Reenchanting Buddhism via modernizing magic: Guru Wuguang of Taiwan's philosophy and science of 'superstition'

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Introduction

'Magic,' 'religion,' and 'superstition' are three terms that occultists, clerics, charlatans and skeptics have spent countless hours attempting to define. Commonly, these three notions occupy multiple typological categories juxtaposed with one comprised of 'science' and 'the secular.'[1] This dissertation analyzes one attempt to draw the boundaries between these categories in a holistic fashion that mutually harmonized all four. This attempt was undertaken by a Buddhist monk from Taiwan, Guru Wuguang 悟光上師 (Dharma-name Quanmiao 全妙, secular name Zheng Jinbao 鄭進寶 1918-2000)—whose name translates as 'enlightened luminosity.'

The discourse that Wuguang joined took place in East Asia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was dominated by a typological trinary consisting of secular-religious-superstitious[2] in which 'magic' did not exist as an independent category.[3] Each concept represented by these categories (as well as the fourth 'non-category') was a newcomer to East

[1] To the best of my knowledge, the most informative and comprehensive work on how scholars have attempted to differentiate these categories remains Randall Styers, *Making Magic: Religion, Magic and Science in the Modern World*, American Academy of Religion Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[2] Jason Ā. Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 163. Josephson argues—I believe quite convincingly—that it was not only the contemporary semiotic *values* of the terms for these categories that were adopted in East Asia during this time (see next two notes), but also the Sino-Japanese *notions* that the terms represent. Stated plainly, the very idea of 'religion'—as well as the 'secular' and 'superstition' —did not exist in East Asia before the modern era. It must be noted that Michael Pye disagrees. Online review: https://www.academia.edu/6044410/Josephson_Jason_%C4%80nanda_The_Invention_of_Religion_in_Japan (accessed Jan. 9, 2015). Whether or not the East Asian appropriation of these categories represents their East Asian birth is irrelevant to this study, as it focuses on how they were applied, not how/when they originated. I rely on Josephson due to his deepening our understanding of how these categories were conceptualized by correctively remapping this discursive context along the lines of a trinary rather than a simple secular/religious binary.

[3] This trinary was the Sino-Japanese appropriation of the 'magic–religion–science triad' that evolved in Western intellectual spheres. Unlike the Western triad, the Sino-Japanese appropriation thereof did not reify 'magic' as *sui generis*. See Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Magic," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Western Mysticism and Esotericism*, ed. Glenn Alexander Magee (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 393-404. In addition to differing in terminology and meaning, the fact that 'magic' is the first category within the earlier, Western triad (whereas its closest counterpart 'superstition' is the last category within the East Asian trinary) reflects the view of nineteenth century Euro-American social evolutionists who believed that religion evolved from magic. See Rodney Stark, "Reconceptualizing Religion, Magic, and Science," *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2001): 107.

Asian intellectual discourse.[4] Once adopted, East Asian elites classified the religious and intellectual traditions of their lands in terms of this trinary. Phenomena perceived as beneficial to the future of their respective nations were placed into the category of 'secular' and idolized while phenomena blamed for Asia's having fallen behind the technologically advanced West were cast into the category of 'superstition' and demonized. The middle category, 'religion,' served as a safe haven for ideologies and activities that, although not necessarily useful in forwarding the modernization of East Asia, were not blamed for her relative backwardness.[5] It was within the confines of this neutral category that Buddhists, Daoists and practitioners of folk religion[6] strove to establish their traditions. To accomplish this they set about disenchanting these traditions by

[4] The Sino-Japanese terms: 'religion,' 宗教 (Ch. *zongjiao*, Jpn. *shūkyō*), 'superstition' 迷信 (Chn. *mixin*, Jpn. *meishin*), 'secular' 世俗 (Chn. *shisu*, Jpn. *sezoku*) and 'science' 科學 (Chn. *kexue*, Jpn. *kagaku*) are all recent innovations that were first concretized in Japan during the nineteenth century by rendering them into Chinese characters. This enabled Chinese speakers to simply borrow the Japanese translations instead of coming up with their own. See Akira Iriye, *China and Japan in the Global Setting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 34. *Zongjiao*/*shūkyō* that came to be used for 'religion' had been previously used in Japan since the early part of the Tokugawa period 徳川時代 (1603-1868) by Confucians as a technical term denoting the ideal behavior of a wise rule, as detailed in Hans M. Krämer, "How 'Religion' Came to Be Translated as Shūkyō: Shimaji Mokurai and the Appropriation of Religion in Early Meiji Japan," *Japan Review 25* (2013): 106. *Mixin*/*meishin* also has a premodern usage, but one that differs from the modern equivalent of superstition. Buddhists had used it to denote how people are misled by their own attachments. Premodern critics of Daoism had used it polemically to assert that Daoist practitioners used mysterious rites to mislead people. See Rebecca Nedostup, "The Transformation of the Concept of Religion in Chinese Modernity," in *Religious Diversity in Chinese Thought*, ed. Perry Schmidt-Leukel et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 167. *Shisu/sezoku* was used by premodern Buddhists to refer to the superficial, mundane truth in contradistinction to the ultimate truth. See Josephson, *The Invention of Religion*, 152. For the evolution of *kexue*/*kagaku* refer to Suzuki Shūji, "Dreams of 'Science' and 'Truth,'" in *The Emergence of the Modern Sino-Japanese Lexicon: Seven Studies*, ed., tr. Joshua A. Fogel (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 181-203. Although 'magic'—which goes by multiple terms explored in this dissertation—did not exist as an independent category, the concept that 'magic' existed as a phenomenon separable from 'religion,' is a Christian construct that was adopted in East Asia. See Stephen G. Covell, *Japanese Temple Buddhism: Worldliness in a Religion of Renunciation*, Topics in Contemporary Buddhism (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 12-14; Winston B. Davis, *Dojo: Magic and Exorcism in Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 210.

[5] Josephson demonstrates that these categories were in fact legal, in addition to ideological or ethnographic. The 'secular' was equated what was 'real,' while 'superstition' was equated with the 'delusional.' See Josephson, *The Invention of Religion*, 3-4 and 259-262.

[6] 'Folk religion' 民俗宗教, also referred to as 'popular religion,' is an umbrella term for local cults that do not neatly fit within the confines of established religious categories such as Buddhism, Daoism and modern Shintō. While multiple folk religious groups in close geographical proximity oftentimes share numerous similarities, they are not considered a singular unified tradition due to their non-centralized and heterogeneous nature. See Philip Clart, "The Concept of 'Popular Religion' in the Study of Chinese Religions: Retrospect and Prospects," in *The Fourth Fu Jen University Sinological Symposium: Research on Religions in China: Status quo and Perspectives*, ed. Zbigniew Wesolowski (Xinzhuang: Furen Daxue chubanshe, 2007), 166-203.

reinterpreting them with a demythologizing hermeneutic. The result was that depictions of scientifically inexplicable phenomena were either presented as metaphor or entirely cast aside and deemed 'superstitious.' This gave birth to a new, disenchanted form of Buddhism referred to by scholars as 'Buddhist modernism'—an umbrella term that encompasses the most prominent forms of Buddhism in contemporary Taiwan.

In response to the modernist disenchantment of Buddhism, Wuguang sought to redeem magic from the category of 'superstition.' To do so, he emulated the ways his Buddhist predecessors and contemporaries had disenchanted Buddhism in order to reenchant it. I refer to his reenchanting technique as 'sophisticating,' meaning 'to mix with something foreign or inferior' or 'to adulterate.'[7] The word 'sophisticated' itself, which comes from the Greek *sophia* for 'wisdom,' refers to something that is 'refined' or 'highly developed.'[8] These dual implications of adulteration and refinement are present in Wuguang's hermeneutic, with the former serving as a means to achieve the latter. The base material which Wuguang sophisticated was comprised of magical practices exiled to the category 'superstition' found within esoteric Buddhism, Taiwanese folk religion and Daoism. The foreign ingredients with which he adulterated these were science and modern philosophy. Wuguang added these foreign elements in order to rescue beliefs and practices related to magic that East Asian modernist circles had demythologized and demonized by presenting them as scientifically and intellectually sound.

[7] This is based on 'sophisticate's' usage as a transitive verb meaning, "to mix (commodities) with some foreign or inferior substance; to render impure in this way; to adulterate." See, "Sophisticate, v.," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, December 2015), http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/184762?rskey=g7WbHZ&result=3 (accessed Jan. 9, 2016).

[8] This is based on 'sophisticated's' adjectival value meaning, "mixed with some foreign substance; adulterated; not pure or genuine" and "of equipment, techniques, theories, etc.: employing advanced or refined methods or concepts; highly developed or complicated employing advanced or refined methods or concepts." See, "Sophisticated, adj.," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, December 2015), http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/184763 (accessed Jan. 9, 2016).

Wuguang's ability and desire to sophisticate what had been labeled 'superstitious' were rooted in his eclectic background. Wuguang was a: Chan 禪 monk, faith healer, exorcist, alchemist, holder of an honorary doctorate in philosophy, lesser archbishop 少僧正 in the Japanese Buddhist ecclesiastical hierarchy 僧階 and Shingon 真言 priest.[9] He was also a student of: Kundalini Yoga, Tibetan Karma Kagyu Buddhism, Socratic philosophy, Western esotericism and Christianity.[10] Despite his being so deeply involved in such *recherché* traditions and spiritual technologies, he embraced science, studied biology and physics and even looked forward to—and optimistically attempted to prophesize—future scientific discoveries. His claim to fame is his resurrecting an 'extinct school' of esoteric Buddhism referred to in Chinese as Zhenyan 真言 and Japanese as Shingon—a word that is an early Chinese translation of the Sanskrit word 'mantra.'[11]

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[9] Photographs of Wuguang's honorary doctorate, ecclesiastical position and Shingon ordination certificates can all be seen in Wuguang, *Fojiao zhenyanzong jishenchengfo guan* 佛教真言宗即身成佛觀 [Contemplation on Becoming a Buddha in this Body] (Kaohsiung: Paise wenhua, 1991), front endpapers. For the other credentials mentioned here see Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

[10] Wuguang respectively references Plato's Allegory of the Cave and Phædo in his book, *Chande jianghua* 禪的講話 [Speaking of Chan/Zen] (Jiayi: Wuzhishan guangmingwang si jiayi daochang, 1991), 17 and 55. Wuguang's familiarity with Western occultism is evidenced by the symbol he created to signify his sect (Chapter 5). Due to the relationship forged between Swedenborgians as well as members of the Theosophical Society—of which D.T. Suzuki was a member—and Meiji-era Buddhist modernists, this familiarity is understandable. The most famous Theosophist to deeply involve himself with Buddhism in Japan and elsewhere was Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907). See Stephen Prothero, *The White Buddhist: The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott,* Religion in North America Series (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) and "Henry Steel Olcott and 'Protestant Buddhism,'" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63, no. 2 (1995): 281-302; Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 155; Yoshinaga Shin'ichi, "Theosophy and Buddhist Reformers in the Middle of the Meiji Period: An Introduction," *Japanese Religions* 34, no. 2 (2009): 119-131 and "Suzuki Daisetsu and Swedenborg: A Historical Background," in *Modern Buddhism in Japan,* ed. Hayashi Makoto et al. (Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2014), 112-143. For Wuguang's studies into the other subjects mentioned here, refer to Chapter 2.

