/modules/tadbook2/view.php?book\\_sn=1&bdsn=72](http://www.ikuantao.org.tw/modules/tadbook2/view.php?book_sn=1&bdsn=72). A more moderate estimate comes from a Taiwan General Social Survey on Social Change, which shows that in 2009, about 2.4% of the population of Taiwan were I-Kuan Tao followers, representing about 500,000 people (see Kuan 2013:18). Officially, in 1995 I-Kuan Tao had approximately 942,000 members in Taiwan but no government figure has been given since then (see Ministry of Interior 1996:117).



localities use to address individual problems and to construct a renewed collective identity. By studying its development in Taiwan, we can observe how fundamentalism appears when embedded in one locality.

### **A Brief History of I-Kuan Tao and Its Fayi Chongde Division**

The situation of I-Kuan Tao in Taiwan is complicated by the fact that different divisions operate separately. This is partly due to its former long-term illegal status, during which time each division operated locally to avoid government attention. Another reason for the disunity is that after the early death of the modern founder and eighteenth patriarch Zhang Tianran 張天然 (1889-1947), the organisation splintered. More than 30 divisions currently operate independently in Taiwan with no prospect for (re-)unification. Despite this fragmentation, all divisions have similar texts, doctrines, rituals and etiquette as Zhang provided clear guidelines for his followers. They can be found in his books *Tao Etiquette* and *Questions and Answers on I-Kuan Tao*, which offer coherent doctrines and simplified manuals for ritual practice — these standardised guidelines played a crucial role in I-Kuan Tao's rapid growth.

Joining I-Kuan Tao requires a special initiation ritual, as Jordon & Overmyer (1986) have documented. Participation in a division's activities is possible only after initiation into that particular division. No division will tolerate someone joining two or more divisions simultaneously. Thus, my observations are based only on the Fayi Chongde division (which is descended from another main division, the Fayi). These observations are supplemented by information and publications obtained from other divisions. The initiation ritual is understood as a process of

gaining ‘the Three Treasures’ (*San Bao* 三寶). The Three Treasures are the Holy Gate, the Holy Mantra, and the Holy Sign (Lin 2003:8-33).

The Holy Gate refers to a place between the follower’s eyes that the ‘enlightening master’ or initiator (*dian chuangshi* 點傳師) points out during the initiation ceremony. This gate takes the follower to a bright, enlightening path that leads back to heaven, enabling them to transcend the cycles of birth and death. The Holy Mantra is believed to lead the follower to heaven and is supremely powerful and mysterious. It is a powerful bond between one’s true inner self and the heavenly world (Lin 2003:19). The first three words of the mantra represent the three different levels of the cosmic order while the last two signify the Maitreya Buddha, who is believed to be the saviour of the current era. The Holy Sign (or Holy Covenant) is a special hand gesture, which represents the unity of humanity with the whole universe. It also signifies a holy promise to God (Lin 2003:27).

Inheriting doctrines and practices from Chinese sectarian movements from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the relatively recent creation of I-Kuan Tao can be traced to the fifteenth patriarch, Wang Jueyi 王覺一 (1821-1886). However, its rapid development came with the eighteenth patriarch Zhang Tian-ran. The Fayi division originated in the Tongxing (同興) Temple in Tianjin (天津). In 1948, the leader of the Tongxing Temple, Senior Elder (*Laoqianren* 老前人, ‘emeritus division head’) Han Yulin 韓雨霖 (1901-1995) led several elders (*qianren* 前人, division heads) to Taiwan to propagate the lineage. Currently, there are eleven divisions derived from the Fayi group. Among them, the Fayi Chongde has experienced most widespread growth.

The Fayi Chongde is led by Chen Hongzhen 陳鴻珍 (1923- ), who arrived in Taiwan from Tianjin in 1946. She established the Chongxiu (崇修) Temple in the town of Douliu (斗六) as the headquarters of the Fayi Chongde. In 1970, Chen began to propagate I-Kuan Tao to college students, especially those emigrating

from rural areas to attend college in the cities. Intent on spreading the faith through the daily activities and networks of college students, she developed the Vegetarian Assembly (*huoshituan* 伙食團) as a new form of missionary practice. This usually takes the form of people renting an apartment together and cooking vegetarian food by rotation. In this way, the Fayi Chongde has attracted the largest

