Chinese Buddhist Moral Practices in Everyday Life:
Dharma Drum Mountain, Volunteering and the Self

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of
Doctor of Social Science
in the Faculty of Humanities

2010

Tsung-Han Yang

School of Social Science
Department of Sociology
# Table of Contents

List of Tables ........................................................................................................... 9

Abstract .................................................................................................................. 10

Declaration .............................................................................................................. 11

Copyright Statement .............................................................................................. 11

Acknowledgements ................................................................................................. 12

1. Introduction ........................................................................................................ 13

   Introduction: Motivation For and Aims of the Thesis ........................................ 13

   Religion, Volunteering and Everyday Life ............................................................ 23

   The Ethical Dimension of Everyday Life .............................................................. 26

   Religious Moral Habitus ....................................................................................... 27

      The Sociological Perspective on Religious Moral Habitus .............................. 28

      Dharma Drum Mountain’s Chinese Buddhist Moral Habitus ....................... 32

      The Confucian View of Social Relationship and Morality ........................... 32

      The Chinese Buddhist View of Social Relationships and Morality ............ 34

      Sheng Yen’s Notion of Character Education ............................................... 35

      The Goal of Character Education .................................................................. 37

      The Content of Character Education ................................................................ 39

Summary of the thesis .......................................................................................... 40

2. An Introduction to Dharma Drum Mountain .................................................... 44

   Introduction ........................................................................................................ 44

   The Modernisation of Chinese Buddhism .......................................................... 46

      Introduction ...................................................................................................... 46

      Taixu and Yinshun’s Notions of Humanistic Buddhism ............................... 47
### Table of Contents

- **Debates on Buddhist Modernity** ................................................................. 47
- **Leaders of Buddhist Modernists: Taixu and Yinshun** .......................... 48
- **The Taiwanese Buddhist Context Since 1949** ..................................... 51
  - **Structural Impacts on the Development of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan** .......................... 51
  - **The Characteristics of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan** ........................... 55
- **The History of Dharma Drum Mountain** .................................................. 58
- **The Organisational Structure of Dharma Drum Mountain** ................... 61
- **Dharma Drum Mountain’s Meditation Practice** ........................................ 62
- **The Three Kinds of Morality in Sheng Yen’s Notion of Character Education** ........................................................................................................... 64
  - **Introduction** .................................................................................................. 65
  - **Sheng Yen’s Notion of Moral Emotions: Moral Emotions as Means of Emotion Management** ................................................................. 65
  - **Gratitude** ..................................................................................................... 68
  - **Shame** .......................................................................................................... 70
  - **Repentance** .................................................................................................. 70
  - **Empathy: an Important Moral Emotion for Building Relationships** .......... 71
  - **Respect and Care as Two Core Moral Dispositions of Dharma Drum Mountain** ........................................................................................................... 72
    - **Respect** ....................................................................................................... 73
    - **Care** ............................................................................................................ 75
  - **Conclusion** ................................................................................................... 76
- **3. Methodology** .......................................................................................... 79
  - **Introduction** .................................................................................................. 79
  - **The Sampling of the Research Group** ....................................................... 80
  - **The Interview Process** ................................................................................ 82
    - **Introduction** .................................................................................................. 82
    - **Design of Interview Questions** .................................................................. 83
4. Three Types of Volunteer Works at Dharma Drum Mountain..106

Volunteer Work at the End-of-life Chanting Group…………………..107

The Taiwanese Buddhist End-of-Life Chanting Context………………107

The Introduction of the End-of-Life Chanting Group…………………..108

Volunteering Guidelines for the End-of-Life Service…………………..111

End-of-Life Care…………………………………………………………….113

Interaction with the Dying…………………………………………………..113

Interactions with Family Members: the Family Meeting………………116
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The Development of Buddhist Friendships: Attending Religious Congregations and Doing for Others Together in Volunteering</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The Complexity of Buddhist Friendships</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Non-Buddhist Friendships</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteers’ Interactions with Their Circle of Friends</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Typology of Volunteers’ Interactions with Their Circle of Friends</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Three-stage Transformation of Friendships with Circle of Friends</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Introduction of Buddhist Volunteering to the Circle of Friends</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Volunteers’ Relationships with Their Colleagues</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introducing Buddhism to Colleagues</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Evaluation and Intersubjective Negotiations with Colleagues</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>7. The Development of Chinese Buddhist Moral Habitus at Dharma Drum Mountain</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buddhist Reading Groups</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dharma Class</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteering</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Volunteers</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buddhist Monastics</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Everyday Life</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Circle of Friends</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Conclusion........................................................................................................262

Introduction........................................................................................................262

The Main Findings of the Thesis...........................................................................262

Suggestions for Future Research..........................................................................271

Appendix 1  A List of Interviewees.................................................................276

Appendix 2  Interview Questions.................................................................281

Bibliography.........................................................................................................287
List of Tables

3.1 The Distribution of Respondents.................................................................87
5.1: Indicators of Family Backgrounds of DDM Volunteers (percentages)..........153
5.2 Parental Religious Volunteering in Buddhist Families at Dharma Drum Mountain
(percentages)..................................................................................................167
ABSTRACT

- The University of Manchester
- Tsung-Han Yang
- Doctor of Social Science
- December 2010

The aim of this thesis is to explore how the everyday relational contexts of religious practitioners affect their religious practice and the development of their own distinctive religious habitus. The thesis explores the case of Buddhist volunteers at a Chinese Buddhist organisation in Taiwan called Dharma Drum Mountain to examine how volunteers develop a Chinese Buddhist moral habitus and engage in Chinese Buddhist moral practices in the relational dimensions of their everyday lives, including family, friends, colleagues and other volunteers. I drew upon the sociological thought of Sayer, Bottero and Scheff (etc) to develop my interpretation, and have deployed semi-structured interviews and participant observation to collect the research data.

The thesis found that the Dharma Drum Mountain movement systematically cultivates its volunteers’ Chinese Buddhist moral habitus through Sheng Yen’s concept of character education. The goal of character education is to achieve harmonious relationships with others through Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation, or the development of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus from a sociological perspective. The thesis found that Chinese Buddhist moral habitus is a collective accomplishment. Relationality guides the religious moral practices of Buddhist volunteers, because sharing Buddhism with others is the most important factor contributing to the fostering of harmonious relationships with others and achieving mutual well-being. Sharing is the key that opens the door to a win-win situation in interpersonal relationships. Dharma Drum Mountain encourages its volunteers to share through the thorough institutionalisation of sharing into its organisational structure, which is achieved by establishing a mechanism for group discussion in every place where its Buddhist teachings are taught. In addition, the thesis found that volunteers made use of three methods to develop their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus: self-awareness, self-evaluation and joint practice with other people through intersubjective negotiation. The outcome of successful intersubjective negotiation is mutual attunement. Finally, volunteers fully made use six kinds of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts emphasised by DDM - care, respect, gratitude, shame, repentance and empathy - to develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in different kinds of interaction situations.
DECLARATION

A declaration stating that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been Submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning;

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

i. The author of this thesis (including any appendices and/or schedules to this thesis) owns certain copyright or related rights in it (the “Copyright”) and s/he has given The University of Manchester certain rights to use such Copyright, including for administrative purposes.

ii. Copies of this thesis, either in full or in extracts and whether in hard or electronic copy, may be made only in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) and regulations issued under it or, where appropriate, in accordance with licensing agreements which the University has from time to time. This page must form part of any such copies made.

iii. The ownership of certain Copyright, patents, designs, trade marks and other intellectual property (the “Intellectual Property”) and any reproductions of copyright works in the thesis, for example graphs and tables (“Reproductions”), which may be described in this thesis, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions.

iv. Further information on the conditions under which disclosure, publication and commercialisation of this thesis, the Copyright and any Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions described in it may take place is available in the University IP Policy (see http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/policies/intellectual-property.pdf), in any relevant Thesis restriction declarations deposited in the University Library, The University Library’s regulations (see http://www.manchester.ac.uk/library/aboutus/regulations) and in The University’s policy on presentation of Theses.

11
Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Peter Mcmylor and Professor Mike Savage. I thank for their full support, precious advice and tremendous patience to guide me in writing and improving this thesis. In particular, I am grateful to Dr Peter Mcmylor’s warm encouragement and support giving me power to stand up again from difficulties of the thesis writing.

Secondly, I am extremely grateful to the multitude of people at Dharma Drum Mountain provided me with constant support and advice throughout the years of my PhD programme. In particular, the Buddhist monk Changyuan Fashi gave me full support to go through all sorts of difficulties during my PhD study. Li-ying Xue as the volunteer at the End-of-Life Chanting Group made me understand all aspects of the volunteer works at the group, introducing me to other volunteers and building the bridge between the Buddhist monastics and me. Yue-qui Lin as the volunteer at the Visitor Service Centre at the World Centre for Buddhist Education showed me how her religious practices were fully embodied in all daily routines and facilitated her family and friendships. Min-ni Tsai as the volunteer at the Young Buddhist Society as well as my one of my best friend at Dharma Drum Mountain helped me deepen my Buddhist research from the period of the pilot study to the final stage of offering suggestions for future research. Many Buddhist friends helped me collect information and shared important opinions which have become parts of my thesis, including Kuan-ju Chen, Shu-fei Hsieh, Yin-chen Chang, Li-ju Tsai, Ming-chun Lee, Hui-jung Chen, Lisa Tsai, Amanda Huang, Chi-Chih Lien, Pei-Chieh Hsieh, Vicky Yu, Phoebe Wang, Michelle Hsu, Fan-yi Wu, Iris Yen, Cynthia Tseng, Hong-rong Shu, Yi-Hau Lee, Zhi-Fu Chang-jian, Mei-ling Hsieh, Mark Lin, and Zhe-yu Lin

Thirdly, I thank my three of my best non-Buddhist friends Yu-ze Wan, Chen-huan Wu and Luke Mao. They provided me with constant support, emotionally and financially.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my father Wen-Ching Yang and my mother Shu-Mei Lin.
Introduction

Chinese Buddhism is very good. It is a shame that there are only few people who understand how good it is, but most people misunderstand it (Sheng Yen—the founder of Dharma Drum Mountain).

Our understanding of Buddhism is not just an intellectual understanding. True understanding is actual practice itself (Shunryu Suzuki 1999: 97)

Awakeness is found in our pleasure and our pain, our confusion and our wisdom, available in each moment of our weird, unfathomable, ordinary everyday lives (Chodron 2005: 26)

INTRODUCTION: MOTIVATION FOR AND AIMS OF THE THESIS

This chapter provides a guide to the thesis. I will first describe the motivation for and aims of the research, and then illustrate the key theoretical concepts of the thesis. Finally I will provide an outline of the thesis.
The thesis explores how other people in religious practitioners’ everyday relational context affect their religious moral practice. The idea for this study developed out of the interviews conducted with my Dharma Drum Mountain respondents during the fieldwork for the thesis in Taiwan. In the interviews, many respondents told me that after they joined Dharma Drum Mountain, they started to practice Buddhism for self-transformation and had found that the transformation of their daily habitual behaviours often manifested in their joint practice with others. They viewed their self-transformation as a collective accomplishment, for instance, one respondent shared with me how she had transformed herself through her interactions with other volunteers, “when I encountered difficulties in volunteering or in other relationships in daily life, other volunteers often cared for me with Buddhist concepts or showed me how to deal with difficulties with Buddhist practice. After the involvement of Buddhist volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain several years, I deeply feel that without their sharing of Buddhism to me in every critical moment of my life, I could not have changed my habits and experienced the happiness of spiritual growth through Buddhist practice.”

If only one respondent had mentioned the importance of relationality in personal religious practice, I might have classified them as a special case. However, I found that senior volunteers from each of my selected volunteer groups all shared the same feelings with me in interviews and this impressed me deeply. These respondents’ discourses on their religious practice in relationality inspired me and compelled me to make comparisons with my personal religious and volunteer experience at Dharma Drum Mountain. I had three findings from these interviews and I made use of these findings to develop my thesis. Firstly, my respondents’ discourses challenged my previous experience of Buddhist practice that the success of Buddhist
self-transformation is the result of a personal accomplishment from self-growth and self-improvement only. My respondents’ discourses on relationality are supported by an important Buddhist concept called Dependent Origination, which refers to the way in which “phenomena come into being in dependence upon other phenomena” (The Dalai Lama 2009: 29).\(^1\) The principle of Dependent Origination highlights that human beings are dependent upon others, as Kwee (2010: 24) puts it, ‘the Buddha’s causality hypothesis of Dependent Origination necessitates a communal view of human life that considers the self not as self-contained but as constituted in multiple relationships from the cradle to the grave. The Buddhist vision concurs with collaborative practice and reflective negotiation as reflected by “Interbeing” (*Heart Sutra*), “Relational Being” (Gergen) and the confluence of the two: “Relational Interbeing”.

From the Buddhist perspective, the concept of Dependent Origination can successfully explain why my respondents view their Chinese Buddhist practice as the result of co-construction or co-creation with others in their interactions. From a sociological perspective, I found that Sayer’s (2011) concept of lay normativity which highlights the importance of the relational character of human being in everyday life is useful for exploring how Chinese Buddhist volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain are dependent upon other people in their daily relational context to transform the self, because Sayer

\(^{1}\) The principle of dependent origination is a Buddhist term which refers to how ‘phenomena come into being in dependence upon other phenomena’ (The Dalai Lama 2009: 29). The concept of conditioned arising is based on the idea that all things are conditioned, relative, and interdependent; and that personal actions are affected by three factors: causes, conditions and effects. According to the definition of ‘condition’ found in a Buddhist dictionary, “all phenomena arise dependent upon a number of causal factors called conditions”. The Buddha use the example of a flame in an oil lamp to illustrate the principle of conditioned arising. He notes that “the flame in an oil lamp burns dependent upon the oil and the wick. When the oil and the wick are present, the flame in an oil lamp burns. If either of these is absent, the flame will cease to burn” (Buddhanet 2010, at http://www.buddhanet.net/funbud12.htm).
argues that the natures of human beings are vulnerable and dependent upon others.

According to Sayer’s (2011) new interpretation of the relationship between the self and relationality, human beings are dependent on others for their sense of self. Therefore, Sayer suggests that self-interest and altruism are not mutually exclusive or opposed but actually act “for self-and-other together” (Held 2006; quoted in Sayer 2011:123). Although Sayer does not link his concept of lay normativity to the religious context, I think it is viable to extend his theory to the Buddhist context, because many volunteers, particularly female married volunteers, shared with me how they made efforts to negotiate with their partners to find a balance between their desires for Buddhist volunteering on the one hand, and fulfilling their partners expectations of their housework and childbearing, on the other. Sayer’s (2011) concept of lay normativity can successfully explain how volunteers engage in self-transformation in their interactions with other people in their everyday relational context.

According to the analysis above, one of my research themes emerged from this finding: how do other people in Dharma Drum Mountain volunteers’ daily relational context influence their change of habitual behaviours or spiritual growth? How do volunteers’ Buddhist practices affect other people in their daily relational context, including family and friends? Through exploring these questions with sociological theories, I believe Chinese Buddhist volunteers’ emphasis upon relationality in personal religious practice offers sociologists a new perspective on self-transformation in religious context.