[11] Tang Dynasty Zhenyan—also referred to as Tang Esotericism 唐密—is a form esoteric Buddhism that continues to captivate the imaginations of scholars and practitioners of Buddhism alike. According to traditional East Asian religious historiography, Zhenyan flourished in China during the Tang Dynasty 唐朝 (618-907) in the nation's capital of Chang'an 長安 (modern day Xi'an 西安). However, sometime in the early Song Dynasty 宋朝 (960-1269) its chain of initiation was interrupted and its spiritual technologies became subsumed under other Buddhist movements, folk religion and Daoism. Prior to this fissure, of Zhenyan's initiation chain was transported to Japan by the Japanese figure Kūkai 空海 (a.k.a. Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師; 774-835), who had studied the esoteric

The more mundane side of his life was equally complicated. Before acquiring the above credentials he made a living as a bamboo furniture maker, construction worker and as a merchant sailor who reportedly had "a reputation for pugnacity that was known all along the South China coast."[12] He was married and had six children. This multifaceted life earned him the additional title of "heavenly vagabond" 太空流浪人.[13] Largely unknown elsewhere, this complex character is famous throughout the Chinese-speaking Buddhist world for having founded an influential revivalist Buddhist sect that has spread to numerous locations throughout East Asia, spawned offshoots, rivals and even inspired the formation of other religious movements, in addition to influencing popular Asian and Western Buddhist figures. His followers proclaim that the natural world testified to his saintliness, as butterflies followed him when he walked and when traveling a gentle drizzle of rain would suddenly spring from the sky whenever he arrived at his destination, as though to welcome him.[14] They also report that he visited them in their dreams, both while alive and posthumously, when they suffered from physical or psychological ailments, and upon awakening these ailments were inexplicably gone.[15] When instructing these same devotees—who include wealthy business people, university professors, engineers and similarly

Dharma under the Chinese Master Huiguo 惠果 (746-805) while on a trip to China. After this, the teachings Kūkai received from Huiguo became the basis for Shingon. See Charles Orzech, "Seeing Chen-yen Buddhism: Traditional Scholarship and the Vajrayāna in China," *History of Religions* 29, no. 2 (1989): 87-144. Although this is the traditional account, Robert Sharf has called the existence of Tang Dynasty Zhenyan into question in Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise*, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 14 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 263-278. However, the existence or non-existence of this school during the Tang Dynasty is irrelevant to this study as it concerns a modern movement.

[12] Shinzen Young, *Break Through Pain: A Step-by-Step Mindfulness Meditation Program for Transforming Chronic and Acute Pain* (Boulder, CO: Sounds True Inc., 2004), 75.

[13] Guo Yongkun 郭永坤, "*Da Kaohsiung fojiaohui suoshu siyuan tuanti jianjie* 大高雄佛教會所屬寺院團體簡介, [Profile of the Member Monasteries of the Buddhist association of Kaohsiung" (2010). Online: http://nknush.kh.edu.tw/~volunteer/te001.htm (accessed Dec. 6, 2015).

[14] Interview with disciple who often traveled with Wuguang, Aug. 2014.

[15] Interview with one of Wuguang's oldest disciples, Aug. 2014. It should be noted that this individual is not an MSBL priest and is in fact a faculty member in a scientific discipline at a Taiwanese university.

modernized individuals—he openly smoked cigarettes and spat red saliva from chewing betel nut.[16]

Although undoubtedly born out of his unique character, Wuguang's eclecticism was also a product of his place and time. He was born in a small, rural agrarian mountain village in southern Taiwan. Taiwan, like Wuguang himself, is a relatively minor place from a global perspective whose peripheral nature conceals its importance to the study of how religion has been transformed to suit the needs of the modern world. This importance is embodied within Taiwan's contemporary urban landscape—that boasts the greatest per capita number of both convenience stores[17] and Buddhist temples on the planet[18]— and is rooted in her political past. Within the span of a mere four hundred years, this land of the old and new has been successively colonized by four different world powers from Europe and Asia: Spain, Holland, China (twice) and Japan.[19] This rapid oscillation of sovereignty coincided with leaps in globalization, secularization and science symptomatic of modernity—each of which deeply impacted the shape of religion across the world. Of the ruling powers that claimed Taiwan and left their imprint upon the island's religious topography, the impressions made by her two closest East Asian neighbors, Japan and China, are the deepest. While Taiwan was in each of their hands, they themselves were in the midst of earth-shattering transitions whose reverberations led to comprehensive restructurings of their religious traditions, processes that gave birth to

[16] Master Daqing 大卿導師, "*Qianxu* 謙虛 [Modest Remarks]," Dharma Lineage Website, 2006: http:// www.dharmalineage.org/Docs/%E8%AC%99%E8%99%9B.htm (accessed Jan. 9, 2015).

[17] Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), "Grocery Retail Trends in Taiwan 2013," (Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance, 2013): 4 and 9. Online: http://www.aquaculture.ca/files/documents/ GroceryRetail Taiwan.pdf (accessed Oct. 30, 2015).

[18] Hua-Chen Jenny Lin, "Crushed Pearls: The Revival and Transformation of the Buddhist Nuns' Order in Taiwan" (PhD diss, Rice University, 2010), 115.

[19] For the periodization of Taiwan's history in reference to colonialism see, Ching Cheong, *Will Taiwan Break Away? The Rise of Taiwanese Nationalism* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2001), 120.

disenchanted and rationalized forms of Buddhism that had been purged of superstition that represent early forms of Buddhist modernism. But this is but one side of Buddhist modernism.

In composing this dissertation, it is my aim to explore the hitherto largely unexplored phenomenon of Buddhist modernism's reenchanted, magical side, something I attempt through examining the life, times and career of Wuguang. While ample scholarly attention has been paid to disenchanted forms of Buddhist modernism—a Buddhist response to modernity—subsequent reenchanted responses to this response have yet to be thoroughly explored. And yet, it is Buddhist modernism's magical side that represents the most visibly vital contemporary state of the tradition. The scholarly community has likewise all but ignored Wuguang, as—outside of my work[20]—he has only been discussed in a single English paragraph[21] and two Chinese MA theses.[22] This is despite the fact that he was the direct ideological heir of Japanese, Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist modernist developments that have received robust scholarly attention, and was the founder of an international Buddhist organization that has in turn spawned at least five others. This dissertation thus aims to break new ground in the field of Buddhist Studies[23] by exploring a reenchanted form of Buddhist modernism and bringing to light one of its important architects. Additionally, while there are numerous academic treatments of early Japanese and

[20] Cody R. Bahir, "Buddhist Master Wuguang's (1918-2000) Taiwanese Web of the Colonial, Exilic and Han," *E-Journal of East and Central Asian Religions* 1 (2013), 81-93. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.2218/ejecar.2013.1.737 and "Reformulating the Appropriated and Relinking the Chain: Challenges of Lineage and Legitimacy in Contemporary Chinese Zhenyan," in a forthcoming book on Sino-Tibetan Buddhism, ed. Fabienne Jagou, title, publisher and pagination TBD.

[21] Chen Bing, "The Tantric Revival and its Reception in Modern China," in *Images of Tibet in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Monica Esposito, 2 vols. (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2008), 1.394.

[22] Gu Zhengli 顧正立, "Study on Shingon Buddhism of Guangmingwang Temple at Wuzhishan, Kaohsiung"高雄市五智山光明王寺之真言宗信仰研究," (MA thesis, Huafan University, 2012); Li Yongbin 李永斌, "Master Wu Light Esoteric Ideological Research 悟光法师密教思想研究," (MA thesis, Northwest University, 2011).

[23] Jonathan A. Silk states that, "Buddhist Studies as an umbrella term for the disinterested or non-apologetic inquiry into any aspect of Buddhism or Buddhist traditions generally refers to the modern, academic study of Buddhism in all forms." See Jonathan A. Silk, "Buddhist Studies," in *Encyclopedia of Buddhist Studies*, ed. Robert E. Buswell Jr. (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2004), 94.

Chinese Buddhist modernisms, there is a dearth of material on the nascent forms of Taiwanese Buddhist modernism that emerged during the first half of the twentieth century. Due to the fact that Taiwan's sovereignty oscillated between Japan and China during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the sculptors of this early form of Taiwanese Buddhist modernism were directly and simultaneously influenced by the forms of Buddhist modernism that were taking shape in both Japan and China. As Wuguang was directly responding to these Taiwanese modernist developments, this dissertation illuminates multiple facets of both disenchanted and reenchanted forms of Buddhist modernism that have remained outside the mainstream of scholarly attention.

Section I: Research Questions and Motivations

While conducting this study I have sought to resolve specific questions whose answers offer insight into a single, much larger question: how have magically-inclined, modernist East Asian clerics reacted to the earlier modernist demythologization and castigation of their religious practices? In other words, what happens when a tradition 'purified' from its 'mythical' elements reincorporates itself in the tension between its 'enchanted' past and 'scientific' present? Previous scholarly discussions on Asian religiosity have yet to address this question.

David McMahan, upon whose work I directly build, has limited his discussions on Buddhist modernist reenchantment to the Western 'mindfulness movement,' asserting that it is "derived from a hybridizing of Buddhist mindfulness with modes of consciousness derived in part from modern literary sensibilities that give new attention and valorization to the details of ordinary life."[24] This usage—which is applied to forms of Buddhism outside of this study's

[24] David L. McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 24. Also see his, article, "The Enchanted Secular: Buddhism and the Emergence of Transtraditional 'Spirituality,'" *The*

scope—has nothing to do with magical practices. In fact, it is unrelated to reenchanting *Buddhism*, as it is "ordinary life" that is being reenchanted *through* concepts rooted in Buddhist modernism. Michael Pye, Winston Davis and Katja Triplett—who have dealt with magic and modern Buddhism in East Asia—have focused on the persistence and survival of magic within 'popular Buddhism,' rather than clerical attempts to reclaim it.[25] The foci of these significant contributions, however, preclude their potential to bestow on us an understanding of how complex Buddhist doctrines related to, ontology, metaphysics, phenomenology and soteriology have been reinterpreted in light of the disenchanting hermeneutic of Buddhist modernism in order to reenchant the tradition. Their aims and foci lay elsewhere.