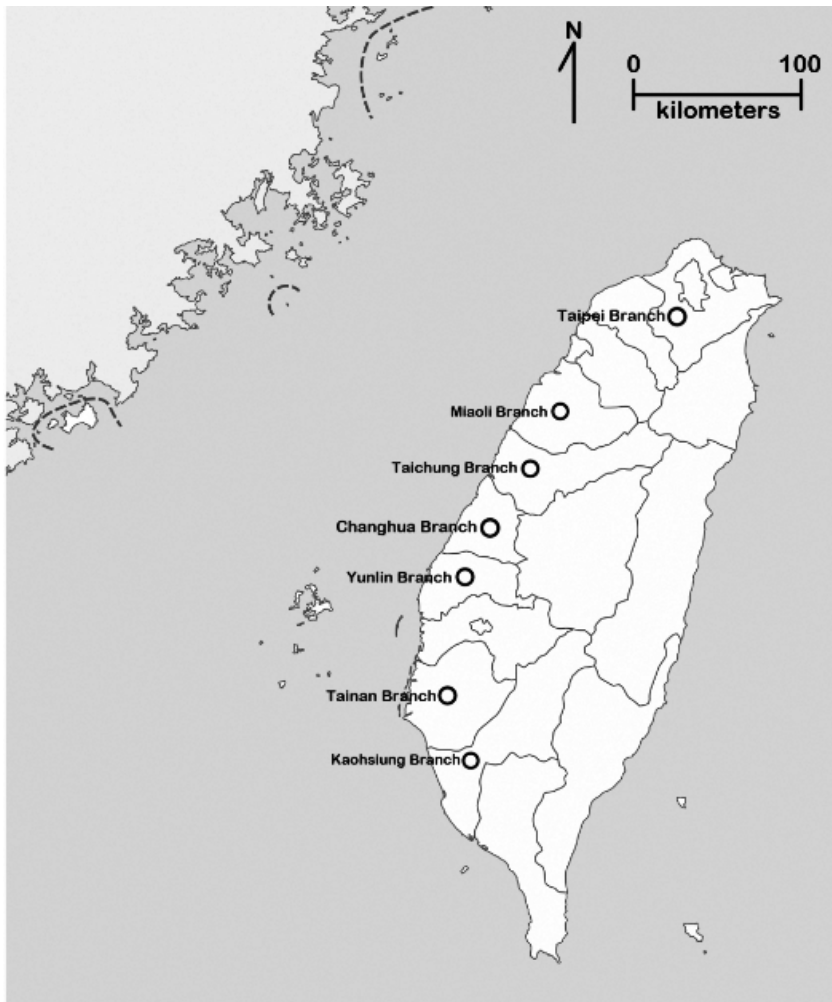


Figure 1. Locations of I-Kuan Tao Fayi Chongde Division's Branches in Taiwan

number of young intellectuals of any I-Kuan Tao division. Since 1976, the Fayi Chongde has spread overseas, and it now has branches across five continents.

I-Kuan Tao was not legalised in Taiwan until 1987 and it remains illegal in China. In 1953 and 1963, the ruling Kuomintang (KMT, 國民黨) government initiated major campaigns to stop its spread in Taiwan. This stopped I-Kuan Tao's public activities but did not prevent its gradual growth. Several months before martial law was lifted in 1987, I-Kuan Tao was legally registered as a religion. Facing a crisis of political legitimacy in the transition from authoritarian rule, the KMT desperately needed I-Kuan Tao's help to mobilise popular support and solicit votes.

Despite its improved relations with the central government, I-Kuan Tao still claims legitimacy through embodying the real mandate of heaven.<sup>4</sup> It holds that the eras of the Green Sun and the Red Sun have passed and we are now in the era of the White Sun. I-Kuan Tao cosmology and eschatology follow the tripartite scheme often found in Chinese religions: the era of the White Sun is thus the third era, which is the last chance for salvation. In this period of final salvation, the Eternal Primordial Mother (Wusheng laomu 無生老母) has opened the door for universal salvation. The legendary figure from Chinese folklore Jigong (濟公) will descend from heaven to gather up all lost souls (*shouyuan* 收圓), thereby allowing all sentient beings to return to paradise. The eighteenth patriarch Zhang Tianran is believed to have been a reincarnation of Jigong. Even though he died in 1947, the mandate of heaven, or the *dao* lineage, was been transmitted to

---

4 Since the Zhou dynasty (1046-256 BC), the doctrine of the 'mandate of heaven' has held that the ruler received his mandate directly from heaven. By this means his rule was legitimised but was also subject to certain limitations: the ruler's task was to recognize any signs of heavenly wrath or approval and act accordingly (Fischer-Schreiber 1996:184-185). Later the doctrine was extended to act as a benchmark for current events. Therefore, any historical event could be judged on the basis of the mandate, to determine whether or not an action was legitimately endorsed by heaven.

the human realm and thus the leaders of each division of I-Kuan Tao are now all believed to be entrusted with the mandate. I-Kuan Tao believes that natural disasters indicate the imminence of doomsday, so everybody should urgently link up with the mandate of heaven to receive one last chance of salvation.

I-Kuan Tao postulates that we need to cultivate ourselves with both internal and external merit (*neigong* 内功 and *waigong* 外功): internal merit is accrued by cultivating one's inner virtue, external merit requires a follower to engage in good deeds for other people or society in general.

Institutionally, there are two types of seniority within I-Kuan Tao. The first is based on one's role in missionary activities: from low to high these are common follower, lecturer, hall chairman, initiator (or enlightening master), elder and so forth. The second type depends on what training courses one has accomplished. Each course lasts for one year. From introductory to advanced, there are courses for new members (*xinmin* 新民), for achieving perfection (*zhishan* 至善), for nourishing virtues (*peide* 培德), for practicing virtues (*xingde* 行德), for worshipping virtues (*chongde* 崇德) and for becoming a lecturer. Across each level these courses cover three broad subjects: scriptures, ritual practices, and wisdom and philosophy for everyday life.

Since the beginning, three elements of the teachings of I-Kuan Tao have stimulated followers to be involved in missionary activities:

1. the third and last eschatological period is dawning, and this is the last chance to be saved;
2. everyone needs to understand the urgency of the situation, so more people can be saved; and
3. most importantly, everyone should take on this responsibility and become an indispensable member of the missionary network. This may enhance a follower's willingness to learn more about the religious teachings and also enhance his or

her pride and sense of expectation. Thus, I-Kuan Tao is a highly participatory religious group. Not every follower shares the eagerness of a missionary of course, but participation leads to a strengthened sense of religious identity.