Secondly, I found that meditation was just one of the methods with which volunteers choose to practice Buddhism. Many adopted different kinds of Buddhist methods to
practice in daily life such as chanting the Buddha’s name, prostration and sutra recitation as well as meditation. Actually I was shocked as I heard my respondents’ responses to meditation, because Dharma Drum Mountain styles itself as a Chinese Buddhist organisation which focuses on Buddhist education and the promotion of Chinese meditation. However, according to my interview, it seems that not many respondents view meditation as their method of Buddhist practice. It made me confused and forced me to reflect on what magical factor I had overlooked that the majority of volunteers had learned from Dharma Drum Mountain and applied to the relational dimension of their daily lives.

This magical factor is Chinese Buddhist moral habitus. I found that Dharma Drum Mountain institutionally teaches its volunteers and laity different kinds of Chinese Buddhist morality to cultivate their Buddhist moral habitus in its Dharma class, routine religious congregations and volunteer works, including commitments, respect, care, empathy, gratitude, shame and repentance. It seems that Dharma Drum Mountain attempts to integrate Chinese Buddhist morality and meditation practice together to promote its religious ideas. On the one hand, meditation as a type of body technique can help people pay attention to whatever is happening to them in the moment, in particular being aware of their emotional condition in their encounters with others. On the other hand, Buddhist moral habitus helps people attune themselves to others through intersubjective understanding. However, it is not clear how these two factors are practiced together in daily life.

From a practical perspective, according to my observations in the fieldwork for the thesis, when Dharma Drum Mountain’s monks and nuns teach meditation to the laity, they often introduce meditation practice and Chinese Buddhist morality independently.
- as opposed to making it clear that the daily practice of meditation is inseparable from the ongoing practice of Chinese Buddhist morality in interpersonal relationships. In my view, the methods currently used by monks and nuns to teach meditation are problematic because individual meditation experiences in Chan meditation retreat or in daily routines do not explicitly prepare or prime individuals for flourishing in interpersonal relationships.

From a theoretical perspective on morality and meditation, sociologists emphasises the importance of developing the capacity for attention and awareness in relation to the practice of lay morality (Sayer 2011) and the expression of moral emotions (Turner and Stets 2006). Attention and awareness are also central to meditation practice, as Siegel (2010) points out that mindfulness - an English translation of a Pali term *Sati* - is at the core of meditation practice which refers to awareness, attention and remembering. Pagis (2009) explores meditation from a sociological perspective and proposes a term “embodied self-reflexivity” to describe meditation practice. In her conceptualisation of embodied self-reflexivity, Pagis points out that a capacity for awareness is important in meditation practice, because when individuals practice meditation, they make use of their capacity for awareness to focus on their physical sensations for the purpose of self-monitoring. The body itself becomes the medium for increasing awareness of physical sensations.


3. As Pagis (2009: 266) puts it, “embodied self-reflexivity is a process based predominantly on feeling the body, in which the relation with oneself unfolds through a corporeal medium by way of practices that increase awareness of sensations, such as meditation, yoga, and dance”
Pagis did not use her theory to explore the relationship between meditation and morality, even though some scholars have shown how the two can work together from theoretical perspective. As Robinson (2008: 69) puts it, “a natural consequence of increasing spiritual awareness is an increased awareness of the needs of the other”. Robison (2008) further maintains that the increase of the capacity for awareness contributes to the arousal of personal moral responsibility naturally. Wallace (2007) explores how Buddhist meditation can cultivate a sense of empathy and points out that this is possible because according to the Theravada Buddhist sutra Satipatthanasutta, for instance, there are four kinds of meditation application, including observation of the body, feelings, the mind, and mental objects of oneself and of others. Wallace argues that the final kind of meditation application involves shifting attention “back and forth between self and others” (Wallace 2007: 114). He calls this process “reiterated empathy” or making use of meditation to “observe in oneself, others, and both oneself and others the contents of the mind” (Ibid). By engaging in meditation practice, a person “mindfully observes all the phenomena of the environment from one’s own perspective by means of direct perception and empathetically attends to them from the perspective of others” (Ibid). Thus, according to Wallace, the practice of meditation necessarily entails the cultivation of the capacity for mutual awareness. When people practice meditation, they not only develop the ability to engage in the individual practice of meditation, but also the ability to engage in Buddhist moral practice. Therefore, the combination of meditation practice and moral practice in everyday lives is viable from a theoretical perspective. However, there is lack of practical evidence to support this theory.

Because Chinese Buddhist moral habitus is the magical factor which has become many
volunteers’ motivation to practice Buddhism for mutual well-being in their interactions with other people in their daily relational context, the exploration of how volunteers realise Dharma Drum Mountain’s Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in their interactions with others in their everyday relational context has become another research theme of the thesis. In addition, because I found that Dharma Drum Mountain institutionally teaches its volunteers and laity different kinds of Chinese Buddhist morality to cultivate their Buddhist moral habitus in its Dharma class, routine religious congregations and volunteer works, it is interesting to explore what the relationship between Chinese Buddhist daily religious practices and Chinese Buddhist education on morality is. Moreover, because the majority of volunteers start to learn Chinese Buddhist moral concepts and transform the self with Buddhist methods after they involved in volunteer works at Dharma Drum Mountain, volunteering itself becomes the focal point to link Buddhist organisations, volunteers, and other people in volunteers’ everyday relational context, it is interesting to explore what the significance of volunteering on the institutional promotion of Buddhism and self-identity is. Finally, I will explore how volunteers practice meditation in volunteering or daily life. How do volunteers put meditation and Chinese Buddhist moral concepts together in their daily life? I will discuss the concept of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus and Sayer’s (2005, 2011) concepts of ethical dispositions and lay normativity in this chapter and discuss the contents of Dharma Drum Mountain’s Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in Chapter 2.

Thirdly, I found that many respondents mentioned that they encountered many difficulties in their religious practice in everyday life. Many Buddhist volunteers have successfully practiced Buddhism in their interactions with families and friends in daily life, but the majority of these volunteers also maintained that they struggled in their
daily religious practices, particularly young volunteers from non-Buddhist family. Many volunteers have experienced micro-political struggles in their pursuit of well-being with Buddhist practice in the relational dimensions of their daily lives. They often have to resist the attitudes of their family or friend circles towards Chinese Buddhism in search of the good life with Buddhism. Many Buddhist volunteers experience humiliation in their interaction with non-Buddhists, who often evaluate their behaviours from within moral boundaries against Buddhism or suspect their beliefs for a variety of reasons.

Conflicts between volunteers and their family or friends on their Buddhist involvement show that there are tensions between Buddhism and other worldviews in Taiwan. According to my observations and interviews of young volunteers, there are three kinds of tensions between Buddhist values and secular values in Taiwanese society currently extant: 4 (1) the institution of Buddhist ordination. According to Chinese Buddhist precept, marriage is not allowed for people who want to become ordained monks or nuns. However, this precept has become one of the main obstacles for the promotion of Chinese Buddhism, particularly Buddhist promotions to young people, because many parents fear that their children will become monks or nuns if they learn Buddhism; (2) the vegetarian diet. According to Chinese Buddhist doctrines, a vegetarian diet is helpful for Chinese Buddhist practice, and many Chinese Buddhist organisations encourage their laity to become vegetarians. However, many parents are

4. When I interviewed volunteers whose ages were over 40 years old or volunteers who had children, the majority of volunteers told me that their friends had positive attitudes towards Dharma Drum Mountain, but they also mentioned that they had many conflicts with their partners. On the contrary, the majority of young volunteers, including young volunteers from Buddhist family or non-Buddhist family, all told me that their friends have negative attitudes towards Buddhism. Young volunteers from non-Buddhist family mentioned that they had many conflicts with their parents.
against their children becoming vegetarians due to concerns about their health and growth.

The third kind of tension is focused on the approach towards material well-being. Buddhism has its unique perspective on materialism. Sheng Yen (2004) argues that in the modern consumer society, people have to contemplate what they truly need in their daily life, because “typically modern people’s needs are few, but their wants are too many”, because “most people’s desires are endless” (Sheng Yen 2004: 34-37). Sheng Yen compares the difference between need and want and maintains that “the things we need are proper to desire. The things we merely want are unimportant” (Sheng Yen 2004: 37). He urges people to think “should I try to obtain them? For instance, everyone like fame, statue, wealth, and power, but undeserved fame is only a façade, undeserved wealth is simply ill-got-ten gains, undeserved statue is just an act.” (Sheng Yen 2004: 37). He therefore suggests that “it is improper to pursue such things” (Ibid). However, it seems that Sheng Yen’s appeal for reflection on the material life is not prevalent in the Taiwanese society now, because many people view wealth and fame as their life goals and make every effort to pursue these.

The third research theme of the thesis emerged from the analysis above and it is interesting to explore how Chinese Buddhist volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain deal with conflicts with other people as they engage in Chinese Buddhist moral practice in their everyday lives. Although many Buddhist volunteers did manage to foster their relationships with families and friends with Buddhist practices, it is not

5. Sheng Yen (2004: 35) argues that need refers to “the things that you can’t live without, such as sunlight, air, a minimum of food, clothes to fend off the cold, a house to shelter you from the wind and the rain. In our time basic transportation, computers, and telephones have become needs too.”
clear how they did this. What kinds of difficulties did they encounter in the relational dimensions of their daily lives? How did they resist others’ objections to their religious beliefs? How did Buddhist organisations help volunteers overcome their difficulties and improve the relational quality of their family life, friendships and colleagueship?

From a sociological perspective, Bottero’s (2010) concept of practices as negotiated outcome of intersubjective coordination and Scheff’s (2006) concept of attunement and awareness are important for explaining how volunteers solve conflicts through intersubjective negotiation and attain mutual attunement. I will introduce Bottero’s theory in Chapter 1 and Scheff’s theory in Chapter 2. By exploring these questions, it should be possible to understand the actual condition of Chinese Buddhists in their daily lives in Taiwan.

With these questions in mind, this study aims to investigate how Chinese Buddhist volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain in Taiwan make use of their Buddhist moral habitus to practice Buddhism in the relational contexts of their everyday lives. The study will be guided by the following questions: (1) what is the relationship between Chinese Buddhist daily religious practices and Chinese Buddhist education on morality? (2) how do other people in Dharma Drum Mountain’s volunteers’ daily relational context affects their development of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus? (3) how do volunteers’ moral Buddhist practices affect other people in their daily relational context, including other volunteers, family and friends? (4) how do volunteers manage to deal with conflicts with other people in their daily lives about the issue of their Buddhist volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain?

RELIGION, VOLUNTEERING AND EVERYDAY LIFE
Everyday religion has become a popular issue in the sociology of religion (Hall 1997; Bender 2003; Cadge 2005; Orsi 2005; Ammerman 2007; McGuire 2008). Sociologists have found that although religious authority has declined in some parts of the world, religious attendance and the religious population in other parts of the world are still on the increase and religious authorities still command tremendous human and monetary resources (Hefner 1998; Lambert 1999; Eisenstadt 2000, 2002; Schmidt 2006; Goh 2009). Sociologists have started to rethink what religion is and are curious about “what people do with religious practice, what they make with it of themselves and their worlds” (Orsi 1997: 7). In other words, they have begun to think about how religion “comes into being in an ongoing, dynamic relationship with the realities of everyday life” (Ibid). Everyday religion is “the activity that happens outside organized religious events and institutions” and studying it involves exploring “all the ways in which non-experts experience religion” (Ammerman 2007: 4). Everyday religious experiences can occur in any area of daily life, such as cooking, gardening and walking (Hall 1997; Ammerman 2007; McGuire 2008). The study of everyday religion shows people may combine multiple religious sources into their daily religious practices in terms of their interests (Orsi 1997; Ammerman 2007; McGuire 2008). This means that people’s daily religious practices are “constituted by cultural bricolage” and also highlights how religious ideas are “invented, taken, borrowed, and improvised at the intersections of life” (Orsi 1997: 7-8).

Current research on everyday religion mainly focuses on exploring how individuals construct their religious identity and practice religion in their daily lives in terms of their personal religious interests. Research has shown that individuals have the capacity to construct a sense of religious belonging and commitment which does not
always rely on the doctrines and rituals of institutional religious traditions (Cadge 2005; McGuire 2008; Pagis 2009, 2010). However, only a few scholars have studied how organised religion is practiced in volunteering environments and in the everyday lives of volunteers. Bender (2003) explored how volunteers at a non-sectarian organisation called God’s Love We Deliver (GLWD) engaged in religious practices in the GLWD kitchen.  

Bender’s research demonstrates that volunteers often practice religion in their volunteer groups outside of the religious institutions they are associated with. But we still do not know how individual volunteers at organised religious institutions practice religion in their daily lives.

Current research on religious volunteering is mainly focused on two areas. The first is the relationship between religious volunteering and civic engagement, for example, how religious volunteers make use of their social capital to engage in civic affairs (Jackson et al. 1995; Schneider 1999; Schmidt 1999; Bacon 2001; Parker and Smith 2002; Uslaner 2002; Lichterman 2005; Karner and Parker 2008). The second is the relationship between religiosity and religious volunteering, in particular, how religious congregations or church attendance affect religious volunteering. Some scholars focus on social capital (Becker and Dhingra 2001; Lam 2002; Yeung 2004; Strømsnes 2008) others on motivation (Cnaan et al. 1993) race (Musick et al. 2000) or characteristics and values of congregational volunteering (Harris 1996; Hoge et al. 1998). However, like

---

6. According to the information of the website, God’s Love We Deliver is a non-religious organisation. (https://www.glwd.org/about/overview.jsp;jsessionid=AC6DE172B63A96B00D478E66E7A55815)

7. Schuller compares different definitions of social capital from different scholars and points out that social capital is often “defined in terms of networks, norms and trust, and the way these allow agents and institutions to be more effective in achieving common objectives” (http://www.sociologia.uniroma1.it/users/cpellegroini/c11-Schuller.pdf). In addition, in the thesis, my usage of social capital mainly refers to how people use this skill to connect to people rather than how people accumulate power to dominate resources.
other current researchers of volunteering, scholars in this area rarely explore how emotions affects religious volunteering (Smith 2008). In addition, although scholars have explored the relationship between religious volunteering and morality, the focus has mainly been on how religious volunteering affects people’s moral attitudes (Bader and Finke 2010; Becker and Dhingra 2001; Schafer 2011; Taniguchi and Thomas 2011; Vaisey 2009) and how religious values motivate volunteers’ helping behaviours through language (Einolf 2011). The development of religious moral habitus, which is an important motivation for religious volunteers who want to use their religious moral habitus to flourish and pursue well-being in their daily lives, has so far been overlooked. Religious volunteers are morally educated by religious organisations through volunteering and can apply what they learn into all aspects of lives. Religious organisations encourage their volunteers to engage in religious practices to develop religious moral habitus. Therefore research into religious moral habitus may help to understand how volunteers engage in religious practices in their daily lives.