The only scholarly works of which I am aware of that dissect modern East Asian clerical interpretations of magic are Pamela Winfeld's article, "Curing with *Kaji*: Healing and Esoteric Empowerment in Japan" and Katja Triplett's chapter, "Healing Rituals in Contemporary Japanese Buddhism as Acts of Individual and Collective Purification."[26] While Winfeld's article discusses the Buddhist doctrines interpreted, her focus is not on science or reenchantment.

Eastern Buddhist 43, no. 1-2 (2012): 1-19. This same conceptualization of Buddhism as a tool to reenchant modern life is found in Jørn Borup, *Japanese Rinzai Zen Buddhism: Myōshinji, a living religion*, Numen Studies in the History of Religions, 119 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 188.

[25] See Michael Pye, "Rationality, Ritual and Life-shaping Decisions in Modern Japan," in *Japan and Asian Modernities*, ed. by Rein Raud (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 1-27; Michael Pye and Katja S. Triplett, "Religiöse Transaktionen: Rational oder Irrational?," in *Workshop Organisation und Ordnung der Japanischen Wirtschaft IV: Themenschwerpunkt: Wahrnehmung, Institutionenökonomik und Japanstudien*, eds. Werner Pascha and Cornelia Storz, Duisburger Arbeitspapiere Ostasienwissenschaften, 55 (Duisburg: Inst. für Ostasienwiss, 2004), 27–38; W. Davis, *Dojo*, 297-298.

[26] Katja S. Triplett, "Healing Rituals in Contemporary Japanese Buddhism as Acts of Individual and Collective Purification," in *Purification: Religious Transformations of Body and Mind*, eds. Gerhard M. Martin and Katja Triplett, T & T Clark Theology (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013), 107-117; Pamela D. Winfield, "Curing with *Kaji*: Healing and Esoteric Empowerment in Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 32, no. 1 (2005): 107-130. One figure who Triplett and Winfeld both discuss was a high-ranking Shingon priest named Oda Ryūkō 織田隆弘 (1913-1993). Oda embraced both science and magical aspects of Shingon esoteric rituals and published works explaining their harmony in both Japanese and English. See his book, *Kaji: Empowerment and Healing in Esoteric Buddhism* (Tokyo: Kineizan Shinjō-in Mitsumonkai, 1992). Oda is also discussed in Jason Ā. Josephson, "An Empowered World: Buddhist Medicine and the Potency of Prayer in Japan," in *Deus in Machina: Religion, Technology, and the Things in Between*, ed. Jeremy Stolow (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 117-141.

Triplett, who does touch upon science, frames her subject as a form of "fundamentalism" and thus—in my view—misses the mark.[27] Neither of these scholars closely read the writings of their subjects in order to discursively locate them. This dearth of scholarly attention is in stark contrast to the plethora of nuanced analyses of the philosophical contours of the disenchanting modernist hermeneutics of Japan and China. Scholarship on intellectually nuanced religious reenchantment is largely confined to the field of Western occulture.[28]

My approach and focus differs from previous scholarly treatments in that I explore an influential and erudite East Asian monk's polemical response to his predecessors' and colleagues' demythologization and demonization of magic. To answer my core research question—while not overreaching—I have sought to explore issues concerning Wuguang's life and its context as well as his ideology, sources, motivations and influence.

The core questions I will explore concerning Wuguang's life, context, ideology and sources include: how did Wuguang, an individual from a working class family in an isolated mountaintop agrarian village, encounter the wide array of religious, philosophical and scientific traditions that demonstrably influenced him? Why were his studies so eclectic? Why did he study the particular traditions that comprise this eclecticism? Which manifestations of disenchanted Buddhist modernism was he responding to? In what ways did Wuguang's approach both differ from and resemble those of his predecessors and contemporaries? Answering these questions will give us insight into not only Wuguang, but also into the disenchanting modernists to whom

[27] Triplett, "Healing Rituals in Contemporary Japanese Buddhism," 112.

[28] Recent influential examples include, Egil Asprem, *The Problem of Disenchantment: Scientific Naturalism and Esoteric Discourse, 1900-1939* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), "The Disenchantment of Problems: Musings on a Cognitive Turn in Intellectual History," *Journal of Religion in Europe* 8 (2015): 305-320; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

he was responding and the contours of nineteenth-twentieth century East Asian Buddhist discourse more broadly.

In seeking to understand Wuguang's motivations, I have analyzed his life from both etic and emic perspectives. Etically, I have sought to understand the external factors that produced this particular figure. This has been done in order to lay the groundwork for an emic understanding of what motivated Wuguang to 'revive' Zhenyan traditions, why he rejected the disenchanted form of Buddhism being popularly propagated, and why he chose to sophisticate magic.

Answering questions related to Wuguang's influence offers greater insight into how his reenchantment efforts have shaped the face of contemporary living East Asian religiosity. These questions include: how has the sect that Wuguang founded fared since his passing in the year 2000? Is Wuguang's influence limited to this sect's members, or is it discernible elsewhere? How have the individuals who he influenced praxiologically translated Wuguang's reenchantment of Buddhism into their living religiosity? The answers to these questions deepen our knowledge of the current situation of Taiwanese Buddhism and religiosity in the Chinese-speaking world.

This study's significance lies not only in its deceased subject, but in that subject's living heirs and their position within their Taiwanese—and increasingly international—context. To this end, I have sought to both account for and quantify Wuguang's impact, uncover the reasons people were drawn to him during his life, and continue to flock to his movement since his death. In order to appreciate this significance, I approach the movement that he founded as a New Religious Movement (NRM), while employing the Religious Economy Model (REM) as utilized by Rodney Stark, William Sims Bainbridge and like-minded sociologists of religion. These

scholars reject the 'secularization thesis' that predicts the decline or death of religion in the face of science and secularity, and instead hypothesize that "secularization stimulates religious innovation."[29] REM frames both religion and magic as 'products,' while treating religious organizations as 'suppliers,' and religious individuals as 'consumers.' As a deductive model for the global religious market, it is used to understand why new religions are born, and predict whether a religion will flourish or flounder. Rather than seeing secularization as heralding the death of religion, they "argue that secularization is a self-limiting process that begets its own religious reactions….As major religions adopt an increasingly vague and inactive conception of the supernatural, they will be replaced by religions offering more vigorous conceptions."[30] My utilization of REM attempts to identify the "vague and inactive conception of the supernatural" that made room for Wuguang within the religious marketplace, as well as why certain religious consumers find his teachings to be a more "vigorous conception."

Section II: Data Collection

I have employed multiple data collection methods in order to answer the research questions detailed above. The primary data that I have collected can roughly be categorized as: historical, textual, material, doctrinal, ritualistic and anthropological. These have all been further enriched through secondary sources.

Much of my data has been collected by conducting long-term, onsite fieldwork at multiple locations throughout Taiwan from 2011-2015. I have conducted numerous semi-structured interviews, executed participant observation and collected examples of religious

[29] William S. Bainbridge and Rodney Stark, "Church and Cult in Canada," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers canadiens de sociologie,* vol. 7, no. 4 (1982): 353.

[30] Ibid, 352.

material culture at relevant sites. At the headquarters of Wuguang's sect, I have additionally engaged in targeted data collection in the form of questionnaires that I handed out to specific members. Moreover, from August, 2011 to June 2013 I attended the priestly ordination class of an offshoot of Wuguang's sect that included not only instruction, but required ritual performance.[31] As my fieldwork involved live human subjects, I have paid special attention to the ethical issues of issues of informed consent, confidentiality and doing no harm.[32] I have gathered historical data through fieldwork at other relevant religious sites, and through news broadcasts and gazetteers.

Wuguang's contribution to modern Buddhist discourse is most clearly encapsulated in his writings. It is here that we find the ways in which he built upon or diverged entirely from his predecessors and contemporaries. Thus, I have undertaken an extensive reading of all his available works. I began at the very beginning of his writing career and proceeded to move forward chronologically. This was done in order to understand how his ideology evolved

[31] Instruction was centered on a soteriological epistemological transformation based on Zhenyan/Shingon phenomenology (see Chapter 5). The ritual requirements consisted of preliminary esoteric practices that had to be performed twenty eight times and the Quadrilateral Cultivation 四度加行 whose four rituals had to be practiced 108 times. All rituals were performed in full religious garb at the sect's headquarters (see Chapter 9).

[32] Informed consent as defined by standard anthropological fieldwork guidelines is a process that is "dynamic and continuous; the process should be initiated in the project design and continue through implementation by way of dialogue and negotiation with those studied," American Anthropological Association, *Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association* (NP: American Anthropological Association, 2009), Section A.4. Found on the American Anthropological Association website, "Professional Ethics," www.aaanet.org/cmtes/ethics/Ethics-Resources.cfm (accessed May 22, 2013). In order to uphold this standard, I made sure to continually receive both implicit and explicit informed consent from the leadership and members of the religious communities in which I conducted fieldwork. This was achieved by presenting myself, first and foremost, as a PhD candidate writing a dissertation focused on their religious movements' history, ideology, practices, demographics and sociological contexts. I was also quite careful in making sure my presence was actually welcomed to whatever event I attended by either waiting for an invitation or first informing those concerned of my intentions to participate rather than simply showing up unannounced. Additionally, I made it clear that any and all data I collect via posing questions, taking pictures or recordings and attending rituals were solely for the purpose of research and may very well in fact be included in my dissertation and future publications. Implicit consent was obtained by being invited to attend and participate in religious functions. Explicit consent was received verbally in front of witnesses. When conducting semi-structured interviews, I kept all media devices such as voice recorders in sight and only utilized them if given explicit permission by the interviewee. Unless given explicit permission, the anonymity of all individuals has been safeguarded through omission of their real names and possible identity markers.

throughout his lifetime. To my surprise, I discovered that—in terms of magic—there was no significant change at all.[33] From his earliest works to his last sermons, his doctrines revolved around harmonizing magic and modernity. In addition to uncovering this consistency, I have elucidated Wuguang's hermeneutical methodology by scrutinizing his writings through a discriminating lens focused on orthopraxic, doctrinal and thematic minutiae in order to untangle the multifarious threads he used to weave his doctrines.

Section III: Background and Terminology

The research questions posited above are interlinked with three concepts central to this study, Buddhist modernism, magic and disenchantment/reenchantment, as well as the more peripheral issue of Buddhist sectarianism. All of these issues are inseparable from the historical context that produced Wuguang. Thus, before outlining this dissertation's structure I have defined these four terms while explaining their relevant histories.