## **Cultural Fundamentalism in I-Kuan Tao**

### **I. Scriptures in the Fayi Chongde Division**

As it claims to be exclusively connected to the lineage of the *dao*, I-Kuan Tao holds the Chinese classics in the highest regard, instituting programs (and even competitions) to promote their study and recitation. It interprets the classical scriptures literally as they represent guidelines for self-cultivation, personal interaction and political management. In this sense, I-Kuan Tao is very close to fundamentalism, which presumes an eternal truth behind specific scriptures and the desire to understand current social and political situations through their philosophies and moral precepts. However, at the same time, I-Kuan Tao continually generates new scriptures and sometimes even alters the text of the classics. How can we understand this attitude? And how does it relate to the claim that I-Kuan Tao embodies a form of modern fundamentalism?

First, it is necessary to review the scriptures of I-Kuan Tao. Those of the Fayi Chongde division derive, like those of all others, from Zhang Tianran. The only differences are in the newly revealed spirit writing texts, which we will return to later. The scriptures are used both for reading and as ritual items in daily and monthly ceremonies, and for initiations and special memorial days. In ritual, several scriptures appear either as objects for worship or as procedural manuals. The first is Zhang's *Tao Etiquette and Questions*, which regulates the procedures of and occasions for all rites and ceremonies in I-Kuan Tao. The

second and third short scriptures that hang on the walls on each side of the main altar in the worship hall are I-Kuan Tao's self-generated scripture, *The Purpose of Tao* in 108 Chinese characters and the *Section on the Great Unity from The Conveyance of Rites* (*Liyun datong pian* 禮運大同篇) in 107 Chinese characters. The former is an excerpt of Master Zhang's book *Questions and Answers on I-Kuan Tao*, summarising how followers should behave. The latter is a passage from the chapter entitled *The Conveyance of Rites* from the classic *Record of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記). *Section on the Great Unity* is one of the most celebrated texts in the Confucian tradition and has been understood as representing Confucius's ideal for a harmonious social order. This idealised order, the Great Unity (*datong* 大同), is the age in which the world was shared by all people (*tianxia wei gong* 天下為公; see de Bary & Bloom 1999:342-343).

Another two short hard-bound scriptures are placed on each side of the altar. On the right is an elaborated version of *The Purpose of Tao* (see below), and on the left is a folk scripture, *The Scripture of the Peach Garden to Illuminates the Sacred* (*Taoyuan mingsheng jing* 桃園明聖經). Both are texts derived from spirit-writing — called *xunwen* (訓文) in I-Kuan Tao — literally meaning 'instructional texts' or 'revealed texts'. *The Purpose of Tao* was generated between 1985 and 1992 from 28 spirit-writing ceremonies; the later *xunwen* version has 21,148 Chinese characters, which includes the original text. I-Kuan Tao calls this *xunzhongxun* (訓中訓), that is 'instructions within instructions' or 'revelations within revelations'. *The True Scripture of the Peach Garden Holy Emperor Kuan Who Illuminates the Sacred*, is a spirit-writing text popular before the formation of I-Kuan Tao. Its contents propagate Confucian moral precepts such as filial piety and loyalty. It became the core Fayi scripture as the founder of the Fayi division, Senior Elder Han, was cured by accruing merit publishing it.

Besides being used in ritual, all levels of training include studying scripture,

including the classic Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist scriptures, those generated by patriarchs and senior elders of I-Kuan Tao, and new ones generated by spirit-writing or channelling. Which scriptures are core can be determined by analyzing the reading list of I-Kuan Tao's 2005 scripture recitation competition, in which more than 50,000 participants from all main divisions took part to commemorate the organisation's 100th anniversary. The compulsory scriptures which were all very short (under 1000 Chinese characters), included *The Purpose of Tao*, *The Section on Great Unity*, the Buddhist *Heart Sutra* (*Xinjing* 心經), The Daoist *Purity and Serenity Scripture of Lord Lao, the Most High* (*Taishang laojun qingjing jing* 太上老君清靜經), and *The True Scripture of Maitreya's Relieving the Distressed* (*Mile jiuku zhenjing* 彌勒救苦真經), a short I-Kuan Tao text generated by spirit-writing in 1926 in 514 characters that explains the Three Eschatological Periods in simplified form.

Competitors also had to choose one or two optional texts from the Confucian Four Books – the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語), *Mencius* (*Mengzi* 孟子), the *Great Learning* (*Daxue* 大學) and the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸) – the Daoist *Daodejing* (道德經) and the Buddhist *Platform Sutra* of the Sixth Patriarch, and *Diamond Sutra*. It is important to note that the versions of the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* used by I-Kuan Tao are not the standard versions canonized by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) but were generated by spirit-writing. These are the *The Testimony and Explication of the Great Learning* (*Daxue zhengshi* 大學證釋) and *The Testimony and Explication of the Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong zhengshi* 中庸證釋) mentioned above. According to Chung (2000:17-21), these two new versions were generated by the New Salvation Sect (救世新教) sometime in the 1920s. The spirits which descended to produce them included Confucius, Mencius, Yan Hui 顏回, Zeng Zi 曾子, Zi Si 子思 and Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, among others. They have different structures, word



sequences and contents to the Zhu Xi versions: the spirit-writing version of the *Great Learning* has 11 chapters instead of Zhu Xi's 10 and the new *Doctrine of the Mean* has 9 paragraphs and no chapters, unlike Zhu Xi's version with 33 chapters. It is impossible to list all of the differences between the two versions here but in the example below we not only see one important change made to the text but also the comments of the spirits concerning the changes.