THE ETHICAL DIMENSION OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Sayer (2005, 2011) proposes his concept of lay normativity to explore lay people’s relations with others in the ethical dimension of everyday life, as Sayer (2011: 7) puts it, the concept of lay normativity refers to “issues of how people behave or should behave in relation to others, with respect to their well-being”. Sayer’s lay normativity highlights what people care about or what matters to them in their daily life “depends hugely on the quality of the social relations in which they live, and on how people treat on another” (Ibid). Lay normativity shows that the evaluative and sentient nature of human beings is an important influence in our everyday lives. We are evaluative
beings because we can evaluate normative questions, including “what is good or bad about what is happening, how others are treating them, how to act and what to do for the best” (Sayer 2004, 2005, 2011:1). In addition, we are sentient beings because we can suffer or flourish in various ways. Our sentient nature shows that “we are vulnerable and susceptible to various kinds of loss or harm” (Sayer 2011: 1-5). In other words, we are dependent on others for the sense of self. We are interdependent.

Therefore, Sayer (2010, 2011) proposes several key elements of lay morality. These include: (1) moral sentiments (emotions) like compassion, benevolence, gratitude, guilt, shame and sense of justice, and injustice; (2) ‘fellow-feeling’, the ability to understand others via not only discourse but also expressions and body language, which is a precondition of everyday moral conduct; (3) dispositions or the capacity to behave in particular ways; (4) norms concerning how we should evaluate actions and behave; (5) discourses or moral stories, symbols and exemplary individuals; (6) individual reflexivity and moral reasoning, which enable people to examine, evaluate, and re-adjust their moral or immoral emotional responses, reflect on virtues, vices and exemplary characters, reconsider memories and moral stories, and ultimately take into account the norms and the views of others.

**RELIGIOUS MORAL HABITUS**

The thesis explores how Chinese Buddhist volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain in Taiwan make use of their Buddhist moral habitus to interact with others in the relational dimensions of their daily life. Chinese Buddhist moral habitus is the key concept considered in this thesis, which explores how Chinese Buddhist volunteers at
Dharma Drum Mountain (DDM) make use of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in their interactions with others so that all concerned can flourish in their everyday lives. The first section of the thesis discusses the sociological perspective on religious moral habitus and the peculiarities of the Chinese Buddhist moral habitus, which varies according to each particular monastic community. The focus here will be on Dharma Drum Mountain but not all aspects of its Chinese Buddhist moral habitus are common to other, similar communities.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON RELIGIOUS MORAL HABITUS

The concept of religious moral habitus is a development of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, which is the most prominent theory of habitual actions in contemporary sociology. Bourdieu (1990: 53) defines habitus as “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them”. It is an embodied phenomenon and Bourdieu views the body as “a mnemonic device upon and in which the very basics of culture, the practical taxonomies of the habitus, are imprinted and encoded in a socialising or learning process which commences during early childhood” (Jenkins, 2002: 75–6). Mouzelis (2008) maintains that Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is the core idea of his “theory of practice”. Habitus “as a set of dispositions, is the major link between social structures on the one hand and practices on the other. Social structures, via various socialization processes, are internalized and become dispositions, and dispositions lead to practices which, in turn, reproduce social structures”. (Mouzelis
Many sociologists are critical of Bourdieu’s notion of habitus because of its focus on the unconscious nature of embodiment at the expense of conscious deliberation, which is also important in habitual actions (see Archer 2007, 2010a, 2010b; Adams 2006; Bottero 2010; Elder-Vass 2007, 2010; Ignatow 2007, 2009, 2010; Mouzelis 2008; Sayer 2005, 2009; Sweetman 2003; Vaisey 2009). In this thesis, a similar notion of habitus to that advocated by Bottero (2010) in her critique of Bourdieu’s theory of practice will be adopted to explore the religious moral habitus of DDM volunteers. Bottero (2010) criticises Bourdieu for failing to consider actual interactions between actors, particularly the intersubjective nature of practice, and suggests that practice is the negotiated outcome of intersubjective coordination. Intersubjectivity is thus integral to joint practice. Bottero argues that collective accomplishments of practice are dynamic because variously disposed agents all bring their own subjective experiences and dispositions in face-to-face encounters. They rely on our capacity for conscious coordination and intersubjective negotiation is an important part of joint practice. Bottero’s ideas will be used in this thesis to explore how volunteers make use of moral dispositions like caring or moral emotions like gratitude to intersubjectively coordinate their actions with others through negotiation to achieve attunement.

As for the relationship between morality and habitus, sociologists note that Bourdieu fails to consider the moral dimensions of human life (Ignatow 2009; Lamont 1992; Sayer 2005; Winchester 2008). Ignatow (2009) claims that this omission can be traced back to Bourdieu’s separation of the cognitive and somatic elements of habitus, while Sayer (2005) criticises Bourdieu for overlooking the conscious aspects of subjectivity, the consequence of this being that emotions cannot be integrated into Bourdieu’s
concept of habitus. Sayer argues that emotions are cognitive, evaluative and suffused with intelligence (Nussbaum 2001; quoted in Sayer 2005) and proposes his ethical dispositions in order to integrate morality into the concept of habitus. These ethical dispositions “are acquired and become embodied through practice involving relations with others” (Sayer 2005:43). But it is emotions such as gratitude, benevolence, compassion, anger, bitterness, guilt and shame that are the crucial elements of each ethical disposition.

These emotions are in turn highly influenced by the surrounding social context. Sayer (2000:45) argues that when people call upon ethical dispositions to make moral decisions, inner conversation and public conversation jointly influence their moral judgements because “social action is influenced by an ongoing mutual and self-monitoring of conduct. This process of self- and mutual evaluation is crucial both for our well-being and for social orders”. At times when there is tension between people’s ethical dispositions and the prevailing social norms, they might become involved in micro-political struggles of resistance in their everyday lives. In addition, the strength of ethical dispositions can increase or decrease depending on “their seriousness and the frequency with which they are activated” (Sayer 2005: 44). Ethical dispositions can also be applied to novel situations, which will again necessitate that moral adjustments are made. In the final analysis, as Sayer points out, evaluation is the most important feature of our ethical dispositions because we care about how others treat us.

Some sociologists have made use of the concept of habitus in the religious field, developing the concept of religious habitus (Mellor and Shilling 2010) to explore how structural and individual factors affect individuals’ religious practices (Anderson 2010),
and how embodied religious practice informs the moral self (Winchester 2008). The definitions of religious habitus are varied. Mellor and Shilling (2010) and Winchester (2008) suggest that religious habitus refers to embodied religious practices, with Mellor and Shilling (2010) maintaining that religious habitus is the outcome of religious body pedagogics. Anderson’s (2010) definition of religious habitus is the broadest and includes not only embodied religious practices but also beliefs and dispositions.

In their theoretical review of the concept, Mellor and Shilling (2010) claim that habitus “results from the interaction that occurs between religious phenomena and people’s experiences and reactions to these phenomena”. They define religious habitus as “a contingent outcome of religious practices and beliefs’ rather than following ‘Bourdieu’s (1977) general conception of habitus as a medium which is both produced by and serves automatically to reproduce the environment in which it is forged’. They point out that religious habitus is highly dependent upon ‘all manner of social influences’ and is not the ‘guaranteed outcome of any single set of body pedagogic means and their associated experiences’ (Mellor and Shilling 2010: 30). Winchester (2008) on the contrary conducted empirical research into religious moral habitus and found that religious moral habitus is not limited by pre-existing religious cognitive schema, because stable moral beliefs or attitudes are hard to produce moral selves. Instead, Winchester argues that “religious practices were key elements in the process of developing and solidifying moral dispositions over time” (Winchester’s 2008: 1773). Winchester points out an important point on the research into religious moral habitus is that religious moral habitus was significantly enabled and constrained by social relationships, institutional contexts and moral orders in people’s everyday lives. He encourages scholars to further explore how people engage in religious practices to
constitute moral identities in diverse social contexts.

**Dharma Drum Mountain’s Chinese Buddhist Moral Habitus**

*The Confucian view of social relationships and morality*

To understand the characteristics of Dharma Drum Mountain’s Chinese Buddhist moral habitus, it is necessary to understand the relationship between Chinese Buddhism and Confucianism, because the morality of Chinese Buddhism has been heavily influenced by Confucian moral teachings due to the long history of creative transformation of original Buddhist traditions in China (Ch’en 1964, 1973; Fu 1973; Guo Huei 2011; Jekins 2002; Madsen 2007; Wang 2008; Yao 2000; Yandell and Netland 2009). Buddhism is not an indigenous Chinese religion and entered China from India around the first century AD (Jekins 2002, Yandell and Netland 2009). Confucianism was already well established before Buddhism entered China. Confucianism as a philosophical system of morality shaped the social and ethical framework of Chinese society and its core values are to foster family solidarity, public morality, self-cultivation and social responsibility (Yandell and Netland 2009; Yao 2000). The Way (dao) which means “to follow our nature” is the Confucian view of the world and there are three elements which make up The Confucian Way: heaven, humans and harmony (Yao 2000: 139-189).

There are several characteristics of the Confucian view on social relationships and morality. First of all, Confucian teachings are based on the family and emphasize the virtue of filial piety and ancestral cult (Yandell and Netland 2009; Yao 2000). In
addition, Confucianism has a tradition of emphasizing the importance of the ethic of responsibility and role obligations in social relationships and is based on the idea that individuals can flourish “through performing different, mutually complementary roles” (Madsen 2002: 194), or as Yao (2000: 154) puts it, “Confucians believe that humans must fulfil their duties to qualify for this role”. Moreover, Chen (2009) argues that the concept of self-in-relation or the relational self is the unique feature of Confucian societies, because Confucianism views the self as always at the centre of relationships and “surrounded by other people connected to one” (Tu and Ikeda 2011; Yang 2006: 342; Yao 2000). From the Confucian perspective, the maintenance of social harmony through “living up to social roles, expectations, obligations, and responsibilities within a social network” is the goal of the person in interpersonal relationships (Chen 2009: 991). The ‘Confucian Way of Harmony’ “works on the solution and resolution of conflict” (Yao 2000: 178).

The final feature of Confucian morality is self-cultivation, which Confucians argue should be a major goal for every person in Confucian societies (Chen 2009). Confucians argues that building the capacity for self-cultivation is the way to achieve social harmony, and as Yao puts it, “the Confucian solution of the conflict between oneself and others is that one must start with the personal cultivation of one’s own character, and then be in harmony with others by extending one’s virtue to others” (Yao 2000: 179). Self-cultivation represents “a necessary condition for a personal transition from a crude and uncivilised being to a cultivated and civilized person” (Yao 2000: 156). Self-cultivation has a strong spiritual dimension and it can be seen as “the fundamental path to the spiritual transformation of one’s character…an inward process of looking into one’s own heart/mind and reflecting on one’s own innate sources of sagehood” (Yao 2000: 156, 220). Tu (1985: 232) explores the relationship between
self-cultivation and otherness and argues that self-cultivation involves “a dynamic process of the development of self in the spirit of filiality, brotherhood, friendship, discipleship, and loyalty”.

From the secular and practical perspective, self-cultivation can be seen as a process whereby one learns how to become a person, in other words, a person-making process (Hall and Ames 1987; Yang 2006). Person-making refers to “the process by which one returns to human nature, which is good and moral” (Yang 2006: 344). Confucians argue that the goal of self-cultivation is to become a person of virtue and in order to reach this goal the individual must be given moral training in the Confucian virtues. Among these virtues, ren (仁), which has been translated variously as humaneness, humanity, benevolence and so forth, is the most important virtue of Confucius’ teachings, and as Chan (1963: 108) notes, “the completion of the self means humaneness or humanity”. To attain humaneness, Confucians highlight the importance of learning and emphasize learning as “a process of generating virtue within and learning to be a person of virtue” (Yao 2000: 213).

**The Chinese Buddhist view of social relationships and morality**

When Buddhism entered China, the Buddhist view of social relationships and morality was quite different from that of Confucianism because the aim of Indian Buddhism was to attain enlightenment for individual salvation in nirvana. The individualism of Indian Buddhism in practical terms meant Buddhist monks leaving behind the domestic life and terminating ties with family and society for Buddhist practice (Ch’en 1973). From the Confucian perspective, Buddhism represented an attempt to transcend
or evade the necessary constraints of human morality (Fu 1973). Confucians accused Buddhist transcendentalists of selfishness and seeking to “escape from human relations and ethicosocial obligations in the secular world” (Fu 1973: 380). To Confucians Buddhist monks and nuns were “parasites” because they “did not cultivate the land nor did they weave cloth” (Yao 2000: 235). Their refusal to marry was “contrary to nature” and “deprived the country of much-needed manpower” (Yao 2000: 235).

Therefore, in order to survive in Chinese society, Buddhism had to accommodate several aspects of Confucian thought, particularly those to do with family ethics. For instance, a Buddhist doctrine of filial piety was created that placed the family at the heart of Buddhism and defined filial piety as the primary purpose of Buddhist practices. Moreover, Chinese Buddhism reinterpreted the notion of renunciation and argued that “renunciation itself was the highest form of filial piety” (Unno 1989: 84). Furthermore, Chinese Buddhism decreased emphasis upon the notion of nirvana and stressed the positive notion of enlightenment in this life (Kasulis 1987). The goal of Buddhist practice was reinterpreted and the aim of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation became achieving “harmony within the social and cosmic order” rather than attaining individual nirvana as release (Yandell and Netland 2009: 37). Through the integration of Confucian morality, Chinese Buddhism was transformed and developed into a pragmatic and this-worldly form of Buddhism (Jenkins 2002). The notion of Humanistic Buddhism which was mainly worked out by the two great 20th Century Chinese monk philosophers Taixu and Yinshun is the paradigm of this-worldly Buddhism. I will discuss the notion of Humanistic Buddhism in chapter 2.

**Sheng Yen’s notion of character education**
The Chinese Buddhist monk Sheng Yen, the founder of Dharma Drum Mountain, established the theoretical system underpinning DDM’s interpretation of Chinese Buddhist morality, which is summed up by Sheng Yen’s notion of “uplifting the character of humanity and building a pure land on earth” (Sheng Yen 2009a). The phrase “uplifting the character of humanity” combines Confucian and Buddhist views on moral self-cultivation, integrating the Confucian emphasis on learning and self-cultivation with the core ideas of the bodhisattva path, including avoiding evil, cultivating good, and saving all beings (Chappell 1996; Sheng Yen 2009b). Although many scholars have shown how the development of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan has been affected by Confucianism (Guo Guang and Chang Shen 2011; Guo Huei 2011; Lin 2010; Lu 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2004; Madsen 2007; Ting 2009), few have considered the influence of Confucian moral teachings on Sheng Yen’s notion of Buddhist moral practice.

Lin (2010) considers the features of Sheng Yen’s ideas on character education and links these to the modernization of Chinese Buddhism but does not explore the relationship between character education and religious practice. He underestimates the influence of Confucian moral teachings, which means his analysis is limited and unsystematic. Guo Guang and Chang Shen (2011) on the other hand, make it clear that Confucian ethics have been integrated into Sheng Yen’s notion of “uplifting the

8. Dharma Drum Mountain was founded in 1989.

9. The bodhisattva path means the way to attain Buddhahood is by emulating the practices of the Bodhisattvas. (Yinshun, 1989). Kornfield (2008: 354) points out that Bodhisattva “is the Sanskrit word for a being who is devoted to awakening and to acting for the benefit of all that lives”.