Buddhist Modernism: From Disenchantment to Reenchantment

David McMahan has defined 'Buddhist modernism' as "not all Buddhism that happens to exist in the modern era but, rather, forms of Buddhism that have emerged out of an engagement with the dominant cultural and intellectual forces of modernity."[34] Buddhist modernism is not a static and well-demarcated phenomenon but "a dynamic, complex, and plural set of historical

[33] There is a single exception. Wuguang's book on Chan/Zen, *Speaking of Chan*, interprets magical phenomena related to ghosts and other noncoporeal entities via a psychologizing hermeneutic. As this interpretation is inconsistent with Wuguang's writings that came both before and after it was published, I have concluded that it does not represent a change in Wuguang's views. Its peculiarity is easily explained by the fact that it is a book on Chan/Zen and the form of Chan/Zen that Wuguang was familiar with was a disenchanted form influenced by both Japanese and Chinese forms of Buddhist modernism that Wuguang studied whilst a monk at a modernist monastery. The development of this nascent form of Taiwanese Buddhist modernism is dealt with at great length in the next chapter. Wuguang's exposure thereto is discussed in Chapter 2.

[34] McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 6.

processes with loose bonds and fuzzy boundaries."[35] Nevertheless, there is a common interpretive trope that the architects of Buddhist modernism used in order to harmonize their religion with modernity that McMahan identified as 'demythologization.'[36] McMahan defines demythologization as "the process of attempting to extract—or more accurately, to reconstruct—meanings that will be viable within the context of modern worldviews from teachings embedded in ancient worldviews. In order to transpose such themes into a modern key, elements that are incompatible with modernity are relegated to 'myth' and shorn of literal truth-value."[37] Things deemed "incompatible with modernity" of which McMahan speaks are what we would refer to as the 'fantastical' or 'magical' and include things such as wonder-working, divination and accounts of other realms.

Demythologization is not a strictly Buddhist phenomenon. This term is a translation of the German *Entmythologisierung*, a popular modernist Christian hermeneutic associated with Rudolf K. Bultmann (1884-1976). Bultmann distinguished the mythological aspects of the New Testament from the religion's essential teachings, which he referred to as *Kerygma*, and asserted that the former are incompatible with a modern and scientific worldview, and must therefore be reinterpreted as ahistorical and symbolic.[38] The similarities between Bultmann's demythologization and the hermeneutic of Buddhist modernism have already been noted by

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[35] Ibid.

[36] McMahan identifies two additional aspects that characterize Buddhist modernism, 'detraditionalization' and 'psychologization.' He defines detraditionalization as "the modernist tendency to evaluate reason, experience, and intuition over tradition and to assert the freedom to reject, adopt or reinterpret traditional beliefs and practices on the basis of individual evaluation." Concerning psychologization he states that it presents "Buddhism as an ethical psychology, deemphasizing ritual and religious elements." See ibid, 43 and 52. However, it is obvious that both of these are themselves secondary outcrops of the primal interpretive ploy of demythologization. Detraditionalization is predicated on a loss of religious authority, an authority built upon a religious mythos (see below, 'Methodology') and psychologization is nothing more than reinterpreting the magical and mythological through a psychologized—and disenchanted—worldview. These issues are discussed in greater detail in this dissertation's final chapter.

[37] Ibid, 6 and 46.

[38] See Rudolf K. Bultmann, "New Testament and Theology," in *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, ed. Hans W. Bartsch (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row Publishers, 1961), 1-44.

scholars.[39] Less well-known is the fact that the term demythologization is used as a translation for Max Weber's (1864-1920) term '*die Entzauberung der Welt*' which is usually translated as the 'disenchantment of the world'[40] from Weber's "Science as a Vocation."[41] Disenchantment is a philosophical rubric used to analyze the transformative quality of modernity. Weber's word which is translated as both 'demythologization' and 'disenchantment'—'*Entzauberung*'—is a composite formed from the word *Zauber*[42] meaning 'magical' (*magische*).[43] In front of *Zauber*, Weber attached the German prefix *ent-* which connotes a transformation that negates an immediately former condition and is similar to the English prefixes *de-* and *dis-*. Thus, to 'demythologize' or 'disenchant' something is to rob it of its previously possessed magic.[44] Weber referred to this 'magic' as 'mysterious incalculable forces' (*geheimnisvollen unberechenbaren Mächte*)[45] and proclaimed that to believe in them in the modern era required one to make an 'intellectual sacrifice' (*opfer des intellekts*).[46]

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[39] McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 46-50; James M. Shields, "Awakening between Science, Art and Ethics: Variations of Japanese Buddhist Modernism, 1890–1945," in *Rethinking Japanese Modernism*, ed. Roy Starrs, (Leiden: Global Oriental (Brill), 2012), 111.

[40] For a summary of translations of *entzauberung* as 'demythologization,' see See Bo Elling Bo, *Rationality and the Environment Decision-making in Environmental Politics and Assessment* (London: Earthscan, 2008), 167 note 19.

[41] The English version of Weber's work that I am working from is, Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," *Daedalus* 87, no. 1, Science and the Modern World View (1958): 111-134.

[42] Philip Fisher, *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 83.

[43] This is according to *zauber*'s use as a noun meaning "magical acts" (*magische Handlungi*), "magical means" (*magisches Mittel*) and "magical effects" (*magische Wirkung*). "*Zauber, der*," *Duden Online,* http://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Zauber (accessed Oct. 30, 2015).

[44] Although Weberian disenchantment is often used as a passive and sociological construct, Weber also used it as a prerogative. Jeffrey Green has explained that Weber saw disenchantment as an "ethical necessity" and "a call to recognize that the moral and spiritual direction previously understood to be available is no longer available—or, that such direction was never available." See Jeffrey E. Green, "Two Meanings of Disenchantment: Sociological Condition vs. Philosophical Act—Reassessing Max Weber's Thesis of the Disenchantment of the World," *Philosophy and Theology* 17, no. 1-2 (2005): 60.

[45] Weber, "Science as Vocation," 117. Also see Egil Asprem, "The Problem of Disenchantment: Scientific Naturalism and Esoteric Discourse, 1900-1939" (PhD diss, University of Amsterdam, 2013), 13 and 20-21. It should be noted that the German term '*unberechenbaren*' also translates as 'unpredictable.' '*unberechenbaren*,' *Duden Online,* http://www.duden.de/suchen/dudenonline/unberechenbaren

[46] Weber, "Science as Vocation," 133.

Within the nineteenth-twentieth century East Asian Buddhist modernist context of this dissertation, many magical phenomena were not only "shorn of literal truth-value" through the disenchanting hermeneutic of demythologization, but were in fact demonized, relegated to the category of 'superstition' and purged from Buddhism by both the pen and the sword. This occurred during the Meiji Buddhist Revival and Buddhist Revival in China.[47] These revivals were born out of crises. Japan and China were threatened by Euro-American powers who, with their advanced technology, expanded deep into Asia with colonial zeal. In order to curb Western expansionism, the Japanese and Chinese literati attempted to modernize their respective societies. To do so, they adopted Western pedagogical methodology[48] and intellectual categories. While applying these categories—namely the secular-religious-superstitious trinary—the Japanese and Chinese elite sought to expunge 'superstition' from their cultures. This purge entailed the illegalization of multiple magical practices commonplace in various forms of folk religion and Daoism related to divination, spirit communication and faith healing.[49]

This disenchantment threatened the survival of Buddhism in both Japan and China. Her temples were ransacked, idols smashed, treasuries plundered, clerics defrocked, practices mocked and ideologies scoffed at. In both places the same key criticisms were applied to

[47] It must be noted that Japan and China were not the only locations to produce an early form of Buddhist modernism during a Buddhist revival. In fact, the very term 'Buddhist modernism' is a later incarnation of the term 'Protestant Buddhism' coined by Richard Gombrich to refer to similar developments that took place in Sri Lanka. See Richard F. Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990; reprint; Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1990), 6-7 and the sources cited there.

[48] See Margaret Mehl, *Private Academies of Chinese Learning in Meiji Japan: The Decline and Transformation of the Kangaku Juku*, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph, 92 (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Press; London: Taylor & Francis, 2003), 15-20; William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 260.

[49] See Paul R, Katz, "'Superstition' and its Discontents – On the Impact of Temple Destruction Campaigns in China, 1898-1948" (paper presented at the "International Conference on Sinology," Taipei, 2013). Online: https://www.academia.edu/6686676/_Superstition_and_its_Discontents_On_the_Impact_of_Temple_Destruction_Campaigns_in_China_1898-1948 (accessed Jan. 12, 2016). Also see Josephson, *The Invention of Religion*, 182-201.

Buddhism: it is otherworldly, parasitic, superstitious and backwards. Each one of these characteristics were seen as a threat to the Japanese and Chinese literati who believed that their respective society's survival rested upon the possibility of catching up with the West. These onslaughts catalyzed a number of Buddhist thinkers to reformulate their religion and restructure the *saṃgha*. To do so, they attempted to distance Buddhism from things deemed 'superstitious'—e.g. 'magic'—and present Buddhism as a scientifically compatible and philosophically rational religion. This posed a great challenge as within Buddhism there are depictions of miracles, multiple-universes, rebirth, ghosts and other similarly unverifiable phenomena. Due to their lack of verifiability, believing in them is contrary to an empirical, scientific worldview and demands one to make a Weberian intellectual sacrifice. Within these East Asian contexts, such a sacrifice was a price far beyond what the literati would pay. This meant that securing Buddhism's East Asian future demanded its reformulation. As the literati had embraced modern Western philosophy and modern science, it was this to which Buddhism had to be reconciled. Two of the most famous Japanese and Chinese Buddhist modernists to take on this task were Inoue Enryō 井上 円了 (b. Inoue Kishimaru 井上岸丸; 1858-1919) and Taixu 太虚 (secular name Lu Peilin 呂沛林; 1890-1947), whose contexts and approaches I will now briefly discuss.

Inoue Enryō and the Meiji Buddhist Revival

The Meiji Restoration 明治維新 (1868-1912) was a time of great upheaval for Japanese society characterized by zealous nationalism. In a time-span of less than half a century Japan was transformed from a feudal society based on a rigidly tiered caste system into a modern nation-state with a Western-based system of education ruled by a constitutional monarchy. This restoration was intended to be a new start for the country that would transform her into a modern

nation-state capable of competing with Euro-American powers. This was accomplished by mimicking the Western powers the Japanese elite felt threatened by. Before the Meiji, Westerners had been perceived as 'barbarians' *ban* 蠻 (Chn. *man*). This changed during the Meiji, when these barbarians were then considered the bearers of 'enlightened civilization,' to be emulated.[50] This mimicry entailed adopting Western dress, food, pedagogy and intellectual categories.