The first paragraph of the Zhu Xi version of the *Great Learning* is: "What the *Great Learning* teaches, is...to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence." (大學之道, 在明明德, 在親民, 在止於至善, Legge 1960:356-357). The spirit-writing version is: "What the *Great Learning* teaches, is ... to illustrate illustrious virtue; to treat relatives with affection; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence." (大學之道, 在明明德, 在親親, 在新民, 在止於至善).

After making this change, the spirit of Confucius descended to the writers and said:

*So the dao of the Great Learning now is complete. The Confucian doctrines transmitted by sages are now also complete. It is very important to know this. Later generations omitted the character qin (親 'familiarity') and the two characters zai xin (在新, 'to renovate the people'). Although Zhu Xi's use of the citation from the Announcement to the Prince of Kang (Kang Gao 康誥) to interpret the word qin as xin and thus to render the phrase as 'to renovate the people' was inspiring and creative, it left out the true meaning 'treating the people with affection'. Thus, it did not make Confucianism complete (Anonymous 2002:37).*

Any real fundamentalists would be astounded that classical scriptures could be revised by descended spirits. In the preface of the spirit-writing version of the *Great Learning*, Yan Hui descended and said:

*At this time Confucius comes to examine and interpret the Great Learning and correct its mistakes. For a long time these mistakes have been followed and people have failed to understand the real meaning [of the scripture]. Confucius takes this problem seriously, and wants to correct it, as well as expounding it in more detail. The old version and new version will be compared side-by-side and the true meaning will be clarified (Anonymous 2002:28).*

In the postscript of the spirit-writing version of the *Great Learning*, the spirit of Zhu Xi himself came down and said:

*I was foolish. Now I descend with the spirit of Confucius. As soon as I listened to his teaching, I was enlightened. This moment was extraordinary and unparalleled. Anybody who has had such an opportunity is blessed and inspired. When I was in the human realm, I studied the scriptures and searched for teachers. Yet there were many things in the classics I could not understand. Even though I worked very hard, I still fell short of the sages. Many years passed, but I never attained [the dao]. In this magnificent gathering, sages instruct me and I understand the real intentions they had when they wrote the scriptures... In the past, I laboured to explain what I did not understand, but I missed out on the essence [of the scripture]. When I think about these things now, I feel regret and guilt (Anonymous 2002:220).*

Thus, Zhu Xi himself admitted that his edition of the *Great Learning* was inaccurate, either in its interpretations or how the paragraphs were divided. His version of the *Great Learning* did not shed light on the real intentions of the sages; only the spirit-writing version of the *Great Learning* (as used by I-Kuan Tao) reveals the truth.

Revealed texts (*xunwen*) are usually generated during important collective rites, in which deities descend to give lessons to the participants. Mediums produce spirit-writing in both oral and written forms. In the Fayi Chongde division, those parts of the revealed texts that come from Ji Gong have been collected into a series of pamphlets collectively called *Bright Wisdom* (*Guangming de zhihui* 光明的智慧). The contents of *Bright Wisdom* include methods of self-cultivation, philosophy of life and management of the emotions. During training sessions, the *Bright Wisdom* texts form part of the core readings.

The *xunzhongxun*, referred to above, are similar to crossword puzzles in that intersecting sentences are hidden within the revealed text. Because these texts



Picture 1. Spirit-writing in Fayi Chongde's Taichung Brance

are generated spontaneously, it would seem impossible to insert such meaningful phrases or sentences in them consciously. For believers, this demonstrates the true magic of the deities. The main scripture of the Fayi division, the elaborated version of *The Purpose of Tao*, mentioned above, was generated in a form of *xunzhongxun*, in which 108 Chinese characters are embedded in a longer article of 21,148 characters. The long process of creating this version of *The Purpose of Tao* involved thirteen deities over three years, fifteen locations and 28 iterations of collective ritual.

## II. I-Kuan Tao's Attitude to Scripture

In I-Kuan Tao sacred messages are revealed by multiple deities, and the magical revealed texts are taken as absolute and unquestionable sources of sacred authority. The form of the texts, such as the *xunzhongxun*, are magical; without the direct involvement of deities there would be no way of creating this kind of scripture. I-Kuan Tao followers also believe that the classics, while not written by deities, were written by sages who had attained enlightenment. However, it is important to point out some distinctions between I-Kuan Tao and monotheist revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam. First, in I-Kuan Tao an ultimate authority exists beyond the god or deity who revealed the text. This authority, *dao*, is imminent and penetrates everything around it. The will of all gods is conditioned by this *dao* and is not arbitrary. Second, the relationship between human beings and gods is both continuing and mutually discernible. That is, a person can attain the status of deity through self-cultivation and moral endeavour, and can also sense the deities' intentions any time if his or her mind is pure. Therefore, deities and people are always interacting and have the potential of mutual transformation. It is also important to note that while I-Kuan Tao has evolved into a religion that appears to be monotheistic, with the Eternal Primordial

Mother as the sole supreme deity responsible for people's eternal salvation, it still recognises folk deities and the hierarchies among them. This contrasts with a typical monotheist system, in which the authority of God allows for no other deities.