10. Character education is a Dharma Drum Mountain’s term to promote Sheng Yen’s notion of “uplifting the character of humanity and building a pure land on earth” (Sheng Yen 2009a).
character of humanity”, which urges individuals to engage in Buddhist moral practice for the sake of self-cultivation and social harmony. However, Guo Guang and Chang Shen’s assertions are based on a literature review and not supported by an empirical investigation examining whether Dharma Drum Mountain’s laity actually adhere to Sheng Yen’s moral guidelines in their practice of Buddhism.

**The goal of character education**

The goal of character education is to achieve harmony between the self and others through self-cultivation and the practice of “The Six Ethics of the Mind Campaign”, which is the guideline of Dharma Drum mountain’s Chinese Buddhist moral practice proposed by Sheng Yen in 2007. Firstly, Sheng Yen argues that Chinese Buddhism seeks to achieve harmony between the individual’s inner state and the external environment, or as he puts it, “the world we live in is filled with suffering, and the suffering is derived from conflicts and confrontation between the self and the external world. To get rid of suffering and get well-being, we should learn how to resolve conflicts and achieve harmony with Buddhist practice” (Sheng Yen 2010: 8-17). Sheng Yen argues that the way to achieve harmony between the self and others is to learn how to be a person, which he views as the first step of Chinese Buddhist practice (Sheng Yen 1994, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2005).

Secondly, “The Six Ethics of the Mind Campaign” is the modern Chinese Buddhist moral concept designed to interpret interpersonal relationships from a Chinese Buddhist perspective. Sheng Yen argued that traditional Confucian ethical relationships based on the Confucian Five Ethics - five different kinds of ethical
relationships between sovereign and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger, and between friends - cannot sufficiently interpret the interpersonal relationships of modern society, because the interpersonal relationships of modern society are more complex than those of traditional society. The content of The Confucian Five Ethics no longer satisfactorily accounts for the main interpersonal relationships in people’s daily lives. The Six Ethics of the Mind Campaign is the Buddhist attempt to advocate a new Six Ethics for reforming the traditional Confucian Five Ethics model. The new Six Ethics consists of Family Ethics, Living Ethics, School Ethics, Environmental Ethics, Workplace Ethics, and Ethics between Ethnic Groups. Sheng Yen states that the value of Buddhist ethics lies in serving and giving, which means that when people interact with others, they should practice pursuing their own interests and caring for others’ at the same time if they want their relationships to be harmonious.

From a sociological perspective, the goal of character education is to transform individual characters through “changing individual’s embodied dispositions and inclinations” (Sayer 2011: 151). Sayer also highlights the importance of learning for the cultivation of new ethical dispositions, as he puts it, individuals should “undergo a deeper, emotional and bodily learning through repeated practice” (Sayer 2011: 151). Noddings (2002) argues that the goal of character education is to develop the virtues, such as care and trust. The teaching of traditional values is the core of character education and story-telling is the best way to engage in character education, because through story sharing individuals understand more about how to play their roles as part of a group and make sense of things associated with this role, including obligations, rewards, expectations and responsibilities and norms. Character education should be conducted in a group, and a strong community should view character education as its
central task if it wants to ensure “widespread agreement on basic values” (Noddings 2002: 63). Wuthnow (1995) explores how young people build character in volunteering and points out that volunteering helps make a young person a person of character through “strengthening their conviction of the need to balance their own interests with the needs of others, to scan their environment and adapt, to recognise their ability to make contributions to the good of society, and to feel confident that they could work effectively with others” (Wuthnow 1995: 190).

The content of character education

The self is the focus point of Sheng Yen’s notion of character education. Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation is the core of Sheng Yen’s moral framework and there are four sequential stages of Buddhist self-cultivation: self-knowing, self-affirmation, self-growth and self-dissolution (Sheng Yen 1994, 2005, 2009a, 2009b). Some sociologists have suggested that awareness and attention is the first step of moral practice (Sayer 2011, Turner and Stets 2006), so Sheng Yen (2000, 2006) also suggests that awareness is the first step in character education so that the self is aware of the needs of others and of their own personal strengths and weaknesses that will need attention for self-cultivation. Lin (2010) points out that the content of Sheng Yen’s notion of character education includes focusing on the self, making the Bodhisattva vow and promoting emotional education. Although Lin (2010) notes that Sheng Yen’s moral Buddhist teachings entails three kinds of moral emotions, including

11. The purpose of the Bodhisattva vow is a commitment to work to alleviate the suffering of all sentient beings (Wegela: 2009). This is the content of the Bodhisattva vow: “Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to save them all; The deluding passions are inexhaustible, I vow to extinguish
gratitude, repentance and shame, he does not explore these moral emotions in detail. In addition, Lin’s analysis of Sheng Yen’s emotional education is based upon theoretical description rather than empirical investigation. This means Lin’s view of Sheng Yen’s character education is limited and one of the aims of this thesis is to provide a more comprehensive picture. The research conducted for this thesis suggests that volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain cultivate and practice three aspects of Sheng Yen’s notion of character education in their interactions with others, including care, respect and moral emotions, the last of which can be divided into four kinds: empathy, gratitude, shame and repentance.

**SUMMARY OF THE THESIS**

The core theme of the thesis is exploring how Sheng Yen’s notion of character education is used by Buddhist volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain to cultivate Chinese Buddhist moral habitus and pursue well-being within the constraints of Chinese Buddhist morality in three relational dimensions of their daily lives: volunteering, family and friendship circles. Three main kinds of morality seem to govern their interactions with others i.e. care, respect and moral emotions. The thesis makes use of these three kinds of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus to link each chapter and argue that the goal of Sheng Yen’s character education is to cultivate volunteers’ Chinese Buddhist moral habitus, which refers to the capacity to intersubjectively coordinate with others in negotiation for mutual attunement. Moral dispositions and moral emotions enable volunteers to engage in self-evaluation and decide how to treat them all; the truth is impossible to expound, I vow to expound it; the way of the Buddha is unattainable, I vow to attain it” (Erricker 2010: 82)
others in their relational life.

The thesis is comprised of eight chapters. Chapter 2 introduces Dharma Drum Mountain from different aspects with five sections. The first section introduces the modernisation of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan. The second introduces the history of Dharma Drum Mountain. The third section introduces the organisational structure of Dharma Drum Mountain. The fourth introduces Dharma Drum Mountain’s meditation practice. The fifth section explains three kinds of Chinese Buddhist habitus in Sheng Yen’s notion of character education (care, respect and moral emotions) in more detail and is followed by a section on the four kinds of moral emotions (empathy, gratitude, shame and repentance).

Chapter 3 describes how I collected my research data from interviews and participatory observation. Firstly, I discuss the sampling process and the design of the interview questions. I describe the interview process, which started with a pilot interview and then went on to the formal interviews after several revisions of my interview questions. Thirdly, I explain how I engaged in participatory observation of three volunteer groups separately. I reflect on the tension created by my roles as a researcher and a lay person of Dharma Drum Mountain and the tension between my research objects and myself in terms of my own self-reflexivity. Finally, I review the data analysis process from coding to constructing my arguments in terms of suitable theories.

Chapter 4 examines how volunteers make use of Buddhist moral habitus and meditation practice to serve religious attendants and to volunteer for their clients through interaction rituals. The chapter shows that care and respect are the two moral
dispositions volunteers used to serve their clients. In the following chapters, the thesis will explain how volunteers make use of these two moral dispositions they learned at volunteering in the relational dimensions of their daily life. In addition, mediation practice helps volunteers to be aware of their emotional conditions and evaluate how to treat the clients appropriately to attain mutual attunement. In the first section of the chapter, I describe how I selected these three volunteer groups as the objects of my data collection and introduce the three volunteer groups from several perspectives, including contents of volunteer works, the population of volunteers and history. These three volunteer groups are the End-of-Life Chanting Group, the Visitor Service Centre at the World Centre for Buddhist Education and the Buddhist Youth Society. From the second to the fourth section, I explore these three volunteer groups separately.

Chapter 5 explores how volunteers used different kinds of moral dispositions and moral emotions to interact with their family members. Firstly, I introduce the characteristics of the Chinese family, Dharma Drum Mountain’s Buddhist ideas about family ethics and the family backgrounds of my respondents. Secondly, I focus on intergenerational relationships to explore how Buddhism influences volunteers’ family lives through parents’ transmission of the volunteering ethos to their children and children’s intergenerational assistance of their parents. Finally, I explore how volunteers practice Sheng Yen’s concept of character education in marital relationships to solve marital conflicts and achieve harmony through intersubjective negotiation.

Chapter 6 explores how Buddhist volunteering affects volunteers’ relationships with non-Buddhist friends and leads them to build new friendships with other Buddhist volunteers through volunteer work. The chapter also explores how Chinese Buddhist moral concepts affect volunteers’ friendship building and maintenance. Firstly, I
analyse volunteers’ Buddhist friendships from three angles: by examining Buddhist norms of friendships and the organisational norms of Dharma Drum Mountain; how Buddhist friendships develop through religious congregations and religious volunteering; and how the conditions of volunteering and volunteer motivations affect the development of Buddhist friendships and engender in them increasing complexity. I then consider the transformations that occur in volunteers’ existing friendships as a result of their volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain. Lastly, I look at how religious volunteering affects volunteers’ relationships with their colleagues at work.

Chapter 7 explores how volunteers develop their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus with Sheng Yen’s notion of Chinese Buddhist morality in Dharma Drum Mountain’s congregations and relational dimensions of their daily lives. The first and second section introduces how volunteers learn from Buddhist reading groups and Dharma class and how they apply Buddhist knowledge to their volunteer work and daily life. The third section explores how volunteers develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in their interactions with other volunteers and Buddhist monastics during volunteer work. The fourth section explores how volunteers develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in the relational dimensions of their daily lives, with their families and circles of friends.

Lastly Chapter 8 summarises and draws together the analysis of the preceding chapters and considers the implications of the thesis for the sociology of religion.
INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces several aspects of Dharma Drum Mountain in association with the core theme of the thesis. To understand the increasing importance of Dharma Drum Mountain to the development of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan, it is necessary to place it within the wider religious context of Taiwanese society. According to the statistics compiled by the Government Information Office in Taiwan in 2006, the country’s total religious population is 18,718,600. The percentage of the top ten religions as a part of the total religious population in Taiwan is as follows: (1) Buddhism: 43.2%; (2) Daoism: 40.6%; (3) I-Kuan Tao: 4.3%; (4) Protestantism: 3.2%; (5) Catholicism: 1.6%; (6) The Tienti Teachings: 1.6%; (7) World Maitreya Great Tao: 1.34%; (8) Tiender: 1.1%; (9) Li-ism: 1%; (10) Syuan Yuan Jiao: 0.08%. Buddhism is the largest religion in Taiwan, with 8,086,600 adherents or 43.2 percent of the religious population overall.

Dharma Drum Mountain is one of the largest Buddhist organisations in Taiwan. The leading Chinese Buddhist scholar Jiang (2000) coined the term “The Four Largest Buddhist Organisations in Taiwan” to illustrate how the development of Taiwanese

1. For the complete statistics on religion in Taiwan see the Taiwan Yearbook 2006 at: http://www.gio.gov.tw/taiwan-website/5-gp/yearbook/2006/22Religion.htm
Buddhism has been deeply affected by Dharma Drum Mountain and its counterparts Tzu Chi, Buddha’s Light Mountain (Foguangshan) and Zhongtaishan. There are no precise statistics on its membership but Tzu Chi has grown to more than 10 million members in nearly 50 countries around the world (O’Neill 2010) while Buddha’s Light Mountain’s lay organisation Buddha’s Light International Association (BLIA) claims its membership tops 6 million and includes more than 200 branches spread over 55 countries, (Buddha's Light International Association 2011; Chandler 2006; the Fo Guang Shan Monastery 2008). The membership of Dharma Drum Mountain is over 1 million (Apple Daily 2009) and although there are no public statistics for the membership of Zhongtaishan, Chiang (2000) estimates that its membership is slightly less than Dharma Drum Mountain. Chandler (2006) argues that the statistics provided by the four largest Buddhist organisations should be viewed as representing all of their Taiwanese Buddhists plus overseas Buddhist laity, because these organisations have become international Buddhist communities, with branches all over the world. Each organisation has made a unique contribution to the social engagement of Chinese Buddhism, for example, Tzu Chi emphasises “the modernisation of Buddhist compassion” whereas Buddha’s Light Mountain focuses on promoting “democratic civil religion” and Dharma Drum Mountain urges its laity to practice Buddhism for “transcendent meaning in a broken world” (Madsen 2007: v).

The development of Dharma Drum Mountain has been deeply affected by its founder’s religious concerns as well as the direction of modern Chinese Buddhism and Taiwan’s social and political climate. This chapter introduces these influential factors and Sheng Yen’s notion of Chinese Buddhist morality and meditation over five sections. The first section considers how structural factors affect the development of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan and outlines the key characteristics of Chinese Buddhism. The second
section provides a brief introduction to Dharma Drum Mountain’s history and its founder’s religious concerns. The third section describes the organisational structure of Dharma Drum Mountain and the fourth Dharma Drum Mountain’s notion of meditation practice. The final section introduces the three kinds of morality underpinning Sheng Yen’s notion of character education, including care, respect and moral emotions.

THE MODERNISATION OF CHINESE BUDDHISM

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores Chinese Buddhist modernity from the theoretical perspective of Chinese Buddhism. The notion of Humanistic Buddhism is the mainstream modern Buddhist philosophy practiced by Chinese Buddhist organisations in Taiwan (Chandler 2006; Madsen 2007, 2008; Pittman 2001; Ting 2004, 2006, 2009). The purpose of humanistic Buddhism is to “redirect people’s attention back from other realms and lifetimes to present existence in this world” (Chandler 2006: 186). Such “this-worldly pragmatism” is the focal point of Humanistic Buddhism and seeks to integrate people’s religious practice into all aspects of their daily lives. The most important effect of humanism on religion in Taiwan has been the secularization of Buddhism. This has led to the divisions between “supramundane and mundane and between monastic and lay life” becoming blurred so that “the holy life of monastics is secularized while the secular life of laity is sacralized” (Chandler 2006: 189).

The theoretical framework for Humanistic Buddhism was mainly worked out by the
two great 20th Century Chinese monk philosophers Taixu and Yinshun. Their notions of Humanistic Buddhism have become the mainstream of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan and have been carried out in different practical ways by the many Chinese Buddhist organisations, the largest three of which have become the paradigms of Humanistic Buddhism. In this section, I will consider how social and political factors have affected the development of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan and constrain even the three most influential and largest Chinese Buddhist organisations i.e. Dharma Drum Mountain, Tzu Chi and Buddha’s Light Mountain. These three organisations are recognised as the paradigms of Humanistic Buddhism in Taiwan (Chandler 2006; Madsen 2007, 2008; Pittman 2001; Ting 2004, 2006, 2009). Because the focus of this chapter is introducing Dharma Drum Mountain not the history of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan, I will constrain the time setting of the Taiwanese Buddhist context of the thesis starting from 1949 to now. This is because the majority of the founders of the current leading Chinese Buddhist organisations such as Buddhist Master Yinshun, Hsing Yun at Buddha’s Light Mountain and Sheng Yen at Dharma Drum Mountain moved to Taiwan and developed their doctrines and established their organisations, following the retreat of the Nationalist government (KMT) from mainland China in 1949.