Buddhism, which had enjoyed governmental sponsorship during the preceding Edo Period (also called the Tokugawa Period; 1603-1868), came under attack. In addition to the above-mentioned criticisms that were leveled against Buddhism, her Indian origins—as well as Chinese provenance—became a source of nationalistic derision.[51] This derision can be understood within the context of Japan's 'Exiting Asia Ideology' 脱亜論 that sought to separate the Japanese 'race' from other 'Asian races' and claim superiority over them.[52] As Buddhism originated in India and traveled to Japan via China—two countries from which the Japanese literati were attempting to detach themselves—many of the literati believed that it should be discarded during Japan's exit from Asia. In 1868, the Japanese government issued the 'Separation of kami and buddhas Campaign' 神佛分離, which led to the 'Abolish Buddhism and destroy Śākyamuni Campaign' 廃佛毀釋, during which Buddhist clergy were forcibly defrocked and Buddhist temples, art and treasures expropriated, sometimes through violence.[53] This was

[50] Masako N. Racel, *Finding their Place in the World: Meiji Intellectuals and the Japanese Construction of an East-West Binary, 1868-1912* (PhD diss, Georgia State University, 2011), 1.

[51] Claudia Marra, "Haibutsu Kishaku," *Journal of Nagasaki University of Foreign* Studies 18 (2014): 175. Online: http://id.nii.ac.jp/1165/00000069/ (accessed Jan. 12, 2016).

[52] Alberto La Spada, "From Nation-states to Nation-regions: The Evolution of National Identities Facing the Dawn of the Global Era," (BA thesis, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, 2014), 67-68. Online: http://hdl.handle.net/10579/4484 (accessed Jan. 13, 2016).

[53] See Allan G. Grapard, "Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution: The Separation of Shinto and Buddhist Divinities in Meiji ('*Shimbutsu Bunri*') and a Case Study: Tōnomine," *History of Religions* 23, no. 3 (1984): 240-265.

done to create a clear demarcation between the 'foreign' religion of Buddhism and native Shintō 神道, the latter which was promoted as a tool of national progress.[54]

These attacks on Buddhism motivated Japanese Buddhists such as Inoue to reform their religion by harmonizing it with science, modern philosophy and framing it as 'Japanese.' Inoue was the first Buddhist priest to gain admittance to the Imperial Tōkyō University.[55] He rejected 'magical Buddhism'[56] 祈禱佛教 and sought to disenchant Japanese religion by embarking upon his 'Preternatural Studies' 妖怪學. This entailed Inoue investigating Japanese forms of folk religion in order "to rationally explain away supernatural beliefs so that Japan could become a modern nation-state competitive with the West."[57] This investigation included topics such as

[54] In order to accomplish this, the Meiji government began a process of what John Breen and Mark Teuween have called the "Shintōization" of myths and practices centered on *kami* and their shrines. These preexisting shrines—as well as their deities and the practices that took place there—had hitherto been decentralized. Additionally, unlike Buddhism which boasts a particular canon with rules and regulations, there was no single unifying concept that united these different shrine-based traditions into a distinct religious tradition. Therefore, boundaries had to be drawn for the emerging 'Shintō' to become an individual phenomenon that could be contradistinguished from others. See John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 21-23. The demarcation between Shintō and Buddhism posed a number of challenges. First was the relationship that had existed between Buddhism and native shrine practices for over a thousand years. According to what has been called the 'synchronization of kami and buddhas' 神佛習合, Shintō and Buddhist deities were considered largely interchangeable. This engendered both local shrine and Buddhist deities with a dual-personality of sorts where each was simultaneously perceived to have a Shintō and Buddhist identity. Due to this paradigm, Buddhist temples and Shintō shrines alike contained statues of the other's deities and the liturgy of each contained supplications and praises to both. This interchangeability is based on the doctrine of 'original substance, manifest traces' 本地垂逆, where the 'original substance' is considered to be the same underlying material that both the *kami* and buddhas are composed of. For a full length volume comprised of articles on this paradigm see Mark Teewuen and Fabio Rambelli eds, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003). The construction of Shintō as a unified religion distinguishable from Buddhism was largely fueld by Japanese nationalism and the need to transform the country into a modern nation. To accomplish this holistic societal overhaul, central authority had to be strengthened. Power held by the feudal lords was handed over to the emperor in a process encapsulated by the slogan 'Restore the Monarchy' 王政復古. Shintō was seen as useful in promoting the new-found power of the emperor, partly because his right to rule was justified by his being a descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu 天照. Thus, constructing a unified, state-controlled Shintō essentially meant strengthening the visibility of the Emperor and the birth of this 'religion' was a part of the Meiji propaganda machine.

[55] Jason Ā. Josephson, "When Buddhism Became a "Religion': Religion and Superstition in the Writings of Inoue Enryō," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 33, no. 1 (2006): 150.

[56] Shields, "Awakening between Science, Art and Ethics," 114.

[57] Michael D. Foster, *Pandemonium and Parade: Japanese Monsters and the Culture of Yōkai* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 27.

ghosts, monsters and bouts of insanity. His methodology entailed a demythologization through psychologization of the preternatural. He concluded that the majority of magical accounts were nothing more than humans misinterpreting the world due to their own ignorance.[58] In order to present Buddhism as not only compatible with—but an invaluable tool for—Japan's modernization efforts, he sought to present Buddhism as superior to Western philosophy,[59] and make it more socially engaged by encouraging Buddhists to establish hospitals, charities and educational institutions.[60] His strategy to market Buddhism to the Meiji elite is encapsulated by the motto he created, 'Defend the Nation and Love the Truth' 護國愛理.[61] It was through 'loving the truth' that the nation could be defended. That truth, according to Inoue, was Buddhism itself. Inoue's Buddhism, however, was framed as a particularly 'Japanese' Buddhism—distinguishable from 'inferior' forms of Buddhism such as 'Chinese Buddhism'[62]—that reflected the 'Spirit of Japan' 本精神.[63] The efforts of reformers like Inoue proved successful. Not only was Buddhism once again accepted in Meiji Japan, but it was seen as a useful tool towards its modernization efforts. These efforts were not limited to Japan's borders, but—in emulation of Western

[58] Ibid, 83. For a discussion on Inoue's mystery studies and the typologies he employed see Miura Setsuo, "Inoue Enryo's Mystery Studies," *International Inoue Enryo Research* 2 (2014):127-128. Online: https://www.toyo.acjpluploaded/attachmenll236l.pdf (accessed Jan. 13, 2016).

[59] Inoue's engagements with Western Philosophy are discussed in Chapter 3.

[60] Thomas D. DuBois, *Religion and the Making of Modern East Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 181.

[61] See Kathleen M. Staggs, "'Defend the Nation and Love the Truth': Inoue Enryō and the Revival of Meiji Buddhism," *Monumenta Nipponica* 38, no. 3 (1983): 254.

[62] It should be noted that the term 'Chinese Buddhism' 中國佛教 was originally a Europen concept that framed Chinese forms of Buddhism as a polluted amalgamation of Indian Buddhist and native Chinese religious traditions. See Martino Dibeltulo, "The Revival of Tantrism: Tibetan Buddhism and Modern China" (PhD diss, University of Michigan, 2015), 4.

[63] Gereon Kopf, "The Modern Buddhism of Inoue Enryō," *International Inoue Enryo Research* 1 (2013): 26-27. Online: https://www.toyo.ac.jp/uploaded/attachment/12672.pdf (accessed Jan. 13, 2016).

imperialist nations—included colonial expansionism, a fact reflected in the overseas espionage conducted by Japanese Buddhist missionaries.[64]

Taixu and the Buddhist Revival in China

The years 1839-1942 have been referred to as 'China's Century of Humiliation' 百年國耻.[65] China's humiliation was a product of several conflicts with multiple Western powers as well as Japan. Just as in Japan, during the last decades of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), there was a sense of threat posed by Western expansion. However, unlike Japan which had yet to engage a Western nation-state in a military conflict, China's defeat at the hands of Western powers during the First (1839-1842) and Second (1856-1860) Opium Wars showcased to the world the Qing Empire's inability to thwart Western encroachment. This triggered widespread calls for modernization.

Modernization was centered on education and, at first, was very detrimental to Buddhism. In 1898, the Qing government implemented the 'Using Temple Property to Support Schools' 廟產興學 policy that appropriated monastic property to build its first budding modern school system. This called for the confiscation of *all* temples within China—save for those that performed imperial sacrifices.[66] However, these wide scale confiscations did not truly begin until 1904, two years after the Qing was able to establish China's first-ever public school system.[67]

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[64] See James Boyd, "Undercover Acolytes: Honganji, the Japanese Army, and Intelligence-Gathering Operations," *Journal of Religious History* 37, no. 2 (2013): 185-205.

[65] In both the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC), there have been special remembrance 'Days of Humiliation' practiced to commemorate specific events that occurred throughout this time. See David Scott, *China and the International System, 1840–1949: Power, Presence, and Perceptions in a Century of Humiliation* (New York: State University of New Yotk Press, 2008), 46, 154, 197, 207, 234 and 297.

[66] Vincent Goossaert, "1898: The Beginning of the End for Chinese Religion?" *Journal of Asian Studies* 65 (2006): 307.

[67] Glen Peterson and Ruth Hayhoe, Introduction to *Education, Culture, and Identity in Twentieth-century China*, eds. Glen Peterson et al. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001; reprint, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 1.

Then, led by Western-educated Chinese elite, Buddhist—and even Daoist—religious practices began to be targeted as forms of backwards superstition, and many of the properties belonging to these religious institutions were seized. This marked the beginning of a wave of temple destruction campaigns that would occasionally swell throughout the Qing Dynasty, the Republican period (1912-1949) and under the Communist PRC.[68] The anti-superstition campaigns involved the Chinese adopting the Western category of 'religion' from Japan, and applying it to their own traditions. The Chinese literati, who had been influenced by Jesuit missionaries, imposed Abrahamic concepts upon Asian religions and labeled Buddhism as a form of 'idolatry.'[69] This notion then spread amongst the Chinese populace.

As the attacks on Buddhism in China mirrored those in Japan, it is not surprising that the Chinese Buddhists first looked to Japanese Buddhist modernism for inspiration. This reliance can be seen in the efforts of Taixu, who began his reformist career as a Japanophile.[70] After traveling to Japan he believed that the Japanese Buddhists' approach to modernization as propagated by Inoue and others had proven itself to be successful and should be adopted in China. In an effort to distinguish Buddhism from superstition and thereby, save it from persecution, Taixu attempted to prove that Buddhism was entirely compatible with modernity. Taixu's form of Buddhist modernism was propagated in two educational institutions, the Wuchang Buddhist Academy 武昌佛學院 in Hubei Province's 湖北省 capital city, Wuhan 武漢 and the Nanputuo Buddhist Academy 南普陀佛學院 in Amoy (Xiamen) 廈門. These academies were revolutionary for their time as they took modern Western universities as their pedagogical

[68] See P. Katz, "'Superstition' and its Discontents.'"