In I-Kuan Tao deities, *dao* and heaven are all understood as entities embodying the ultimate truth. While ordinary people may reach this ultimate truth, the mediation of an enlightened master or saint is crucial either through the mystical transmission of *dao* in the initiation ritual or through spirit-writing that reveals the ultimate truth to ordinary people. Within the triumvirate of deities, *dao* and heaven, *dao* is pivotal. *Dao* is omnipresent, pervading government, community, family, personal cultivation and all other realms of life. It is the dynamic and invisible principle in human and natural realms, unlike deities or heaven that are visible and specific entities. Since *dao* is omnipresent and dynamic, no fixed designation can encompass its essence and manifestations. Therefore, by worshipping a specific deity or reading a specific selection of scriptures, one may limit oneself to a fragmentary and biased understanding of the truth. More seriously, one may actually fail to identify the real truth. For this reason, I-Kuan Tao has always claimed to be a *dao* rather than a religion or teaching (*jiao* 教), because it believes that any kind of fixed arrangement, either in doctrine or organisation, is bound to circumscribe and restrict the dynamics of *dao*.

Since *dao* is omnipresent and beyond social hierarchy, it can be embodied by anyone. Its immanent nature ensures that no one person or group can monopolise it. There is, however, a lineage of historical figures who have embodied and transmitted *dao*: wise and virtuous emperors and the sages and profound persons. Since they do not have political power, these latter people are free from the danger of corruption, and may embody a purer state of *dao*. For example, while Yao (堯), Shun (舜), Yu (禹), Tang (湯), Wen (文), Wu (武) and the Duke of Zhou (周公)

began Zhu Xi's version of the lineage of the *dao*, later inheritors were found in the non-governmental Confucius and Mencius. All I-Kuan Tao divisions accept this lineage as far as Mencius, but new ideas have emerged that link the nature of the transmission with changes in the historical and social context:

*In the very distant past, no differentiation was made between “emperor” and “teacher” — all possessed the mandate of heaven. Thus, there were two kinds of authority: authority to govern the people and authority to educate the people. Later, politics and education were distinguished. The mandate of heaven could be granted to either the emperor or the teacher. Such was the great virtuosity of Confucius; he was not an emperor yet he bore the mandate of heaven. His mandate was to be a sages and to be the model of a great teacher...Great and virtuous people could possess the mandate of heaven – neither emperor nor teacher could solely possess it. While the emperor could only be an emperor for a short time, the great teacher would be long commemorated by later generations...Once teachers could no longer bear the great responsibility of education, the mandate of heaven passed to ordinary people. History is fated to follow this new direction (Lee & Lin 1992:13-14).*

I-Kuan Tao's characterisation of the lineage holds that the *dao* has now been transmitted to the ordinary people. This is due to Westernisation, the fall of the empire, and the replacement of Confucian intellectuals by Westernised technicians and scholars. Now, only ordinary people are left to bear the lineage of the *dao* and the mandate of heaven. I-Kuan Tao members, therefore, have the responsibility and legitimacy to embody as well as to spread the *dao*, the first

time these tasks have fallen on commoners.

As I-Kuan Tao uses the Chinese classics as its main scriptures, why are the scriptures revised and re-edited, to the extent that Zhu Xi has confessed his own editorial mistakes? This position is surely at odds with how we usually understand fundamentalism. In mainstream Confucian traditions from the earliest times until the Song dynasty (960-1279) the Confucian classics had rarely been interpreted through religious lenses. During the Song, however, a reorientation took place that was in part a creative response to Buddhism and Daoism. This Neo-Confucian path, as represented by Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–1073), Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-1077), Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032-1085), Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107), Zhu Xi and Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 (1139-1192), took an anthropocosmic view (Tu 1993:167-177). The way that Zhu Xi rearranged the order of the Confucian classics by placing the Four Books (*Sishu* 四書) above the Five Classics (*Wujing* 五經) and by giving the Four Books a particular sequence — the *Great Learning*, the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean* — was especially crucial (ibid.:174).

Neo-Confucianism not only adopted an anthropocosmic vision that emphasised a process of self-transformation and cosmic connectedness, but it also developed an arguably religious perspective: Zhu Xi's *dao* lineage can be interpreted as a creative response to Buddhism's lineage of patriarchs. This anthropocosmic vision, however, did not include the possibility of spiritual beings interacting with the human realm. I-Kuan Tao's revisions of the Confucian classics enacted by deities descending to earth thus adds a truly religious element to Neo-Confucianism, irrespective of precisely how the new versions differ from Zhu Xi's editions of the *Great Learning* or the *Doctrine of the Mean*. These new versions are crucial for the general populace as descended deities rectified them. Thus, there are at least four stages in the generation of a kind of grassroots fundamentalism, as practiced by I-Kuan Tao:

1. Transform the classical scriptures, especially the Confucian classics, into revealed texts. Subsequently, the need for both personal salvation and collective cultural identity can be satisfied by adding communication with deities from the other world to Neo-Confucian anthropocosmic thought.

2. These new Classics, legitimized by the deities in the present, are linked to current times and world events, and have an immediacy and a connectedness the originals did not possess.