TAIXU AND YINSHUN’S NOTIONS OF HUMANISTIC BUDDHISM

*Debates on Buddhist modernity*

As Chandler (2006) points out, Chinese Buddhists have different perspectives on the modernisation of Chinese Buddhism. He divides adherents into two groups:
traditionists and modernists. Traditionalists declare that “the vast majority of changes in social relations that have occurred as an epiphenomenon of modernity have proved to be unnecessary and detrimental to morality and communal stability” (Chandler 2006: 178). In other words, traditionalists uphold religious traditions and do not feel it is necessary to change when confronted with the challenge of the new. Modernists, on the other hand, take positive action to change or revise tradition and adapt it to the modern world. Analysing the notion of Humanistic Buddhism as the core philosophy of Buddhist modernism, Pittman (2001) distinguishes five features:

1. entails an “inner-worldly asceticism”, which signifies the impulse to remake the world;
2. is marked by rationalism, or the attempt to present Buddhism as reasonable and consistent with the findings of modern sciences;
3. sees itself as part of a restoration, by which he means a denial of innovation on the part of modernizers, preferring instead to consider itself as recovering Buddhism’s original intent and spirit so as to face the future more faithfully;
4. is ecumenical and global in scope, seeking to embrace all of humanity and transcend any provincialism or sectarian, and
5. reveals a dynamic interplay between Buddhism as a religion and Buddhism as a means to an end that, once achieved, obviates the need for Buddhism itself (Pittman 2001: 292-294; quoted in Jones 2003: 127-128)

Leaders of Buddhist modernists: Taixu and Yinshun

The Buddhist masters Ven. Taixu (1890-1947) and Ven. Yinshun (1906-2005) are the two most influential modernists and their ideas underpinned the modernisation of Chinese Buddhism during the 20th Century. Taixu’s initial motivation for reforming Chinese Buddhism stemmed from his dissatisfactions with the Buddhist tradition, which “made much of its livelihood from the performance of funerals, and so invested much of its time and energy in learning and performing ceremonies for the dead and dying, to the detriment of teachings and ministries for the living” (Jones 2003: 129). In order to change the focus of Chinese Buddhism from “death rituals to the needs of the...
living” (ibid: 129), in 1928 Taixu began to popularise the concept of “Buddhism for Human Life” which can be seen as a form of “this-world Buddhism” (Ting, 2004). He argued that modern Chinese Buddhism should proceed with an inner-world shift, in contrast to the other-worldly approach of traditional Chinese Buddhism, and called for a renewed emphasis on the living as opposed to the dead. The core theme of Taixu’s “Buddhism for Human Life” was “modernising and rationalizing Buddhist education, monastic organization, and Buddhist doctrine” (Jones 2003: 129). Chen (2005) argues that Taixu made use of many methods employed by Christian preachers, such as participating in civic engagements, for example. Taixu maintained that Buddhists should involve themselves in politics and that the future focus of Chinese Buddhism should be on three areas: education, culture and charity (Chen and Deng 2000).

Taixu’s thoughts on Buddhist ethics can be seen as the foundations of Sheng Yen’s notion of character education, which is built upon the idea of “humanness perfected in Buddhahood attained” (Guo Guang and Chang Shen 2011). Pittman (2001) calls Taixu as an “ethical pietist” and argues that one of Taixu’s greatest contributions to the modernisation of Chinese Buddhism was to highlight that religious practices could make to personal spiritual growth through practicing Chinese Buddhist moral concepts. Taixu placed ethical norms at the heart of Buddhist practice and according to Pittman (2001: 5-6), his notion of Buddhist ethics included four types of norms: (1) norms for cultic performance: the guideline of liturgical practice; (2) norms for self-cultivation: personal disciplines for spiritual maturation, including dietary, educational, and other transformational practices; (3) norms for the organization of the holy community: structural expectations for appropriate relations with other communities and intracommunal religious sharing; (4) norms for social responsibility: basic moral guidelines that contribute to spiritual progress and the realization of the ideal social
order. Norms for social responsibility is the most important for guiding the practice of Buddhism in everyday life with Buddhist morality. Sheng Yen’s notion of character education can be seen as a practical version of Taixu’s notion of norms for social responsibility, because Sheng Yen provides many concrete Chinese Buddhist moralities in his writings. I will introduce several of Sheng Yen’s Chinese Buddhist moralities, which volunteers often use in their daily lives, in the fourth section.

The Buddhist monk Yinshun (1906-2005) was the most important theoretical successor of Taixu’s “Buddhism for Human Life”. As a disciple of Taixu he expanded Taixu’s original idea into the concept of “Human Realm Buddhism” in 1979, thereby enabling Humanistic Buddhism to become the guiding force behind Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan. Unlike Taixu, who concentrated his efforts on integrating and modernising the various schools of Chinese Buddhism, Yinshun effected a revolutionary change of Chinese Buddhism through retracing its past back to the Buddhist scripture in India. Rather than seeking to preserve traditions, the existing religious establishment or popular religious practices, Yinshun aimed to change Chinese Buddhism in the light of true Mahayana Buddhism. Ting (2006) sees Yinshun’s “Human Realm Buddhism” as “anthropocentric” or “de-mystified” in the sense that it defines the true spirit of Buddhism as human-oriented. That is to say, Human Realm Buddhism is a human-oriented philosophy which refers to “taking human beings as the basis” and “taking human beings as central” (Yang, 2004: 17). As Yinshun put it, “Chinese Buddhism often focuses on gods and ghosts. Master Taixu proposed Buddhism for the Human Life as the thought to deal with. However, the Budhadharma is for people; it should be without divinization or deification. It is not a religion of ghosts or spirits,

2. The Budhadharma refers to “the ethical code and religious system of Gautama Buddha”, at: http://www.wordnik.com/words/buddhadharma
nor is it theistic. Only a ghostless, non-theistic humanistic Buddhism can express the true meaning of the Buddhadharma” (Yinshun, 1989: 50-51). Therefore, the main contribution of Yinshun and Human Realm Buddhism is to reaffirm the importance of following the bodhisattva path - that the main purpose of Chinese Buddhism, and the way to attain Buddhahood, is by emulating the practices of the Bodhisattvas.  

THE TAIWANESE BUDDHIST CONTEXT SINCE 1949

Structural impacts on the development of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan

There are several structural factors affecting the development of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan. The first is the Taiwanese government’s religious policy. In 1949 following the defeat of KMT on the mainland, Chiang Kai-shek, the president of KMT, retreated with his supporters to Taiwan where their KMT party ruled for several decades. Because Chiang Kai-shek himself was Christian, under his dictatorship, Chiang made use of the power of KMT and the state to support Christianity and suppressed other religions in the 1950s and 1960s. The KMT made use of the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (BAROC) to control and supervise Buddhism. As Madsen (2007: 28) puts it, “through the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (BAROC), the KMT kept the sangha under surveillance and kept it from expanding in a way that

3. Christianity in Taiwan peaked in the 1950s and the 1960s under the support of the Taiwanese government. But at most it only accounted for about 7 percent of the Taiwanese population (Madsen 2007). Since 1965, Christianity has declined in membership and influence and now only accounts for 3.23 percent of the total religious population in Taiwan. Huang (2006) points out that the main reason for its decline is that Christianity refuses to accept Chinese culture, particularly Confucian moral discourses.
would enable the systematic cultivation and organisation of large numbers of lay followers”. However, the BAROC failed to become a unifying force for Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan and many influential Buddhist leaders like Hsing Yun refused to take part in it and Sheng Yen kept a distance from it (Jones 1999; Madsen 2007). The KMT’s attitude towards Chinese Buddhism was forced to change and it started to support the development of Chinese Buddhism after Hsing Yun at Buddha’s Light Mountain and Cheng Yen at Tzu Chi established their organisations and built their reputation in Taiwanese society in the 1960s. The state started to help emerging Chinese Buddhist organisations, including Tzu Chi, Buddha’s Light Mountain and Dharma Drum Mountain, to play important social roles in the late 1970s and early 1980s. For instance, the Taiwanese government has cooperated with Tzu Chi to deliver social welfare services since the late 1970s. Buddha’s Light Mountain and Tzu Chi obtained the government’s support to obtain land for its temples and hospitals (Madsen 2007). Dharma Drum Mountain cooperated with the Taipei city government to reform traditional funeral practices by holding a Buddhist-style joint funeral and memorial service in 1990s and build up its reputation as a provider of Buddhist funeral services (Hu 2005).

Educational levels are the second structural factor contributing to the prosperity of Taiwanese Buddhism (Chen and Deng 2000; Deng 2004b; Ting 2004; Chiu 2006). The Taiwanese government’s emphasis upon a nine-year compulsory education has not only dramatically improved the standard of education but also contributes “to the development of societal rationality” (Papastephanou 2001). The importance of formal education means that rationality has become a secular value in Taiwanese society and people are more willing to identify with religious groups which rationalise their routine operations. Ting (2004) argues that because modern society operates along the lines of
instrumental rationality, in order to survive and compete with other secular groups, many Chinese Buddhist organisations take several measures to meet the requirements of instrumental rationality, including efficient management and labour division, systematizing their doctrines and practising effective Buddhist preaching. For instance, Tzu Chi is well-known for its highly organised and efficient operation and management of international disaster relief. In particular Tzu Chi is able to successfully collect a large number of foodstuffs and mobilise a lot of volunteers in a very short time and then effectively move them to places in need.

From the humanistic Buddhist perspective, education is one of its leaders’ motivations to modernise Chinese Buddhism, as Taixu argued the lack of education on Chinese Buddhist monastics led to the decline of Chinese Buddhism and one of his core initiatives was to modernise and rationalise Buddhist education and monastic organization (Jones 2003). Chinese Buddhist organisations in Taiwan which follow the concepts of humanistic Buddhism all view education as a core value, for instance, education is one of Tzu Chi’s four missions and education is one of Dharma Drum Mountain’s two methods for promoting Chinese Buddhism. In addition, Tzu Chi and Buddha’s Light Mountain both established schools to promote their Buddhist concepts in the secular educational system from the primary school to the university. Because humanistic Buddhism’s approach to modern rational Buddhist education matches up with the Taiwanese society’s secular attitudes towards education, humanist Buddhism has been gradually accepted in Taiwan.

---

4. Sayer (2011: 61) argues that instrumental rationality refers to “given a particular end or goal, we reason how to achieve it in the most effective and efficient way”. In other words, instrumental rationality attempts to generalise or universalize objects, which implies that these objects appear in essentially the same form in different contexts or when abstracted from their original contexts or situations.
The third structural factor is the emergence of a Taiwanese middle class. This middle class has arisen from a number of different sources, including the government and public services employment (Hsu 1989), land reform (Huang 2006), the rise in education levels (Wang et al. 1986), industrialisation (Huang 2006) and so forth. The Taiwanese middle class mainly affects the development of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan in two respects. On the one hand, it contributes to the prosperity of lay Buddhism in Taiwan by providing different kinds of support to the routine operations of religious groups, including material, physical and psychological. In terms of the material aspect of support, donations from the Taiwanese middle classes to Buddhist organisations have become an important part of the economies of Chinese Buddhist organisations and increased laypeople’s power and organisational status in Chinese Buddhist organisations (Ting 2004). Regarding the physical aspect of support, many volunteers as the middle classes dedicate their time and energy to support the routine operations of Buddhist organisations. As for the psychological aspect of support, volunteers as members of the middle classes often encourage Buddhist monastics’ involvement in their promotion of Buddhism through letters or words.

On the other hand, the Taiwanese middle class’ cultural tastes affect the development of Chinese Buddhist organisations, for instance, Buddhist meditation has become one of the main leisure activities of the Taiwanese middle class (Li 2006). Religious practice through meditation has become part of the common taste and religious habitus of the middle class, and people with higher educational levels are more likely to be involved in religious meditation. Li maintains that one reason for this is that the modernisation of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan has enabled the majority of Buddhist organisations to operate in terms of the logics of instrumental rationality, which makes them more appealing to the middle class. Another reason for their increased
participation is that they are seeking a calm space to engage in self-reflexivity away from their busy working lives. This self-reflexivity provides the middle class with an opportunity to achieve some sort of balance between their work and the rest of their life. Many Chinese Buddhist organisations in Taiwan provide spaces and hold activities targeted at a middle class looking for way to release the stress of work and home life.

*The Characteristics of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan*

The characteristics of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan are discussed here within the constraints of the thesis and in relation to the three largest Chinese Buddhist organisations (Buddha’s Light Mountain, Tzu Chi and Dharma Drum Mountain), which promote the notion of Humanistic Buddhism with different approaches. Because these three organisations are the most influential and largest Buddhist organisations in Taiwan, they are sufficiently representative of the contemporary development of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan (Chandler 2006; Madsen 2007, 2008; Pittman 2001; Ting 2004, 2006, 2009). In terms of modernisation, the focus of all three is on: (1) the enthusiastic appropriation of new technology; (2) the appropriation of modern organizational patterns to Buddhist practice; and (3) the secularization of practice to give it a more humanist tone (Chandler 2006: 183-192).

Each of the leading Chinese Buddhist organisations in Taiwan has been extremely successful at spreading the Dharma with different kinds of media. This includes establishing TV corporations (Buddha’s Light Mountain, Tzu Chi), online radio stations (Buddha’s Light Mountain, Tzu Chi), transmitting live Internet shows of
Dharma assemblies (Dharma Drum Mountain), compiling Buddhist Digital Reference Databases (Dharma Drum Mountain, Buddha’s Light Mountain), establishing a Buddhist e-learning database (Dharma Drum Mountain) and publishing Buddhist literature (Dharma Drum Mountain, Buddha’s Light Mountain and Tzu Chi). The leading Chinese Buddhist organisations also use technological advances to improve people lives, for example, Tzu Chi uses the most advanced medical equipment in its hospital. The use of mass media means people all over the world can access Buddhist material resources at any time and in any place.

Secondly, Chinese Buddhist organisations in Taiwan make full use of rationalisation and institutionalisation to establish different kinds of modern Buddhist-oriented organisations such as charitable foundations, lay associations, medical centres, and Buddhist academics. For instance, Tzu Chi is well-known for its institutionalised management of hospital and relief supplies. Buddhist organisations also engage in administrative innovations to institutionalise organisational hierarchies with codified guidelines for promotion, transfer, taking leaves of absence, and so on. Buddha’s Light Mountain is renowned for its institutionalisation and democratisation of the decision-making process through the election of temple leadership, such as the abbot of its headquarters (Chandler 2006: 184-185). The major Chinese Buddhist organisations have even established institutionalised academies to train Buddhist monastics and laypeople, for instance, Dharma Drum Mountain founded Dharma Drum Sangha University to train Buddhist monastics and Dharma Drum Buddhist College to train laypeople. Buddha’s Light Mountain runs the Buddha’s Light Buddhist Academy to train Buddhist sangha.