[69] Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 53-55.

[70] Fumihiko Sueki, "Chinese Buddhism and the Anti-Japan War," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 37, no. 1 (2010): 12.

model.[71] Similarly to the Japanese reformers, Taixu encouraged Buddhists to involve themselves in charitable social engagement.[72]

Like many great men whose visions are not appreciated in their time, Taixu's plan for a new, worldly-oriented Buddhism would not be realized in his homeland nor during his lifespan. As discussed in Chapter 1, it was not until after those whom Taixu had influenced made their ways across the Taiwan Strait that the ideological seeds he had planted would sprout to fruition.

Reenchanted Buddhist Modernism

The scientifically compatible, rational, socially engaged forms of Buddhism devoid of magic as propagated by these and like-minded reformers represent but one side of Buddhist modernism—'disenchanted Buddhist modernism.' 'Reenchanted Buddhist modernism' represents forms of Buddhism whose architects have harmonized magic with modernity in counter-reaction to disenchanted Buddhist modernism. The modernizing efforts of the early Buddhist modernists that entailed demythologization spurred magically inclined Buddhist modernists to remythologize what had been "shorn of literal truth-value" and expelled to the realm of 'superstition.' These reenchanted responses to disenchanted Buddhist modernism do not represent conservative, regressive or fundamentalist developments aiming to restore Buddhism to a premodern state. Instead, they employ the same techniques the disenchanting Buddhist

[71] Yu Xue, *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism: Chinese Monks in the Struggle against Japanese Aggressions, 1931-1945*, East Asia: History, Politics, Sociology, Culture (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 38-39.

[72] Don A. Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 95. Also see Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 121-131.

modernists had used to demythologize the tradition in order to remythologize it. Thus, reenchanting Buddhist modernists reject neither modernity nor magic—they embrace both.[73]

Wuguang was one such Buddhist modernist who, in response to his predecessors' demythologizing the fantastical or deeming it superstitious, was inspired to sophisticate it. To do so, Wuguang crafted a unique 'theory of everything' (TOE). A TOE is "a theory that provides a unified description of all known types of elementary particles, all known forces in the universe, and the origin and evolution of the universe."[74] Despite the fact that the term TOE is associated with scientific—rather than religious—speculation, it is an appropriate characterization of Wuguang's doctrines. This is because he used his TOE to explain the nature and origins of all phenomena within the universe. Moreover, science—in addition to religious and philosophical concepts—was a vital component of Wuguang's TOE. Were it not for Wuguang's use of science to construct his TOE, it would be entirely unremarkable and could not be considered a form of Buddhist modernism. Wuguang fashioned his TOE in order to rescue 'magic' from the category of 'superstition' by placing it within the benign category of 'religion.'

As I will demonstrate, the exact practices and beliefs that the disenchanting Buddhist modernists deemed 'superstitious' were the exact ones that Wuguang's doctrines were aimed at redeeming, and later became the foundational elements of his disciples' religious practices. Moreover, Wuguang's popularity can be attributed to the fact that he offered religionists from

[73] It must be noted that my charactarization of reenchanted Buddhist modernism is similar to the resurgence of supernaturalism in Thai religiosities that Peter Jackson refers to as 'postmodern Buddhism.' See Peter A. Jackson, "The Enchanting Spirit of Thai Capitalism: The Cult of Luang Phor Khoon and the Post-modernization of Thai Buddhism," *South East Asia Research*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1999): 5-60.

[74] John Daintith, "Theory of everything," in *A Dictionary of Physics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009; 6th edition, 2014). Online: http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199233991.001.0001/acref-9780199233991-e-3048 (accessed Feb. 20, 2016).

traditional Chinese backgrounds a way to harmonize the faiths of their ancestors with their modernized present.

'Magic'

Although reified in Western intellectual circles as "*sui generis*,"[75] even within Western contexts "there is no unanimously agreed academic definition of 'magic,' nor any shared theory or theoretical language — and apparently not even any agreement on the range or type of actions, events, thoughts or objects covered by the category."[76] Within the East Asian context of this study, 'magic' is an even more ambiguous creature. There is no Classical Chinese equivalent for the term 'magic,'[77] and the majority of Sino-Japanese terms that are currently directly translated into English as 'magic' include the character 'demon' 魔. Within Buddhist texts this character is often used to refer to Māra, the demon king who tempted Śākyamuni Buddha as he sat beneath the Bodhi Tree. Thus, it would seem within an East Asian, particularly Buddhist, context that 'magic' would be something entirely negative. This, however, is in fact not the case as 'magic' as a phenomenon separable from 'religion' is a Western import and an entirely Christian construct[78] and the Japanese appropriation thereof was highly influenced by Weber.[79] As noted, within the context of this study 'magic' did not did not represent a distinct typological category. It was magic's liminality that rendered her vulnerable to being exiled to the category of 'superstition' by disenchanting Buddhist modernists, as well as what made it possible for

[75] Hanegraaff, "Magic," 397 and 404.

[76] Bernd-Christian Otto and Michael Stausberg, "General Introduction," to *Defining Magic: A Reader*, eds. Bernd-Christian Otto and Michael Stausberg, Critical Categories in the Study of Religion (Sheffield, UK: Equinox Publishing, 2013), 1.

[77] Gil Raz, *The Emergence of Daoism: Creation of Tradition* (Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 2012), 129.

[78] W. Davis, *Dojo*, 210. For an overview of the wider evolution of the definitions of 'magic' see Michael D. Bailey, "The Meanings of Magic," *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft* 1, no. 1 (2006): 1-23; Hendrik S. Versnel, "Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion," *Numen* 38, fasc. 2 (1991): 177-197.

[79] Covell, *Japanese Temple Buddhism*, 12-13.

reenchanting Buddhist modernists to reclaim her therefrom. This typological ambiguity demands that we must establish what East Asian 'magic' is before we analyze how and why Wuguang sophisticated it.

This study's limited focus on Wuguang's reenchanting Buddhism precludes lengthily comparing Western and Eastern notions of 'magic,' and the fact that Wuguang solely navigated the Sino-Japanese appropriated secular-religious-superstitious trinary rather than its Western predecessor renders such a comparison unnecessary. Moreover, the most convincing attempts to define 'magic' are Western-centric, and therefore ill-suited for this study's purposes.[80] I have therefore analyzed the practices that Wuguang sophisticated as well as the terms he used to describe them by relying upon the definition articulated by Stephen Covell in his work on the 'rejection of magic' in modern Japan, and employed the distinction between 'religion' and 'magic' penned by Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge to examine the sociological significance of Wuguang's religious movement. Covell defines 'magic' as "the utilization of supernatural entities or powers to bring about an effect, or the belief systems associated with such acts."[81] The core terms that Wuguang used to denote 'magic'—'spirit-permeation' *shentong* 神通 and 'mediumship' *wushu* 巫術—are analyzed in Chapter 3. Other practices and beliefs that Wuguang spoke of I cite that are covered by Covell's definition relate to: apotropaic devices, incantations, curses, supernatural capabilities, Daoist immortality practices, spirit-communication, empowerment and astrology (see figure 1). Covell's definition serves our

[80] I have not utilized the seven definitions of 'magic' listed by Wouter Hanegraaff (see note 3) because the practices discussed in this study—as well as Wuguang's personal understanding and public explanation thereof—transverse the boundaries of a number of the definitions detailed by Hanegraaff. Hanegraaff himself states that his list is not exhaustive.

[81] Covell, *Japanese Temple Buddhism*, 12. Covell's definition is based on the one found in Shimazono Susmu, "Religious Influences on Japan's Modernization," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 8, nos. 3-4 (1981): 213.

purposes, for it encompasses the divinatory, spiritualist, accursed and healing practices labeled as 'superstitious' by disenchanting Buddhist modernists and later sophisticated by Wuguang.

Magical Terms Used by Wuguang	
Apotropaic Magic	
fu 符	Ornamental, edible and vestural objects
fu zhou fa 符咒法	Apotropaic methods
hong fu 紅符	Edible talisman
zhou shui 咒水	'Holy water,' (alternatively *jiachi shui* 加持水)
xiandan miaoyao 仙丹妙藥	Miraculous cure, also *xiandan ziliao* 仙丹治療
Incantations	
zhou 咒	'Incantation,' 'mantra,' and 'dhāraṇī'
Curses	
fuzixian 符仔仙	Taboo folk rites
gudu 蠱毒	Poisonous curse
Supernatural Capabilities	
hufeng huanyu 呼風喚雨	Controlling the weather
chengfeng 乘風	Riding the wind
qianli yan 千里眼	Clairvoyance
shunfeng er 順風耳	Clairaudience
lingyan 靈眼	Spirit-eyes, also *yinyan* 陰眼
Daoist Immortality Practices	
liandan 煉丹	Refining the elixir
xianjia miaojue 仙家妙訣	Miraculous alchemical immortality practices
tuna 吐納	Transcendent breath practices
yangshen 養神	Nourishing the spirit
Spirit-Communication	
wenshen 問神	Asking a god
fushen 附身	Possession and intentional spirit-invocation
ling shizhe 令死者	Commanding the dead
Empowerment	
jiachi 加持	Empowerment, or translation of *adhiṣṭhāna*
Astrological	
xingdu haohuai 星度好壞	Astrological auspiciousness and inauspiciousness

Figure 1: Terminology Wuguang used to describe magical practices.

Stark and Bainbridge distinguish magic from religion by stating that, "magic does not concern itself with the meaning of the universe, but only with the manipulation of the universe for specific goals…magic deals in relatively specific compensators, and religion always includes the most general compensators."[82] While this distinction is doctrinally problematic—for as we will see, Wuguang viewed magic and religion as one[83]—it is sociologically applicable because it enables us to comprehend both why and how Wuguang's sophistication became popular.

As I will demonstrate, Wuguang wished to do for 'magic' what the disenchanting Buddhist modernists did for Buddhism—reformulate "meanings that will be viable within the context of modern worldviews."[84] However, rather than shorning them of their "literal truth value" or relegating them to 'myth'[85] by disenchanting Buddhism, he reenchanted the tradition by explaining magic in terms of modern philosophy and science.

Buddhist 'Schools' and 'Lineages'

In addition to Buddhist modernism, reenchantment and magic, there is another issue that, although peripheral, runs throughout this dissertation: East Asian religious 'sectarian consciousness' 宗統意識. As mentioned above, Wuguang's claim to fame is that he resurrected a 'school' of esoteric Buddhism. Appreciating why this bestowed Wuguang with such fame, as well as what this endeavor entailed, requires an understanding of contemporary Taiwanese

[82] Rodney Stark and William S. Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 30. I have relied on this earlier distinction rather than the more detailed one found in Stark, "Reconceptualizing Religion, Magic, and Science," for I do not agree with his assertion that "Magic is limited to impersonal conceptions of the supernatural," and his claim that "Compulsion of spiritual entities remains within the realm of magic, but exchanges with the Gods (which imply rapport) shifts the activity into the realm of religion," 109-110.