3. The new connexion between the deities and the present renews and reaffirms link between the deities, *dao*, and heaven on the one hand and human beings on the other, thereby reinvigorating faith and engagement.

4. The new versions of the classics (while, of course, appealing to the generalized Chinese cultural tradition) stimulate feelings of exclusivity among believers, and may therefore act as a base for a fundamentalist response. This may stimulate further engagement with the tradition and forge collective identities within the existing culture.

## Conclusion

In the global political arena, ‘fundamentalism’ can be seen as the fusion of politicised religious conservatism with demands of an ethnic group that believes it has suffered discrimination (Munson 2010:367). This can be understood in terms of cultural essentialism or ethno-nationalism and, in these cases, religion can become a powerful tool in the hands of politicians (ter Haar 2003:4). Generally speaking, fundamentalists appropriate and renew traditional cultural symbols in order to counteract the influence of modernity as well as to protect themselves from the incursions of imperialism. Within a specific religious tradition, they



usually claim that there is an absolutely sacred authority that resists corrosion. In revealed religions, monotheist religions and religions with a commonly accepted canon, a fundamentalist response will more easily occur because of their readily identifiable sacred core. While fundamentalism is often related to political mobilisation, it sometimes manifests in a choice to be isolated, or at the other extreme an acceptance of violence as necessary to protect the religious and moral truth (ter Haar 2003:4). I-Kuan Tao has not been engaged in any forms of political, let alone violent, action yet if we accept that fundamentalism covers a spectrum, the use of the term remains helpful for analysis.

Marty & Appleby devised a five-dimension model to summarise ideological variations in global fundamentalism (ibid.:247). Using this model, I-Kuan Tao is ranked low in reactivity, high in selectivity, low in dualism, low in inerrancy and high in millennialism. By contrast, American Protestant Fundamentalists ranked high across all criteria, and Hamas and Sikh radicals were high in the first four criteria, and low for millennialism. Thus, I-Kuan Tao has some strong characteristics and some weak characteristics relative to fundamentalist movements elsewhere. Thus, several factors will affect the configuration of a fundamentalist movement. First, whether the prevailing religious tradition is diffused or institutional. In cases of a diffused tradition, the revitalization of the core requires a redefinition of how that core is constituted. Second, the background political and civil setting will determine whether a movement will be, for example, violent, mobilized for political action, vocal in public debate, or a means of local empowerment. Third, the nature of a fundamentalist movement will change depending on whether the state, the clergy, cultural elites, a majority who feel marginalised by a secular state, or a minority who use violence to extend their global political influence, are the main actors.

Specific factors are also necessary to generate a bottom-up Chinese

fundamentalism like I-Kuan Tao: first, a return to the cultural core is required. However, as shown above, the core of Chinese culture is arguably represented by moral precepts and a philosophy of life rather than religious teachings. Thus, there is a necessary arbitrariness in determining what the cultural core really is. Second, since the mid-Ming dynasty, sectarian movements have competed with official intellectuals as the bearers of cultural orthodoxy. Yet due to brutal persecutions they never attained their goal of building an egalitarian utopia free of exploitation, and never able to lose the stain of cultural inferiority and social marginality. It is hard to see how a fundamentalist movement could prosper under these conditions.

Imperialist incursions and political and cultural reforms from the mid-nineteenth century led to the marginalization of the imperial court and Confucian intellectuals. The people and institutions who came to occupy high social positions were not as willing to protect traditional culture as their predecessors. Arguably, only popular sectarian groups were still willing to be associated with the now marginalised traditional culture. And since few people in high positions still cared about them, sectarian groups could appropriate and manipulate traditional cultural symbols without interference. How the subordinated classes in China appropriated and consumed the repository of symbols is important. Rather than accept the abstract principles of the Neo-Confucianists that did not presume the existence of any spiritual beings, they imbued the symbols of traditional culture — the Confucian classics — with a religious authority.

The reformulation of the cultural core — re-editing the classics, generating new scriptures through magic such as the *xunzhongxun*, and requesting deities and patriarchs to descend to the human realm — all are parts of a specifically Chinese quasi-fundamentalist project. We may therefore label I-Kuan Tao as a form of cultural fundamentalism, in which followers adhere to a set of redefined

fundamental cultural principles rather than by a strict adherence to the words of scripture. This cultural fundamentalism allows I-Kuan Tao multiple revelations. Whenever there is a need, a new scripture can descend, in the name of the heavenly *dao*. While this repeated creation of scripture may water down its authority, these ‘disposable scriptures’ allow each individual a position within an interconnected spiritual network, and within the grand salvational schema. It is important to note that these revealed texts are generated in collective rituals and belong to every participating follower. Despite this ‘multiple revelations’ approach, I-Kuan Tao may still be considered fundamentalist, since they have a black-and-white outlook on life and construct boundaries between themselves and non-believers. This outlook is, however, blended with a feeling of collective and individual emotional empowerment engendered by occupying the historically novel position of being common people who have taken charge of their cultural inheritance. We now may hear common people exclaim: Hurrah! We the majority at last determine the cultural orthodoxy — no one can marginalise us now. Also: the mandate of heaven is at last held by those who ought to hold it: the honest, simple, and pure common people! And: The last chance for salvation will come soon. The truth will manifest itself for all to see!