The Chinese Buddhist organisations in Taiwan have adopted a humanistic approach to
“redirect people’s attention back from other realms and lifetimes to present existence in this world” (Chandler 2006: 186). The goal of the humanistic approach to Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation is to “learn how to be fully human”, or as Taixu puts it, “relying upon the Buddha, perfection lies in human character; humanness perfected is Buddhahood attained; this is called true reality” (Hsing Yun 1994: 6; quoted in Chandler 2006: 187). This concept of “humanness perfected is Buddhahood attained” encapsulates Taixu’s Buddhist ethical teachings and underpins all three of the leading organisations’ attempts to promote Chinese Buddhist morality. Chinese Buddhist morality is instructed not only to Buddhist monastics but also to the organisations’ laity, and the contents of Chinese Buddhist morality include the four all-embracing virtues, five precepts, and six paramitas (Chandler 2006). For instance, Tzu Chi is well-known for its reproduction of traditional Confucian filial piety through its organisational culture, as well as its promotion of the idea of family in religion and religion in the family (Lu 1997, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2002; Ting 2007). The practice of Chinese Buddhist morality enables Tzu Chi’s members to develop emotional commitments to religious communities and maintain traditional social values in their daily lives (Lu 1999a, 2002; Ting 1999, Huang 2009).

Madsen (2007, 2008) takes another approach to Chinese Buddhist moral practices in the three leading Chinese Buddhist organisations, exploring whether these organisations intertwined with Confucian moral discourses actually contribute to the democratization of Taiwanese society. Madsen points out that many experts like Lee Kuan Yew, the former prime minister of Singapore, consider the Confucian cultural tradition incompatible with democratic governance. They argue that if Asian societies “want to achieve democratic modernization, they will have to abandon their Confucian traditions in favour of Western moral values” (Madsen 2007: 47). However, Madsen’s
research suggests that the largest Chinese Buddhist organisations creatively adapt Confucian moral discourses into their Buddhist notions and contribute to the cultivation of Taiwanese democratic civic culture in three respects, encouraging social solidarity, equality and tolerance.

Madsen makes use of Weber’s (1964) concept of “rational-ethical religion”, arguing that the three largest Chinese Buddhist organisations in Taiwan are rational-ethical religions because they “downplay mysterious doctrines and elaborate rituals so as to focus the believer on responsibilities within this world, and it tends to reduce religion to ethics” (Madsen 2008: 297). Madsen points out that all three organisations view family as the core of Chinese Buddhist moral practices and encourage their members to “see public life not as different from family life, but as an expanded version of family life” (Madsen 2007: 47). According to Madsen’s studies, the laity of these organisations blurs the boundaries between private and public, expressing civic virtue through caring for people outside of their families and showing respect to people with whom they might disagree with or disapprove of. The organisations help their laity to find the balance between individual autonomy and collective responsibility with Chinese Buddhist moral practices such as care and respect, and support civic harmony by emphasizing tolerance. Madsen points out that through the promotion of the Buddhist-Confucian vision of civic harmony, these Chinese Buddhist organisations help to smooth the rough edges in Taiwanese civic life.

THE HISTORY OF DHARMA DRUM MOUNTAIN

Dharma Drum Mountain was established by the Buddhist monk Sheng Yen
(1930-2009) in 1989, which means it only has a 21-year history. But as a part of the Buddhist tradition it can be directly traced back to the Chinese Buddhist monk Taixu (1889-1947) who was the teacher of Sheng Yen’s teacher Dongchu (1908-1977). Dongchu arrived in Taiwan from China in 1949 and started to promote Taixu’s concept of Buddhism for the Human Life in the cultural and religious fields of Taiwanese society. Sheng Yen became a disciple of Dongchu in 1960 and took over all Dongchu’s Buddhist projects after Dongchu passed away in 1977. The development of Dharma Drum Mountain thus emerged out of Dongchu’s Buddhist projects but enlarged the size and scale of the religious engagements. Several of Dongchu’s creations are still important to Dharma Drum Mountain, such as the magazine *Humanity*, which was first published in 1949, the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Culture established in 1955 and the Nung Chan Monastery in 1971. *Humanity* is one of the oldest modern Buddhist magazines in Taiwan and is currently also one of the most widely read. The purpose of the magazine is to explain how to integrate Buddhist concepts into every aspect of daily life. Nung Chan Monastery was for a long time the most important temple of Dharma Drum Mountain and the organisation’s headquarters until it moved to Jinshan Township in 2005.

Along with Dongchu, Sheng Yen is the central figure in Dharma Drum Mountain’s history and his personal life experiences have deeply affected the development of the organisation. He was born in 1930 and became a Buddhist monk in 1943. In the middle of Twentieth Century, the Buddhist temple mainly supported itself by performing funeral rites for the dead (Guo Pu 2004; Sheng Yen 2008c). Because holding funeral services was the main source of the temple’s income, the temple authorities would make the monks perform as many ceremonies as possible. This led to a situation where the monks were spending all their time conducting ceremonies rather than studying the
sutras or practicing Buddhist methods. Competition over funeral rites between rival monasteries also brought about a collapse of monastic discipline, with meat and alcohol allowed in the temple, for example. Many Buddhist monks were able to ‘reap the benefits of the lucrative trade in death rituals’ and intravenous drug use became increasingly common amongst Buddhist monks at that time (Sheng Yen 2008c:36-55).

As a junior monk, Sheng Yen had to perform ceremonies all day as well, but he reflected that ‘there was nothing in my approach to Buddhism or being a monk that had to do with making a living … Deep inside me I knew that I wanted a different life, one that was about learning and study and the transmission of the Dharma’ (Sheng Yen 2008c: 50-54). Sheng Yen’s core idea of reforming Chinese Buddhism by improving Buddhist education arose out of his dissatisfaction with the monk’s life and personal experiences of performing funeral rites (Guo Pu 2004; Sheng Yen 2008c).

Sheng Yen’s self-reflection about the daily routine of the temple led him to leave the temple and attend a Buddhist seminary in Shanghai founded by Taixu in 1947. Although Sheng Yen moved to Taiwan in 1949 when the Kuomintang government was defeated, he remained inspired by Taixu’s ideas about how to modernise Chinese Buddhism and also became interested in Yinshun’s ‘Human Realm Buddhism’, which advocated the practice of Buddhism through the everyday lives of ordinary people. Sheng Yen integrated the ideas of Taixu and Yinshun together and in 1989 proposed his own concept of ‘Protecting the Spiritual Environment’ which combined the idea of modernisation with that of practicing Buddhism in everyday life (Chen 2004; Guo Pu 2004; Sheng Yen 1993b, 2008c). In the same year, he established Dharma Drum Mountain to realise his philosophy. Dharma Drum Mountain is an organisation distinguished by its commitment to Buddhist scholarship through our university and our graduate institute. We are also committed to spreading the method and concepts of
THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF Dharma Drum Mountain

Dharma Drum Mountain’s organisational structure is designed to reflect Sheng Yen’s ideas about Buddhist education. Education is the core method used to promote his ideals in Taiwan and he maintains that it is the only way to change and improve the position of Buddhism in Taiwanese society. Areas within Dharma Drum Mountain are established in terms of different educational goals for different people and the main purposes of all its activities are to cultivate people’s Chinese Buddhist moral habitus and people’s capacity to meditate in daily lives.

Sheng Yen classifies the organisations of Dharma Drum Mountain into three types according to their educational functions: (1) education through academics. This type of organisation is based on Master Sheng Yen’s idea that Chinese Buddhism should modernise by cultivating new Buddhist talents through the higher education of Buddhist priests and lay people. It includes the Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies (CHIBS) which was established in 1985, the Buddhist Seminary of Dharma Drum Sangha University established in 2001 and the Dharma Drum Buddhist College established in 2007 as well as the Dharma Drum University, which will open in 2012. Education through academics is a characteristic of Dharma Drum Mountain. (2) Education through public outreach. The purpose of establishing this type of organisation is to expand opportunities for Chan practice and popularise Buddhist learning. To achieve this goal, Dharma Drum Mountain has established several
organisations in the cultural and educational fields using a variety of methods such as the branches of Dharma Drum Mountain, publishing companies, Buddhist journals and meditation centres. (3) Education through caring services. The purpose of education through caring services is to provide assistance for all people who need it. In a general sense, education through caring services covers all three types of education and ‘care for all stages of human life, from pregnancy, infancy, childhood, teenage, youth, adulthood, to old age, end of life and eventual death, as well as the many aspects of each of the stages’ (http://www.dharmadrum.org/content/about/about2.aspx?sn=52). To achieve this goal, Dharma Drum Mountain has established many foundations and related volunteer organisations, such as the Dharma Drum Social Welfare and Charity Foundation and the End-of-life Chanting Group.

DhArMa DRuM mOUNTAIN’S mEDITATION PRACTICE

Dharma Drum Mountain is well-known for its teaching of meditation practice, which has become a key feature of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan (Guo Guang and Guo Shen 2011; Guo Huei and Chen 2010; Guo Huei 2011, Ku 2002; Lin 2009; Madsen 2007). Dharma Drum Mountain’s meditation practice is based upon Sheng Yen’s notion of meditation: 5

---

“protecting the spiritual environment”, which conceives of meditation as “the root of life” and all activities in everyday life as opportunities for meditation practice (Sheng Yen 2006), as Sheng Yen puts it, “people generally think of sitting meditation as the only way of meditation practice. At Dharma Drum Mountain, there are many types of meditation practices. In addition to sitting meditation, we suggest that meditation practice can apply into every activity in daily routines, such as interacting with others and doing homework” (Pan 2009: 121).

Dharma Drum Mountain makes arrangements for its laity to learn Sheng Yen’s notion of meditation practice in Chan meditation retreat but also encourages attendants to practice meditation in their everyday life. The key feature of Chan meditation retreat is that practitioners do all the main activities together in the same room, to cultivate mindfulness with different kinds of Buddhist rituals such as attending sitting meditation and moving together in bowing meditation. As Maezumi and Glassman (2002: 47) put it, rituals are “an external expression of our inner state, and we strengthen and reinforce our inner state by these external actions … as we practice together sincerely, we become aware that such notions as internal and external cannot be separated. This awareness is actually the growing realization of the real harmony that underlies everything”. By collectively and ritually practicing meditation, practitioners can concentrate more on their sitting meditation and can understand more how to practice meditation in their everyday lives. Scholars point out that Sheng Yen’s contribution to the modernisation of Chinese Chan Buddhism in Chan meditation retreat was to establish a four-stage meditation procedure for training the mind, transforming the scattered mind into a concentrated then unified mind, ultimately achieving the state of ‘no mind’ (Guo Guang and Guo Shen 2011; Guo Huei 2011).
Dharma Drum Mountain encourages its laity to practice meditation in their routine activities and interpersonal relationships in everyday life. Scholars have distinguished three main methods in Sheng Yen’s notion of meditation practice, including awareness (Guo Guang and Chang Shen 2011), concentration (Lin 2009) and relaxation (Ku 2002). Guo Guang and Chang Shen (2011) note that Sheng Yen’s approach to meditation practice is based upon his notion of “protecting the spiritual environment” and there are three levels of Sheng Yen’s meditation practice in everyday life: (1) cultivating the capacity for self-awareness to detect reactive patterns of thought, feeling and action; (2) expanding the self-concept from the small self (xiao wo) to the large self (da wo) through Sheng Yen’s four stages of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation from self-knowing, self-affirmation, self-growth and self-dissolution; (3) uplifting the character of humanity through awareness and be aware of the needs of others to help them release from suffering with compassionate actions. Guo Guang and Chang Shen (2011) also point out that one characteristic of Sheng Yen’s teaching of meditation is that it integrates Confucian moral thoughts into its teachings in Chan meditation retreat and encourages attendants to engage in Chinese Buddhist moral practices to improve interpersonal relationships in their daily life. For instance, Sheng Yen encourages attendants to learn to be a fully-fledged person in their daily lives and cultivate harmonious relationships with others. In other words, Sheng Yen suggests that if we want to practice meditation in everyday life, we should practice Buddhist morality and meditation together in interpersonal relationships.

THE THREE KINDS OF MORALITY IN SHENG YEN’S NOTION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION
INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the three kinds of morality in Sheng Yen’s notion of character education i.e. care, respect and moral emotions. The thesis adopts these Chinese Buddhist moralities as the core theme to examine how volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain make use of Chinese Buddhist morality to cultivate their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in three relational dimensions of their daily lives: volunteering, family and friendship circles. I will first introduce the four kinds of moral emotions identified by Sheng Yen - gratitude, shame, repentance and empathy - then the two core moral dispositions at Dharma Drum Mountain - respect and care.

SHENG YEN’S NOTION OF MORAL EMOTIONS: MORAL EMOTIONS AS MEANS OF EMOTION MANAGEMENT

Sheng Yen (2009a) views moral emotions as a means for accomplishing emotion management. He suggests that individuals can manage their emotions by cultivating four kinds of moral emotions: gratitude, shame, repentance and empathy. According to Sheng Yen, all four of these emotions originate from our interactions with others and can be used productively by individuals to cultivate moral habitus to improve their characters and foster social relationships. Sheng Yen’s notion of moral emotions is characterized by its integration of the Confucian ethic of responsibility and role-taking, and treats moral emotions as a mechanism through which we can learn to coordinate ourselves with others and thus improve mutual understanding and well-being. Moral emotions can be seen as the core of Sheng Yen’s notion of character education, because he integrates moral emotions into every stage of his recipe for Chinese
Buddhist self-cultivation (Sheng Yen 1999b, 1999c, 1999d, 1999e, 1999f, 2005, 2009a). In other words, he views moral emotions as the starting point and the final goal of Chinese Buddhist moral practice. For instance, Sheng Yen (1999f: 126) argues that shame is important to self-knowing, the first stage of his notion of Chinese Buddhist cultivation, because when we feel shame it motivates us to reflect upon our attitudes and behaviours and to assess our strengths and weaknesses. In addition, he sees self-dissolution as the final stage of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation. This takes place when individuals feel ashamed in their interactions with others and seek reconciliation via an apology in order to create harmonious relationships. This shows that Sheng Yen views moral emotions as motivations, which generate moral habitus like expressing apology and help to improve individual character as well as reinforce the self-society relationship.

To some degree Sheng Yen’s conception of the significance of moral emotions is confirmed by recent sociological work that argues that moral emotions are “aroused in reference to cultural codes that contain evaluative content” (Turner and Stets 2006: 556). Moral emotions can be divided into primary emotions and secondary emotions (Turner 2000, 2007; Turner and Stets 2006; Stets et al. 2008). Primary emotions include happiness, fear, anger and sadness. They are presented as “an immediate response to a stimulus” (Becker and Wachsmuth, 2006) and they are “the foundation of all other emotions” (Stets et al. 2008: 231). Secondary emotions include gratitude, empathy, respect, humility, compassion, shame, repentance, guilt and so forth. They emerge from combinations of primary emotions by the neurology of the human brain (Stets et al. 2008; Turner 2007; Turner and Stets 2006). Secondary emotions “appear to be contingently emergent phenomena, dependent on mutually constitutive processes of cognitive development and socialization” (Sayer 2011: 147). Different kinds of moral
emotions are aroused as a result of how individuals evaluate themselves and their situations in reference to moral codes (Turner and Stets 2006). As Sayer (2011) puts it, moral emotions can be seen as “a sensitive indicator of someone’s social position” to understand their situations (Sayer 2011: 147). Moral emotions can be seen as the work of attention allowing individuals to monitor the different kinds of moral choices they have (Sayer 2011). In addition to this, moral emotions play an important role “as motivations that either support or subvert our choice to act according to principle” (Nussbaum 2001: 1). Moreover, moral emotions have the capacity to “maintain the social order” (Stets et al. 2008: 234).