[83] See Chapter 3.

[84] McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, 6.

[85] Ibid, 46.

Buddhist sectarian consciousness in general and esoteric Buddhist religious authority in particular.

Taiwanese Buddhist sectarian consciousness has been greatly influenced by relatively rigid Japanese Buddhist denominational boundaries that solidified during the Tokugawa Period.[86] Although the neatly organized boundaries that this framework offers have never reflected common perception and are in fact a product of East Asian appropriations of Western religious boundaries, they have shaped both religionist and scholarly understandings of Buddhist sectarianism.[87] These boundaries are articulated via the terms 'school' 宗 (Chn. *zong*, Jpn. *shū*)—the first character in the typological category of 'religion' 宗教—and 'lineage' 流 (Chn. *liu*, Jpn. *ryū*).[88] Most often 'school' represents an over-arching denominational identity that consists of multiple 'lineages.'[89] Within this framework, schools and lineages are clearly defined, independent religious sects whose sectarian identities are defined by the provenance and contents of their Dharma-'transmissions' 傳. These transmissions are depicted as having originated in the past with an important religious figure, claims that are corroborated by school/lineage-specific origination myths and lineage charts[90] 血脈 that respectively detail each sect's first master-

[86] For the development of these Japanese Buddhist boundaries see, Michel Mohr, "Zen Buddhism during the Tokugawa Period: The Challenge to Go beyond Sectarian Consciousness," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21, no. 4 (1994): 341-372.

[87] Jimmy Yu, "Revisiting the Notion of *Zong*: Contextualizing the Dharma Drum Lineage of Modern Chan Buddhism," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 26 (2013): 116-120. Online: http://enlight.lib.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-BJ001/bj001390683.pdf (accessed Jan. 11, 2016).

[88] Both the characters for 'school' and 'lineage' are oftentimes paired with a character meaning 'stream' 派 (Chn. *pai*, Jpn. *ha*), whose usage is interchangeable with 'lineage.'

[89] It must be noted that in Japan, certain sectarian lineages are subdivided into yet another level. However, there is no single standardized term for this. Sometimes the character for 'temple' 寺 (Chn. *si*. Jpn. *ji*) or 'hall' 院 (Ch. *yuan*, Jpn. *in*) is used. The only times I have encountered these terms used this way in Taiwan are in reference to Japanese Buddhist communities.

[90] Lineage charts have been used by Buddhists since at least the Tang Dynasty as a means to validate religious authority. They were retroactively constructed by appropriating important historical and ahistorical figures from the past as patriarchs and placing them at the beginning of the chart. Buddhists did this in order to link their contemporary leadership to these figures through transmission. Lineage charts act in concert with origination myths

disciple transmission and systematically trace subsequent master-disciple transmissions throughout the ages. These transmissions are school/lineage-specific and differentiated by the particular soteriological technology they contain as well as the specific individuals who are believed to have propagated them. Thus, sectarian boundaries are justified by differences in orthopraxis—the contents of a sect's transmission—and the provenance of the transmission. Living devotees' religious authority and sectarian identity rest upon the belief that they are links within an unbroken chain of a particular transmission.

Transmission-procedures often entail reenacting the origination myth of the school in which the transmission is taking place,[91] and therefore differ between schools.[92] One archetypal format that bears great relevance to this study is the Zhenyan/Shingon method for performing *abhiṣeka* 灌頂. *Abhiṣeka* is a ritual based on medieval Indian royal coronation rites that were later influenced by Buddhist purification rituals. It involves anointing the head of the receiver with water, which is reflected in the meaning of the Sanskrit term and the Chinese translation *guanding* 灌頂 (Jpn. *kanjō*), which mean to 'sprinkle the crown of the head with water.' It is often rendered into English as 'empowerment,' as the officiating master transfers his power to the student, which enables the latter to effectively perform esoteric rituals. There are different levels and forms of *abhiṣeka*. In Zhenyan/Shingon, the most basic is karmic-binding *abhiṣeka* 結

and enshrine the actors as the first patriarchs of their schools. See John R. McRae, *Seeing through Zen Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2003), 3-4.

[91] In addition to the ways in which Zhenyan/Shingon transmission reenacts the school's origination myth (see below), the same framework is found in Chan/Zen where mind-to-mind transmission' 以心傳心 is seen as a reenactment of the 'Flower Sermon' 拈花微笑. See Albert Welter, "Mahākāśyapa's Smile: Silent Transmission and the Kung-an (Koan) Tradition," in *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, eds. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 71-109.

[92] Despite the fact that there are discernible similarities between the ways in which transmission is justified in different schools, there is not a single, universal understanding or process of transmission. See Wendi L. Adamek, *The Mystique of Transmission: On an Early Chan History and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 14.

緣灌頂 that establishes a link between the master and disciple. Above this there is Dharma-study *abhiṣeka* 學法灌頂 that enables a devotee to study rudimentary esoteric rituals. After this is Dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka* 傳法灌頂 that renders one an ordained Zhenyan/Shingon priest 阿闍梨 (Skt. *ācārya*) and forges a link within the transmission-chain.[93] This is the level of *abhiṣeka* that Wuguang received in Japan.

Dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka* as practiced in Zhenyan/Shingon represents a reenactment of the school's origination myth referred to as the legend of the 'Iron Stūpa of South India' 南天竺鐵塔.[94] The legend of the Iron Stūpa of South India states that Mahāvairocana[95] transmitted the esoteric Dharma to Vajrasattva Bodhisattva. Vajrasattva then transcribed the contents of this transmission and sealed them in an iron stūpa in southern India. These writings remain locked away and untouched within this stūpa for hundreds of years until the Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna (c. 150-c. 250) was given the whereabouts of the stūpa and knowledge of how to open it in a vision. Whilst inside the stūpa, he received transmission from Vajrasattva, which marks the moment that the first human became a link within the Zhenyan/Shingon transmission chain.[96] Dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka* reenacts the exchanges that took place between Mahāvairocana and Vajrasattva as well as Vajrasattva and Nāgārjuna, as it takes place over a maṇḍala that has been ritually constructed that is meant to simultaneously symbolize Mahāvairocana's palace and

[93] Abé Ryūichi *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 124.

[94] For this tale see, Charles D. Orzech, "The Legend of the Iron Stupa," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 314-317.

[95] Mahāvairocana is explained in greater detail in Chapter 3, Section III, "Soteriological Phenomenology."

[96] Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers; First Indian ed., 1992), 376.

the Iron Stūpa. During the ritual, the initiator and initiated respectively visualize themselves as Mahāvairocana and Vajrasattva.[97]

This origination myth references not only the provenance of Zhenyan/Shingon's Dharma-transmission but also the contents of the transmission itself as well as their soteriological aims. Zhenyan/Shingon's soteriological aim is to realize the unity that exists between the practitioner and Mahāvairocana and is encapsulated in the phrase 'becoming a Buddha in this body' 即身成佛. The realization of this unity, referred to as 'ritual identification' 入我我入 (literally '[the deity] entering me, me entering [the deity]'), is achieved through mimicking Mahāvairocana's activities. These activities—referred to as the 'three mysteries' 三密 (Skt. *tri-guhya*)—are identified as his body 身, speech 口 mind 意, which are respectively copied by performing mudrās, reciting mantras and visualizing maṇḍalas. The transmission that Mahāvairocana gave to Vajrasattva not only serves as the model for Zhenyan/Shingon Dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka*, but also the contents of its orthopraxis due to the fact that this transmission was communicated via the three mysteries.[98]

The sectarian consciousness of Wuguang's disciples is built upon the concepts 'school' and 'lineage' as well as the contents, provenance and continuity of 'transmission.' This can be seen in the following passages written by Wuguang's dharma-heirs that declare and explain their denominational affiliation:

> Esoteric Buddhism originated in India. It was transmitted by Mahāvairocana to Vajrasattva, the latter who passed it on to its systematizer, Nāgārjuna. It was later introduced to China during the reign of the Tang Dynasty emperor Xuanzong by Śubhākarasiṃha and Vajrabodhi, who respectively traveled by land and sea. After that, the Japanese monk, Kūkai studied it with Huiguo

[97] Cynthea J. Bogel, *With a Single Glance: Buddhist Icon and Early Mikkyō Vision* (Seattle and Washington: University of Washington Press, 2009), 208.

[98] Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 130.

> of Qinglong before bringing it to Japan, reorganizing it and passing it down to his disciples. This transmission has continued for over a thousand years.
>
> In 1971, our temple's founder, Guru Wuguang, traveled to Kōyasan, Japan where he studied esoteric Buddhism and received dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka*, thus becoming a fifty-fourth generation *ācārya* of the Chūin-ryu sect under the monk Kamei Senyū. Thus, the bloodline of Zhenyan returned to China. After returning to Taiwan the following year, our Guru planned to build a great monastery, so that the flag of esoteric Buddhism that had disappeared from China for over a thousand years would fly again.[99]
>
> 'Bright' 光明 is a 'lineage' 流 of the 'Mantra school' 真言宗 of Buddhism. It evolved from Japanese Shingon. The founder of our lineage, Guru Wuguang reclaimed the esoteric chain of transmission that Kūkai inherited from Huiguo of Qinglong temple during the Tang Dynasty.[100]

Here, we see that that Wuguang named his sect the 'Mantra (Zhenyan/Shingon) School Bright Lineage' 真言宗光明流. We also witness that the members of the Mantra School Bright Lineage (hereafter MSBL) self-identify as devotees of a specific Buddhist group that is distinguishable from others and that their 'Bright Lineage' 光明流 is a particular sect within the larger 'Mantra school' 真言宗. We are told that this self-differentiation is based upon the contents and provenance of the transmission that they received from Wuguang. The former is

[99] Mantra School Bright Lineage Website, "Introduction of our sect History," http://www.tofub.org/history.html (accessed Oct. 23, 2012). On Nov. 30, 2015 I attempted to access the website only to discover it had been taken down. However, I was still able to access a saved copy from Dec. 7, 2013 by utilizing the Wayback Machine, Internet Archive: https://web.archive.org/web/*/http://www.tofub.org/history.html https://archive.org/web/. I have heavily edited the grammar, syntax and spelling of the text due to the fact that English was not the author's first language. Original text: "Esoteric Buddhism orientated from India, cultivated by Nagahvaya (**龍猛**) which was passed on by Universal Buddha Variocana (**大日如來**) and he derived it into pure Esoteric Buddhism (**密教**) doctrines. That was introduced it to China from India during the time of Tang Xuan Emperor (**唐玄宗**) by Subhakara Simba (**善無畏三藏**) and Vajra Bodhi (**金剛智菩薩**) via the land and sea routes. After that, Japanese student Monk Kukai (**空海**) learnt it from Wei Guo Acarya (**慧果阿闍梨**) of Qing Long Temple (**青龍寺**). He brought it back to Japan, re-organized it and passed it on from generation to generation for more than a thousand years. Our temple founder, Superior Master Wu Guang went to Kongobu-ji (**金剛峰寺**) Head Temple of Shingon (True Words) Buddhism at Mount Koya, Japan in 1971 and learnt this Esoteric Buddhism from Monk Xuan Xiong. He finally received from the Main Court Stream (**中院流**) the title of 54th Bhisoka [sic] Acarya (**傳法阿闍梨**) and the bloodline thus returned to China. Next year after his return to Taiwan, the Superior Master energetically planned and built the Temple of Universal Brightness (**五智山光明王寺**) so that the flags of Esoteric Buddhism which had disappeared from China for more than a thousand years now flies again."