As indicated above, to return to a Chinese cultural core is a complex task, as this requires a definition of what that core is. While the Confucian classics would always constitute part of it, the Daoist *Daodejing* and the Buddhist *Heart Sutra* have both gained the status of scripture in general Chinese culture. The core is thus a kind of a prism in which white light is rendered into different colours when shone from different angles. We might even argue that over Chinese history the Daoist ‘*dao*’, the Buddhist ‘Buddha nature’, the Confucian ‘Principle’ (*li* 理), and the popular phrase ‘True Features’ (*benlai mianmu* 本來面目, literally ‘original face’), have tended to lose their distinctiveness and have merged in meaning in

common usage. Here, the *dao* of I-Kuan Tao does not have a specific Daoist connotation but rather refers to the more popular understanding of the *dao* as the principle behind everything. Thus, the word *dao* is itself a kind of prism through which Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist ideas are refracted.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume, as Jordan and Overmyer (1986:10) do, that syncretism in China originates from the desire of local people to remove barriers from between different traditions and unite Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. In my view, Jordan and Overmyer take the result as the cause. I would argue that the ‘roof’ of Chinese culture is supported by the three pillars of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, which are complementary and interdependent. Confucianism guides social organisation and personal interaction, Buddhism explains the supernatural and theorises the transcendental, and Daoism provides a vision of organic interconnectedness and means for manipulating otherworldly situations. All three pillars are necessary to support the cultural roof that covers the social and religious needs of the common people. As they form part of the same cultural core, they are, at least functionally, one rather than three. Thus, I argue, the term ‘converge-ism’ is more appropriate than ‘syncretism’ to describe this phenomenon in Chinese culture.

From the perspective of syncretism, the term ‘three teachings in one’ (*sanjiao heyi* 三教合一) implies that Chinese local sectarian groups regard Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism as equal but separate elements. However, I argue that in practice, ‘three teachings in one’ is not an equal integration of the three traditions but rather represents an imagined, inclusive and coherent cultural core, often called the *dao* lineage. This view is supported by observing both ritual processes and religious networks. Determining the origins of specific doctrines that are integrated into the ‘three teachings in one’ is not the point — we should rather focus on which ritual procedures and forms of religious networking are adopted

to strengthen the legitimacy and efficacy of the cultural core.

In addition to fundamentalism, other frameworks may also be relevant in an analysis of I-Kuan Tao. One may be to consider whether it is a Revitalization Movement, defined as “a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture” (Wallace 1956:265). Fundamentalism could be perceived as one variety of revitalisation movement, but revitalisation denotes a broad range of phenomena; fundamentalism is arguably more appropriate as stresses the importance I-Kuan Tao places on ‘symbolic return’. Nativistic Movements (Linton 1943), on the other hand, are characterised by the elimination of alien persons, customs and values. This might imply a ‘symbolic return’, but does not sufficiently emphasise the modern context and the appeal to counter-modernity of fundamentalism. Finally, ‘Revival Movement’ refers in a more general sense to an effort to engineer old traditions or organisations and does not address the specific mechanisms of how local people mobilise their traditions.

The use of the term ‘fundamentalism’ has, of course, been the focus of debate (Corbett 2015). Some support its use, including those involved in the influential Fundamentalism Project (Rahman and Moosa 2000); others argue against it, pointing to its limited utility and even cautioning against possible cultural imperialism (Smith 1963). I choose to use ‘fundamentalism’ heuristically and consider it comparatively useful for analysing I-Kuan Tao’s attitude toward tradition and its methods of symbolic return. Since the concept of fundamentalism originates in monotheist religions, attention should always be paid to specific contexts when when we adopt it to understand polytheistic religions. Thus, it should not be used in a strict definitional sense in relation to I-Kuan Tao, but as a heuristic tool to stimulate comparison.

## References

Anonymous 列聖齊述

2002[1926] Daxue zhengshi 大學證釋 [The Testimony and Explication of the Great Learning]. Taipei: Guanghai wenhua 台北:光慧文化.

2003[1926] Zhongyong zhengshi 中庸證釋 [The Testimony and Explication of the Doctrine of the Mean]. Taipei: Guanghai wenhua 台北:光慧文化.

Almond, Gabriel A., R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan

2003 *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalism Around the World*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Bartholomeusz, Tessa J., and Chandra R. de Silva, eds.

1998 *Buddhist Fundamentalism and Minority Identities in Sri Lanka*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

de Bary, William Theodore, and Irene Bloom, eds.

1999 *Sources of Chinese Tradition*. Vol. 1. New York: Columbia University Press.

Corbett, Rosemary R.

2015 Islamic “Fundamentalism”: the Mission Creep of an American Religious Metaphor. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 83(4):977-1004.

Chung, Yun-ying 鍾雲鶯

2000 *Minguo yilai minjian jiaopai daxue zhongyong sixiang zhi yanjiu* 民國以來民間教派大學中庸思想之研究 [A Study of the Ideas of the Great Learning and the Doctrine of The Mean among Sectarian Groups since 1911]. Ph.D. diss., National Chengchi University.

Davies, Jon, and Isabel Wollaston, eds.

1993 *The Sociology of Sacred Texts*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press.

Fischer-Schreiber, Ingrid

1996 *The Shambhala Dictionary of Taoism*. Werner Wunsche, trans. Boston: Shambhala.

ter Haar, Gerrie

- 2003 Religious Fundamentalism and Social Change: A Comparative Inquiry. *In* The Freedom to Do God's Will: Religious Fundamentalism and Social Change. Gerrie ter Haar & James J. Busuttill, eds., Pp. 1-24. New York: Routledge.