Scheff (2006) emphasises that awareness and attunement are two important factors revealing how moral emotions affect human interactions. In order to explore shame, Scheff (2006) integrates Cooley’s (1922) concept of the looking-glass self, Goffman’s (1959, 1969, 1974, 1983) notion of mutual awareness and Mead’s (1934) idea of taking the role of the other into his dynamic model of the emotional/relational world. He points out that moral emotions can be seen as a method of emotion management, because moral emotions like shame and pride are aroused as we become aware of the difference between how others sees us and how we see ourselves. This is because, in real life, “the extent to which they actually see us the way we imagine makes a great deal of difference” (Scheff 2006: 45). In order to be “both accurately aware of the other’s viewpoint and one’s own” (Scheff 2006: 115) it is necessary to develop self-awareness to evaluate what the difference between the two is, then coordinate one’s actions with the attitudes and behaviours of others to achieve interpersonal attunement. Attunement is the crucial if we are to “balance the other’s viewpoint and one’s own, being both accurately aware of the other’s viewpoint and one’s own, and identifying with both viewpoints equally” (Scheff 2006: 115). Moral emotions serve as
an important mechanism for improving intersubjective understanding and show the different results of social bonds, such as solidarity or alienation (Scheff 2006). This thesis therefore explores how volunteers make use of moral emotions in their interactions with others in a manner that is both sociologically informed and in conformity with the insights of this particular tradition of Buddhism.

Gratitude

Gratitude is the most important moral emotion in Sheng Yen’s notion of character education (Sheng Yen 1999b, 1999d, 1999e, 2000, 2005, 2006a, 2009a). For Buddhism, gratitude is an important moral emotion (Berkwitz 2003; Carman and Streng 1989; Fitzgerald 1998). Nagatomi (1989) points out that in the Indian Buddhist tradition, the concept of gratitude are anumodana and krtaveda, the former one refers to “a thankful joy experienced in receiving benefits from others” (Emmons 2008: 102), and the later one refers to “the sentiment of being aware of what has been done” (Nagatomi 1989: 78), and “in a sense of a deep feeling of gratefulness and gratitude”. 6 Scholars maintain that Chinese Buddhism integrates Confucian family ethics into its notion of gratitude and reintegrates gratitude as the concept of “repaying” or pao-en (報恩) (Emmons 2008; Nagatomi 1989). 7 The Chinese term pao means “to return”, “to repay”, “to retaliate”, “to respond”, etc (Nagatomi 1989: 79). The Chinese term en


7. Nagatomi (1989) points out that from a Sanskrit perspective, pratikara is a Sanskrit term which refers to the action of “repaying”, and the notion of reciprocity is at the core of pratikara. However, Nagatomi (1989: 79) also maintains that the idea of pratikara “in conjunction with the notion of gratitude in the Indian Buddhist tradition had little significance”.

68
refers to blessing, caring, kindness, and benevolence (Unno 1989). *Pao-en* therefore refers to someone who is “obligated to repay”, which puts emphasis upon the actions constituting social relationships on the basis of reciprocity. Unno (1989: 83) argues that the notion of gratitude in Chinese Buddhism is revealed in the formulation of the Four Gratings in the *Mahayana Sutra on Meditation of the Mind of Original Birth*, the recipients of which include (1) father and mother, (2) sentient beings, (3) king, and (4) Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

Sheng Yen’s notion of gratitude is composed of interdependence and indebtedness, the former being derived from the Buddhist notion of dependent origination and the latter from the Confucian family ethics. Sheng Yen (1999b, 1999e) argues that gratitude stems from feelings of indebtedness, as he puts it, “we feel grateful because we give too little but we receive too much from our social relationships. When we have a feeling of gratitude, we should try to repay our indebtedness. Therefore, we have to express our gratitude to repay the debts we owe to our parents, the state, the Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and all sentient beings” (Sheng Yen 1999b:51; 1999e: 473). Sheng Yen (2004) later promoted a new Buddhist notion of gratitude in his Fivefold Spiritual Renaissance Campaign, arguing that there are four aspects of the notion of gratitude, including feeling grateful, feeling thankful, reforming your self and moving others through virtue. Lin (2010) argues that Sheng Yen integrates the notion of gratitude into his conception of Buddhist care; Sheng Yen argues that caring for and getting along with others is an expression of gratitude and an important Chinese Buddhist practice. Sheng Yen views gratitude as a kind of ritual and designed different kinds of Buddhist gratitude ceremonies for Dharma Drum Mountain’s religious congregations, such as the lamp lighting and Mother’s Day ceremonies. Through gratitude ceremonies, his followers are encouraged to cultivate a
grateful disposition and to express gratitude in the relational dimensions of their lives.

**Shame**

According to Sheng Yen (2009a), shame is feeling sorry for ourselves and others. One feels shame because “one has not done well enough and hopes to work harder and do better” (Sheng Yen 2004: 47). From the Buddhist perspective, having a sense of shame is a positive virtue and Sheng Yen sees shame not as the result of low self-esteem but a positive response to our faults, because when we feel shame, we will take action to reform ourselves and do better. Contrition is the disposition Sheng Yen recommends for dealing with shame in our interactions with others. Here he again uses a form of emotion management to motivate individuals to take responsibility for rectifying their weaknesses to attain self-dissolution and flourish in the relational dimensions of our life. Self-dissolution is the goal of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation.

**Repentance**

Repentance is one of the most important Chinese Buddhist methods of self-transformation and self-cultivation. Sheng Yen (2006c) argues that repentance is the recognition of our shortcomings and arousal of a sense of remorse, “the contrition and humility that come with regretting things you have done or neglected to do” (Sheng Yen 2006c: 174). We must take responsibility for our shortcomings, amend ourselves according and never make the same mistakes again under any circumstances (Sheng Yen 1999b). Repentance is a very important part of character-building, because
it motivates individuals to address their shortcomings through self-awareness, which is the first step in Chinese Buddhist moral practice (Sheng Yen 1997a, 2006c). Sheng Yen also argues that repentance means “facing yourself, past and present” (Sheng Yen 2006c: 178). By facing ourselves and reflecting on our personal strengths and weaknesses, we start to practice self-knowing, which is the first stage of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation. Sheng Yen argues that repentance is one of two methods of self-dissolution, which is to take positive actions to foster social relationships. He suggests that there are several ways to practice repentance, including prostration, commitments and shame. Prostration is the most popular Buddhist ritual of repentance. Commitments are individual vows to cultivate new habits for dealing with wrongfulness. Finally, when a person feels shame, Sheng Yen suggests that repentance is the moral disposition required to coordinate the individual’s actions with others in order to attain mutual attunement.

**Empathy: an important moral emotion for building relationships**

Empathy is an important moral emotion, which the volunteers studied in this research used to interact with others in their relational contexts. Many volunteers indicated that they learned how to use empathy in their volunteer works. The term empathy began to appear more frequently in Sheng Yen’s later writings, which define empathy as a core of compassion (Sheng Yen 2006c). Sheng Yen argues that empathy is the observation of another’s mind through self-reflection. He emphasises that perspective taking is an important part of empathy and learning to feel what others feel. He did not fully develop his theory of empathy but only mentioned it in some books. However, Dharma Drum Mountain has extended Sheng Yen’s notion of empathy and incorporated it into
its volunteer work. Dharma Drum Mountain treats empathy as an important moral emotion and part of volunteer work. For instance, one manager nun at the Visitor Centre at Dharma Drum Mountain defines empathy as putting ourselves into the shoes of another person, and the purpose of volunteer training at the Visitor Centre is to let volunteers find their own shoes and understand how to put themselves into the shoes of others. Because different visitor groups come from different backgrounds and have different motivations for visiting, volunteers have to cultivate the capacity to evaluate how to introduce Dharma Drum Mountain in terms of the different needs of different visitor groups. The manager nun argues that it is wrong to use one standard to service all clients from different backgrounds. Volunteers use empathy to show how they feel standing in their clients’ shoes and attune themselves to the perspectives of the clients in a way that the clients can accept, as they introduce Dharma Drum Mountain to the clients. The manager nun saw this as an effective way of using empathy in volunteer work.

**RESPECT AND CARE AS TWO CORE MORAL DISPOSITIONS OF DHARMA DRUM MOUNTAIN**

Many volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain mentioned respect and care as two of the key moral dispositions they used to practice Buddhism in the relational dimensions of their lives. Sheng Yen’s concepts of respect and care are based on empathic concerns. He emphasises that successful Buddhist carers require the capacity to express empathy for others when caring for them (Sheng Yen 2006). He also stresses that “we should respect others by putting ourselves into other’s shoes” (Sheng Yen 1999b: 48). Daisaku Ikeda (2011) the founder of Soka Gakkai International, also points out that respect and
care are the core of Buddhist humanism and the basis of empathy, as he puts it, “by putting ourselves in the other’s place, we treat the other with caring and respect” (Tu and Ikeda 2011: 57). In this section, I will first introduce Sheng Yen’s notion of respect and then his notion of care.

**Respect**

Sheng Yen (1994, 1999e, 2009b, 2010) adopts the role-taking approach to discuss how individuals give respect to others in different social situations and relational contexts, including family, friendship and the workplace. Sheng Yen argues that the Buddhist perspective on social relationships highlights that if we want others to treat us well, we should treat others well first. He extends this Buddhist idea to respect and argues that we should give respect to others first, thus making others more inclined to respect us. Sheng Yen’s idea integrates the Confucian notion of propriety into his Buddhist interpretation of respect by arguing that Buddhists should treat others with courtesy and respect (Sheng Yen 1999e). He discusses the relationship between respect and our personal manner, arguing that showing respect to others is the key to developing good personal manners, which Sheng Yen views as the core of character education and essential if we are to flourish and attain harmonious relationships with others.

Li and Fisher (2006) distinguish several characteristics of respect in Chinese culture by comparing the difference between Western and Chinese interpretations of the concept. They argue that respect is a positive self-conscious emotion in both cultures and classify respect into two kinds: ought-respect and affect-respect. Ought-respect refers to respect based on universal moral principles applicable to everyone. It is not
generated in a specific social context or relationship but is a reason-based social, moral and attitudinal construct. It is not expressed as emotion. Affect-respect, on the other hand, refers to an emotion that is generated in a specific social context or relationship. This kind of respect arises from awareness of the gap between the self and others in terms of merit, achievement, status, position, role and power. Individuals show respect to others as a way of recognizing and admiring the qualities of the other, because they value these qualities they have yet to achieve.

In the West, ought-respect is associated with autonomy, justice, equality, authority and reciprocity. People in the West mainly show affect-respect to those who they find respect-worthy. Li and Fisher argue that there are two kinds of respect in Chinese culture. The first is called *zunzhong* (尊重) which can be classified as ought-respect and has several meanings: “(1) the recognition, agreement with, and obeying of law, regulations and social order; (2) people’s basic rights; (3) valuing different cultures, traditions, customs, and social conventions; and (4) accepting or considering the other’s opinion, viewpoints, choices, and preferences within daily social interactions” (Li and Fisher 2006: 234). Like out-respect in the West, Li and Fisher argue that *zunzhong* are basic moral principles that guide people’s social interactions. The second one is called *zunjing* (尊敬) which can be classified as affect-respect. Li and Fisher argue that *Zunjing* as affect-respect in Chinese cultures is less constrained by the notion of respectworthiness and is extended to five categories of people: (1) noble people with high moral character; (2) people who have intellectual excellence and personal charisma; (3) kinship group like parents and elders; (4) people in high political and social positions such as the president of the country and (5) teachers, mentors and admired scholars.
Sheng Yen (1998, 2006b) argues that Buddhist care is an extension of giving (generosity), which is one of the six paramitas. He suggests that the practice of Buddhist care is based upon three kinds of giving: (1) the giving of wealth: providing material supports and social relief to improve the lives of people in need; (2) the giving of fearlessness: encouraging people to “directly experience fear and not lose our mindfulness and loving-kindness” (Trungpa 2007: 47; quoted in Wegela 2009: 113). People who own the feeling of fearlessness can take responsibility for pursuing moral goods for themselves and for others; (3) the giving of Dharma: sharing Buddhist concepts with people to ameliorate their psychological suffering.

Care is the most important Buddhist moral practice at Dharma Drum Mountain. Sheng Yen (2001b) argues that education and care are the two core methods used at Dharma Drum Mountain to promote Chinese Buddhism, as Sheng Yen puts it, “the method of Dharma Drum Mountain is to promote comprehensive education and expand care to all” (Sheng Yen 2001b: 118). In Sheng Yen’s statement, the phrase “care to all” refers to care for all people we encounter and all people in our relational context. Sheng Yen connects the practice of Buddhist care to Buddhist self-cultivation and argues that the more we cultivate the ability of self-evaluation and self-awareness, the more empathy we will be able to show for people in need. Sheng Yen argues that the first step towards caring for others is to care for oneself. In addition, he claims that tolerance is apotheosis of Buddhist care, because our capacity for tolerance reveals that we can respect different voices and cultivate our Chinese Buddhist moral self. Sheng Yen has institutionalized his notion of care into several religious congregations, such as those
caring for the homeless at the annual year-end blessing and for mothers in public at the
annual ceremony of the Buddha. He also established several volunteer groups to care
for particular groups of people based upon his notion of care, such as the End-of-Life
Chanting Group and charity foundation.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this chapter was to introduce Dharma Drum Mountain from several aspects,
including its history, organisational structure, position in the Taiwanese Buddhist
context, notions of meditation practice and Chinese Buddhist morality. The goal of the
thesis, as I explained in Chapter One, is to explore how volunteers at Dharma Drum
Mountain make use of the three kinds of Chinese Buddhist morality in Sheng Yen’s
notion of character education in the relational dimensions of their daily lives. Thus, in
Chapter Two I have focused on explaining the content of Sheng Yen’s notion of
Chinese Buddhist morality in more detail, analysing the theoretical sources of his ideas
about character education and how the promotion of Chinese Buddhist moral practices
has become a key feature of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan. In other words, I have
attempted to paint a more complete picture of the moral discourses prevailing at
Dharma Drum Mountain.

These moral discourses can be traced back to Master Taixu’s teachings, the core notion
of which, in Taixu’s own words, is that “relying upon the Buddha, perfection lies in
human character; humanness perfected is Buddhahood attained; this is called true
ethics is a product of the modernisation of Chinese Buddhism, which was and is an
attempt to inject a sense of social responsibility into religious practices by emphasising the potential for personal spiritual growth through practicing Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in their interpersonal relationships. This thesis argues that Sheng Yen’s notion of character education can be seen as the practical version of Taixu’s thinking on social responsibility, because its goal is learning to be a person. Sheng-Yen suggests that individuals can engage in Buddhist self-cultivation to achieve the goal of learning to be a person. Like Taixu, he fully integrates Confucian moral discourses into his philosophy and believes individuals can flourish in the relational dimensions of their daily lives by practicing Chinese Buddhist moralities such as care, respect and the four kinds of moral emotions: gratitude, shame, repentance and empathy.