[100] Mantra School Bright Lineage Website, http://www.mantrabright.org/ (accessed on Nov 29, 2015). I have heavily edited the grammar and spelling of the text due to the fact that English was not the author's first language. Original text: "'Bright 光明流' is a lineage of 'Mantra 真言宗' school Buddhism. It evolves from Japan's 'Shingon Buddhism,' The Founder 'Master Wu Guang 悟光上師' brought the linkage back to Taiwan in 1972, after inheritance from Xian's 'Wei Guo Acharya 惠果阿闍梨' of Qing Long Temple 青龍寺 by 'Master Kobo Diachi 弘法大師' during the Tang Dynasty 唐朝."

conveyed through the emphasis on mantra recitation, while the latter is expressed in the authors' retracing the provenance of the MSBL's chain of Dharma-transmission. Thus, the sectarian boundaries Wuguang placed around his fledgling lineage were drawn in accordance with well-established Buddhist denominational demarcations. This consistency is also embodied in the MSBL's lineage chart (see figure 2), which implies that the MSBL stems from Shingon's Ono Lineage 小野流.[101]

Figure 2: MSBL lineage chart. Image supplied by MSBL devotee.

[101] As seen when comparing the MSBL's lineage chart with those found in Zuishin'in Religious Research Institute 随心院聖教調査研究会, *Zuishin'in shōgyō tojiin nettowāku* 随心院聖教と寺院ネットワーク [Network of Zuishin'in Religious Temples] (Tokyo: Zuishin'in Shōgyō Chōsa Kenkyūkai, 2004), section 1, 30–31.

Given the importance of Dharma-transmission continuity, it becomes clear why Wuguang's resurrection of Zhenyan was considered such a remarkable accomplishment. Since Zhenyan's orthodox initiation chain disappeared from China after it had been transmitted to Japan by Kūkai, Chinese devotees had to venture outside of their homeland if they wanted to study esoteric Buddhism. As no esoteric Buddhist school or lineage can "spring into being *ex nihilo* but must be able to trace its origin back through several generations of master-to-student transmission,"[102] Wuguang had to travel to Japan in order to join himself with the initiation chain as propagated by Japanese Shingon. After returning, Taiwanese Buddhists saw him endowed with the religious authority to found the MSBL and give them Dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka*.

Although Wuguang's attempt to resurrect Zhenyan by receiving Dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka* in Japan is currently the most successful of which I am aware, it was not the first. In fact, the Chinese Buddhist reformer Taixu also attempted to revive this extinct form of esoteric Buddhism. To do so, he urged his students to receive initiation, first in Japan and later in Tibet, where esoteric chains of initiation remained intact. Taixu's efforts initiated the 'Tantric Revival' 密教復興運動. This revival collectively refers to esoteric Buddhism's rises in popularity on the Chinese mainland during the late Qing Dynasty and early Republican Period (1912-1949).[103] The first rise in popularity was centered in Eastern China and was focused on Japanese esoteric Buddhism while the second was centered near Beijing and concentrated on Tibetan Vajrayāna. The first, Japanese-oriented of these developments—although still alive in present day Hong

[102] Erik J. Hammerstrom, "The Heart-of-Mind Method: Legitimating a New Buddhist Movement in 1930s China," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 17, no. 2 (2013): 13.

[103] See Ester Bianchi, "The Tantric Rebirth Movement in modern China: Esoteric Buddhism Re-vivified by the Japanese and Tibetan traditions," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungarica*, vol. 57, no. 1 (2004): 31-54; Erik Schicketanz, "Wang hongyuan and the Import of Japanese Esoteric Buddhism to China during the Republican Period," in *Buddhism across Asia: Networks of Material, intellectual and Cultural Exchange*, ed. Tansen Sen (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2014), 1.323-347.

Kong[104] despite their being called "short-lived"[105]—was not as widespread as the Tibetan-oriented popularity. Additionally, unlike Wuguang, these figures are not known to have founded their own, independently self-propagating Zhenyan lineages. Wuguang, who resurrected Tang Dynasty Zhenyan by receiving *abhiṣeka* in Japan, was a direct heir of Taixu's Tantric Revival. However, he was not directly influenced by the Japanese-oriented revivalists but, rather, the Tibetan ones.

Despite the fact that Buddhist sectarianism is not the focus of this study, it did weigh heavily upon Wuguang's mind and partially steered the trajectory of his career. It was also of great concern to his predecessors and contemporaries to whom he was responding. Consequently, this is an issue that we will refer to throughout this dissertation.

Section IV: Dissertation Structure

Chapter 1 begins my analysis of Wuguang and his reenchantment by exploring the context from which they arose: Taiwan under Japanese rule. This analysis is based on data gathered from colonial-era Buddhist periodicals and secondary sources. I focus on the ways the secular-religion-superstition trinary was applied by Japanese missionaries and Taiwanese Buddhists in an effort to disenchant Taiwanese religion. I argue that the political and cultural contours of this discursive context gave birth to a nascent form of Taiwanese Buddhist modernism that constituted an intermingling of Japanese and Chinese forms, which represents an

[104] Although usually not mentioned, there was an interest in Japanese esoteric Buddhism happening in Hong Kong that coincided with developments taking place on the Chinese mainland. The Hong Kong Mantra School for Lay Buddhists 香港佛教眞言宗居士林 that is still in operation was founded during this time. See, "Hong Kong Mantra School for Lay Buddhists Website," http://www.buddhistmantra.hk/ (accessed Feb. 4, 2015). Also see Bill M. Mak, "The Career of Utsuki Nishū 宇津木二秀 in Hong Kong during the Japanese Occupation Period (1941-1945)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* 55 (2015): 57-82. Online: http://www.billmak.com/ wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Mak-2015-4.pdf (accessed Jan. 13, 2014).

[105] Bing, "The Tantric Revival and its Reception in Modern China," 394.

early Taiwanese Buddhist revival that has gone unnoticed by previous scholars. I also assert that these Taiwanese modernization efforts were undertaken in response to anti-superstition campaigns that were similar to those that occurred in Japan and China. I additionally argue that this form of Buddhist modernism—as well as the anti-superstition campaigns that triggered it—were what Wuguang was polemically responding to.

Having explored the world into which Wuguang was born, Chapter 2 presents an overview of his life that pays special attention to his studies and exploits. By scrutinizing the details of his life—which I gathered through a close reading of his autohagiography, accounts of people who knew him, fieldwork and secondary sources—I attempt to uncover the internal and external factors that motivated him. This is in order to answer four questions: how did Wuguang become so eclectic? What are the particular sources of the specific elements within his eclecticism? How did Taiwan's history and religious makeup shape his life? Why did Wuguang sophisticate 'superstition' rather than accepting—or entirely rejecting—the disenchanted hermeneutic of Buddhist modernism? I assert that Wuguang's Daoist upbringing, a traumatic childhood religious experience, and his personal religious life were what motivated him to reenchant Buddhism.

Chapter 3 represents our entry into Wuguang's reenchantment. I begin by uncovering how his definition of magic, and how he understood its relationship to science, religion and superstition. Wuguang's definition of magic is elucidated by analyzing his writings on the subjects of Daoist cultivation, mediumship and esoteric Buddhist practices. I argue that Wuguang's understanding of magic was intermingled with his epistemological mystical empiricism and that both were heavily based upon Buddhist sectarian boundaries, the secular-religious-superstitious trinary, Shingon phenomenology and his personal religious life. I

demonstrate that Wuguang believed that belief concerning the nature of magic is what differentiates religion from superstition.

Chapter 4 focuses on Wuguang's TOE that represents his attempt to harmonize science, religion and magic. While detailing the ontological and consequential metaphysical nuances of this theory, I highlight the ways in which Wuguang utilized concepts that his Buddhist modernist predecessors had wielded to disenchant Buddhism in order to reenchant it. In doing so, I identify the particular scientific and religious concepts that Wuguang adulterated magic with in order to sophisticate it.

While my fieldwork data have enriched all aspects of this study, in Chapter 5 they are central. In this chapter I detail the history, structure, headquarters, leadership, praxis and activities of the Buddhist lineage Wuguang founded, the MSBL. As the MSBL is small in comparison to the larger Buddhist groups that dominate Taiwan and is extremely secretive, my data are predominantly qualitative. Although the MSBL self-identifies as a particular lineage of Zhenyan/Shingon, in my analysis thereof I have approached it as a new and independent New Religious Movement whose practices, beliefs and material culture have yet to be documented. To this end I have identified the origin of these facets and paid special attention to how—and why—they have been appropriated and reinvented. Throughout my analysis I additionally draw attention to the ways in which the MSBL's religious life remains consistent with—and departs from—Wuguang's doctrines and personal religiosity. This chapter concludes with a sociological analysis of the MSBL in order to understand its rise, allure, and impact. I argue that Wuguang's reenchanted Buddhism appeals to a niche religious market comprised of modern-minded people from Buddho-Daoist-folk religious backgrounds.

In order to showcase this hitherto overlooked figure's widespread influence across the Chinese-speaking Buddhist world, Chapter 6 details five Buddhist communities in addition to the MSBL that owe their existence to Wuguang. As discussed, Wuguang's influence is alive and well, and has spread beyond the borders of Taiwan to the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Malaysia. Wuguang's relationship to and influence upon each community is individually explored.

In this dissertation's conclusion, I begin by returning to the research questions articulated in this introduction and highlight the issues I have left unresolved. From there, I discuss a number of provocative particularities and offer an integrative analysis thereof. I also return to my core argument regarding Wuguang's doctrines being a form of reenchanted Buddhist modernism, and explore the wider implications of this study, and recommend areas I believe to be the most fruitful for further investigation.