Hinnells, John, ed.

- 1995 A New Dictionary of Religions. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Jordan, David K., and Daniel L. Overmyer

- 1986 The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kuan, Ping-yin

- 2013 A Profile of Religion in Contemporary Taiwan. *In* Religious Experience in Contemporary Taiwan and China. Tsai Yen-Zen, ed., Pp. 17-40. Taipei: Chengchi University Press.

Lee, Xu-zhong 李學忠, and Lin Xiu-yin 林秀英

- 1992 Qin jia bao en 欽加保恩 [Granted the title bao en by heavenly order]. *Hsinchu*, Taiwan: Zhang Tian Ran Publisher.

Legge, James

- 1960 The Chinese Classics. 5 Vols. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Lin, Mingzheng 林明正

- 2003 Yingwen chuanti cankao shouce 英文傳題參考手冊 [A Bilingual Reference Manual for Propagation of the Dao]. Taipei: Guangwui wenhua 台北:光慧文化.

Linton, Ralph

- 1943 Nativistic Movements. *American Anthropologist* 45:230-240.

Marsden, George M.

- 2006 Fundamentalism and American Culture. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marty, Martin E., and R. Scott Appleby, eds.

- 1991 Fundamentalism Observed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ministry of Interior

- 1996 Statistical Abstract of Interior of the Republic of China, 1996. Taipei:

Department of Statistics, Ministry of Interior.

Munson, Henry

2010 Fundamentalism. *In* The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion. John Hinnells, ed., Pp.354-371. London; New York, NY: Routledge.

Qiu, Wei 邱巍

2001 Minchu kongjiaohui ji kongjiao yundong 民初孔教會及孔教運動 [Confucianism and Confucian Movements around 1911]. Zhonggong Zhenjiang shengwei dangxiao xuebao 中共浙江省委黨校學報, 2:53-59.

Rahman, Fazular, and Ebrahim Moosa

2000 Revival and Reform: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism. Oxford: Oneworld.

Renard, John

2002 The Handy Religion Answer Book. Canton, MI.: Visible Ink Press.

Seiwert, Hubert

2003 Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV.

de Silva, K. M.

1986 Religion, Nationalism and the State. USF Monographs in Religion and Public Policy, No.1. Tampa, FL.: University of South Florida.

Smith, Wilfred Cantwell

1963 The Meaning and End of Religion. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Talbot, Ian A.

1991 Politics and Religion in Contemporary India. *In* Politics and Religion in the Modern World. George Moyser, ed., Pp. 135-161. New York: Routledge.

Tu, Wei-ming 杜維明

1991 The Search for Roots in Industrial East Asia: The Case of the Confucian Revival. *In* Fundamentalism Observed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., Pp. 740-781. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

1993 Confucianism. *In* Our Religions. Arvind Sharma, ed., Pp. 139-228. New York: Harper Collins.

1996 Xiandai jingshen yu rujia chuantong 現代精神與儒家傳統 [Modern spirits



and the Confucian tradition]. Taipei: Lianjing台北:聯經.

- 2001 Dongya jiazhi yu duoyuan xiandaixing 東亞價值與多元現代性 [East Asian values and Multiple Modernities]. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 北京:中國社會科學出版社.

Wallace, Anthony

- 1956 Revitalization Movements: Some Theoretical Considerations for Their Comparative Study. *American Anthropologist* 58:264-281.
- 2004 Forward. *In* Reassessing Revitalization Movements. Michael E. Harkin, ed., Pp.vii-xi. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Yang, C. K.

- 1961 Religion in Chinese Society. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Zhang, Tianran 張天然

- 1988[1937] Xing li ti shi 性理題釋 [Explanations for the Answers to the Truth]. Taipei: Zhonghua tang台北:崇華堂.

## 一貫道的經典閱讀與建構原教旨主義： 聖典社會學的考察

丁仁傑

### 摘要

聖典社會學特別到注意聖典運作背後的集體性動員基礎與文化邏輯，根據聖典社會學的研究典範，並經由對原教旨主義的跨文化比較，本文透過對於一貫道經典詮釋與建構社會行動的方式，來理解華人民間社會裡，當透過經典而回歸文化傳統的集體性行動，會以什麼樣的社會過程而發生？又會具有一種什麼樣的社會效果？與一神論傳統特別重視啟示之永恆性的原教旨主義運動相比較，華人社會中，經典與啟示之間有某種分離性，而且經典具有更大的社會普及性，結果是華人的類原教旨主義運動，往往是透過新的啟示的誕生，來活化傳統公認的經典，這是一種有著文化特殊性卻又是在華人民間社會中相當普及性的象徵性回歸的方式。這種方式，或許可以被稱之為「綜攝性的原教旨主義」，是以「不斷重新組合出來的一個永恆不變的真理或道統來做為象徵性回歸依據」的經典運用的操作機制，這是一種高度動態性、混合性和帶有某種世俗性的經典操作模式，某種程度上，它也稀釋了典型原教旨主義所具有的那種絕對性、超越性和「文化本質主義」的性質。

**關鍵詞：**聖典社會學、原教旨主義、一貫道、綜攝主義、經典至上主義