Sheng Yen’s Buddhist-Confucian vision of Chinese Buddhist moral practice is not unique in the Taiwanese Buddhist context. As Madsen (2007, 2008) points out, the three largest and most influential Chinese Buddhist organisations in Taiwan (Tzu Chi, Buddha’s Light Mountain and Dharma Drum Mountain) have each creatively adapted Confucian moral discourses to promote their Chinese Buddhist moral practices. Madsen sees these organisations as a form of “rational-ethical religion” because they “downplay mysterious doctrines and elaborate rituals so as to focus the believer on responsibilities within this world, and it tends to reduce religion to ethics” (Madsen 2008: 297). All three view family as central to Chinese Buddhist moral practices and encourage their members to “see public life not as different from family life, but as an expanded version of family life” (Madsen 2007: 47). By encouraging Chinese Buddhist moral practices such as giving care and showing respect, or supporting civic harmony by emphasizing tolerance, these organisations help their laity to find a balance between individual autonomy and collective responsibility. Madsen argues that through the promotion of the Buddhist-Confucian vision of civic harmony, these
Chinese Buddhist organisations help to smooth the rough edges in Taiwanese civic life and cultivate Taiwanese democratic civic culture. This thesis will show how volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain make use of Chinese Buddhist morality to foster their interpersonal relationships and pursue well-being in the following chapter.
Methodology

INTRODUCTION

The thesis employs qualitative methods to explore how Buddhist volunteers engage in religious practices in volunteering and everyday life. Qualitative research is “grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly interpretivist in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted” (Mason 2002b: 3-25). In addition, “thinking qualitatively means rejecting the idea of a research design as a single document which is an entire advance blueprint for a piece of research … this is because qualitative research is characteristically exploratory, fluid and flexible, data-driven and context-sensitive” (Mason 2002b: 3-25). The selection of qualitative analysis is based on the goal of my thesis that is to understand how people give meanings to their religious practices in relational dimensions of their daily lives, including family, friendships and colleagueship. Because the way people make sense of religious practices is grounded in their own personal experiences and backgrounds, qualitative research is helpful for building up a complex picture of how people negotiate and change their relationships with other people in a range of everyday settings in terms of their narratives. The thesis adopts an ethnographic approach to gain first-hand knowledge in a religious context through participant observation and interviews.
Ethnographic techniques are “the methods used to uncover the social order and the meaning a setting or situation has for the people actually participating in it” (Minnis 1985: 192-193). The first section of the chapter introduces how I selected three volunteer groups as the research groups of the thesis. The second section of the chapter describes the interview process - I made use of the semi-structured interview to collect the research data and here I will also describe my pilot interview and discuss the difference between the pilot interview and the formal interview. The third section of the chapter analyses the process of participant observation, including getting access, involvement in three different volunteer groups, and reflection on my role in the field and my relationship with the people at Dharma Drum Mountain. The fourth section discusses the ethical considerations relevant to my research. The final section introduces the methods used for data analysis.

THE SAMPLING OF THE RESEARCH GROUP

Dharma Drum Mountain’s volunteer groups can be divided into branch-oriented and function-oriented volunteer groups. Branch-oriented groups provide routine support at the different Dharma Drum Mountain communities, cleaning, cooking, staffing reception and handling a variety of tasks. Meanwhile function-oriented volunteer groups are responsible for promoting Buddhism in terms of Dharma Drum Mountain’s organisational functions. The 11 function-oriented groups include the Prajna Meditation Society, Merit and Wisdom Chanting Society, End-of-Life Chanting Group, Dharma Drum Lotus Friends, Volunteer Group, Honorary Board Members Fellowship, Dharmic Affinity Society, Chorus, Young Buddhist Society, Fellowship of Teachers and Fashion Association of Dharma Drum Mountain. Apart from the Chorus and
Fellowship of Teachers, all the function-oriented volunteer groups are national-level and must cooperate with local branch-oriented volunteer groups to hold activities and perform the routine operations of Dharma Drum Mountain.

For this thesis, I selected three volunteer groups to research. There were three criteria for selection. Firstly, I hoped to include both types of volunteer group. In other words, I wanted to select at least one branch-oriented and one function-oriented volunteer group. Secondly, I hoped that each of the volunteer groups I selected would have unique characteristics which could cover the different aspects of volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain. Thirdly, I wanted to select volunteer groups which I could easily get access to for the interviews. Eventually, I chose one branch-oriented volunteer group called the World Centre for Buddhist Education and two function-oriented volunteer groups called the End-of-Life Chanting Group and the Young Buddhist Society.

Among all the volunteer groups at Dharma Drum Mountain, these three volunteer groups are very special. Firstly, the World Centre for Buddhist Education is the headquarters of Dharma Drum Mountain. Of all the branches of Dharma Drum Mountain, the World Centre for Buddhist Education does the widest range of volunteer work and has the largest volunteer population and broadest spectrum of volunteers. I selected the End-of-Life Chanting Group because its volunteer work touches upon one of the core concepts of Buddhism: death. By investigating the End-of-Life Chanting Group, I could explore some unique characteristics of Buddhist volunteering. Thirdly, I selected the Young Buddhist Society because I had been a member of this volunteer group for nearly 10 years. I was familiar with the group and could make use of my personal relationships at the Society to get access to volunteers at other two volunteer
THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

In this section I will describe how I used the semi-structured interview to collect data. The interview methodology is to “investigate elements of the social by asking people to talk, and to gather or construct knowledge by listening to and interpreting what they say and to how they say it” (Mason 2002a: 225-227). Knowledge gained in this way is “a co-production since it is dependent upon the combined efforts of interviewer and interviewee in conjuring up the relevant contexts from which they think, talk, act and interpret” (Mason 2002a: 225-227). The semi-structured interview generates meaningful knowledge on the basis of interviewer-interviewee interaction because this type of interview is “a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of questions. The questions are frequently somewhat more general in their frame of reference from that typically found in a structured interview schedule” (Bryman 2004: 113). The semi-structured interview allowed me to revise my research questions when I heard unexpected experiences from my respondents in the pilot study. When I engaged in the formal interview, the semi-structured interview let me adjust the sequence of interview questions in terms of the response of interviewees after I started doing the interviews and asked some questions to explore new aspects of the research which my interviewees felt were important to them. Although I designed a list of interview questions, I also changed the interview questions to reflect different cohorts.
as I interviewed people from different volunteer groups or different roles in the same volunteer groups.

In the first part of this section, I explain how I designed my interview questions for the pilot study and for the formal interviews. In the second part I will detail the sampling method used to select the interviewees, the changes that were made to the sampling method to reflect the research findings of the pilot study and present the total number of respondents with a table as well. Finally, I will discuss the interview process in more detail and describe how I interacted with my respondents in the interviews.

DESIGN OF THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The development of my interview questions took place in two stages. In the first stage, I generated interview questions for the pilot study. Because my original research focused on exploring how volunteers made use of blogs to build their social networks, the main focus of my interview questions was volunteers’ blogging behaviours such as how often they connected with other volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain on the Internet. Or questions like ‘How do you evaluate the meanings of communicating with other volunteers on blogs? What are the contents of messages you leave on you other volunteers’ blogs?’ The other interview questions were divided into five sections and the topics covered included volunteering, religious practice, Buddhist education, social networks and background information.

Five people took part in the pilot study, one new volunteer, one senior volunteer, one current volunteer staff, one administrator of the Young Buddhist Society and one
Buddhist monastics. However, none of the respondents maintained that they viewed blogging as an important way of connecting with other volunteers. They preferred communicating with other volunteers face-to-face or by phone. In addition, the Buddhist monastics told me that although Dharma Drum Mountain actively made use of the internet to publish news or provide live Dharma activities on the internet and Buddhist monastics often communicated with volunteers through email, it viewed the Internet merely as a tool. Dharma Drum Mountain was still focused on propagating its ideas to the public face-to-face. From the results of my pilot study, it was clear that I would have to change the focus of my research and instead of exploring volunteers’ social networks on the Internet I decided upon the four research questions listed in Chapter 1 of the thesis. I have also explained why I adopted these research questions and how these research questions will add to our knowledge in chapter 1.

After several revisions of interview questions in terms of my respondents’ responses, I decided to separate interview questions into three sections for Buddhist monastics, administrators and volunteers. Interview questions for administrators have two sections, including evaluation of the workplace at Dharma Drum Mountain and background information. Interview questions for Buddhist monastics have three sections, including organisational context, evaluation of volunteer and background information. Questions for volunteers have five sections, including volunteering, religious practice, Buddhist education, social networks, as well as background information. Questions related to volunteering covered every aspect of volunteer work, including their motives, the meaning of Buddhist volunteering to their life, the frequency with which they attend in volunteering, the gains from volunteering, the contents of volunteer work, respondents’ life transformation in volunteering, including their feelings, attitudes towards people in volunteering and the predicaments in volunteering. Questions related
to religious practice focused on exploring how volunteers’ religious practices affect their routine activities and personal relationships. I designed questions related to the end-of-life for the volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting group. As for the other questions, questions related to Buddhist education explored how volunteers learned Buddhist morality and meditation through attending Dharma class, the reading group and Chan meditation class. The questions related to social networks are the core questions of my thesis. In this part of the interview, I asked respondents how volunteering affected the relational dimensions of their everyday life, including family, friendships and colleagueship. Finally, background information collected included gender, age, residence, occupation, education levels and marital status.

SAMPLING METHOD FOR THE INTERVIEW

I made use of purposeful sampling to select my interview respondents. Purposeful sampling indicates that the researcher “deliberately chooses subjects known to be articulate and able to provide important information. The subjects are sometimes known as key informants because they are selected for their unique view of the subject at hand. Maximum variation in the sample, by age, sex, or occupation, for example, ensures that the range of experience of the phenomenon is represented”. (Reid 1996: 388) In addition the logic of purposeful sampling “lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research”. (Patton 1990: 169) I decided to select respondents in terms of their roles in volunteer environments, because I thought that those performing different roles would have different opinions on volunteer work. I could integrate their narratives together and
build up a profile of volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain.

I selected five main roles in volunteer environments as my sampling objectives, including Buddhist monastics, new volunteer member, current volunteer staff, senior volunteer and administrator. Next, I enlarged the number of my respondents by snowball sampling. Snowball sampling involves “using a small group of informants who are asked to put the researcher in touch with their friends who are subsequently interviewed, then asking them about their friends and interviewing them until a chain of informants has been selected” (Burgess 1984: 55). In the interviews, I would ask my respondents to recommend the three volunteers closest to them at Dharma Drum Mountain, regardless of whether these people were in their own volunteer groups or volunteered elsewhere, because I knew many senior respondents had volunteered in different volunteer groups at Dharma Drum Mountain before. Some respondents made good friendships in their previous volunteer groups and their friendships continued after they changed their volunteer environments.

Because I was only familiar with people at the Young Buddhist Society, I asked the gatekeeper of the other two volunteer groups to recommend me five people in terms of my role setting. I started by interviewing these people and used their recommendations to find new respondents but it was difficult finding enough new volunteers in my role setting, because the people recommended to me did not include new volunteers. Therefore, I asked two gatekeepers to recommend three or four new volunteers to me and I found two new volunteers at the Young Buddhist Society by myself. After I had finished my transcription and coding, I found that the majority of volunteers noted that one of the main reasons they wanted to continue volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain was to learn Buddhist concepts and that these concepts changed their habits
and their personal relationships. However, I had not asked any questions about learning and habits, and so I had to seek the permission of my supervisors to go back to Taiwan to do the follow-up interviews. To collect sufficient information about Dharma learning and habits, I decided to add four respondents from another volunteer group, including one administrator at the Chan Meditation Centre, the president of the Prajna Meditation Society and two volunteer members of staff at the Fashin Association of Dharma Drum Mountain. These four respondents were all versed in Chan practices and had attended many Dharma classes.

In total I interviewed 87 respondents, including 10 new volunteers, 33 current volunteer staff, 27 senior volunteers, 8 Buddhist monastics and 9 administrators. Details of the interviews are shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: The distribution of respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The End-of-Life Chanting Group</th>
<th>The Young Buddhist Society</th>
<th>The World Centre for Buddhist Education</th>
<th>Other Volunteer Groups</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Volunteers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Volunteer Staff</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Volunteers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DETAILS OF THE INTERVIEW

I carried out three sets of interviews, including the pilot study, formal interview and the follow-up interview. The purpose of the pilot study was to test whether my initial interview questions were viable and revised my research questions in terms of the results of the pilot study. I did five interviews with volunteers in five roles, including Buddhist monastics, new volunteer, current volunteer staff, senior volunteer and administrator. I chose these five people from the Young Buddhist Society, from the many people I knew in this group. Four volunteers were good friends of mine but from different areas and from three different local Young Buddhist Societies. The length of these five interviews was around an hour and a half on average. I changed my research questions and interview questions in the light of the results of the pilot study. I turned my focus from respondents’ usage of the Internet to respondents’ interactions with people in their social networks in the real world. I have discussed why I changed the focus of the thesis in the first and second paragraph of the section on the design of the interview questions.

After revising my interview and research questions, I started the formal interviews. When I contacted my potential interviewees by phone or face-to-face, I would let them know my research purpose, an outline of the interview questions and the length of the
interview. I told them that they had right to refuse to be interviewed and could refuse me later if they changed their mind. When I began the interview, I informed them I would be using the tape recorder to record the interview, that they could cease the interview at anytime if they felt uncomfortable and that they could tell me which parts of their interview could not be cited. I also informed my respondents in advance that they had right to decide which questions they wanted to answer and how in-depth they wanted the interview to be.

Almost everybody I approached accepted my invitation to be interviewed, although three people immediately refused, their reasons being “You found the wrong person”, “I am very busy now” and “if you cannot find any volunteers, you can call me”. The first person was my research objective in my follow-up interviews but because I had no time to ask him again, I gave up on this interview. However, I felt the other two people were very important in their volunteer groups, so I attempted to invite them again later. One accepted my interview three months later, and another person became my respondent ten months later after he had refused me three times.

As for the location of the interviews, 52 respondents were interviewed at the branches of Dharma Drum Mountain, 26 respondents were interviewed at McDonalds or coffee shops or restaurants, 7 respondents were interviewed in their homes and 2 respondents were interviewed at their workplaces. Regarding the average length of interview of each volunteer group, respondents from other volunteer groups took about 121 minutes, respondents from the Young Buddhist Society took about 103 minutes, respondents from the End-of-Life Chanting group took about 82 minutes, and respondents from the World Centre for Buddhist Education took about 73 minutes. On average, each interview took about 87 minutes.
In practice, although I asked questions from the 7 sections of my interview schedule, I did not always follow the original sequence. When the interview began, my first question was always ‘could you tell me how you become a member of Dharma Drum Mountain?’ After listening to their answers, I would ask several questions related to their responses. For instance, if my respondents mentioned that they joined Dharma Drum Mountain because members of their families were volunteers there, then I would ask them some questions about their family circumstances and how their relatives’ volunteering affected their motivation to volunteer. If my respondents noted that they came to Dharma Drum Mountain due to their reading of Sheng Yen’s books, I would ask them some questions related to religious practices and Buddhist education following their responses to my first question.

Some respondents told me that I was a very good listener and when they talked to me, they felt very comfortable because I would not interrupt them when they talked to me. This means that I rarely interrupted them talking even they did not answer my questions directly and talked about other topics. When I encountered this problem, I often tried to find several cues related to my original questions and asked some questions about the relationship of their responses to my original questions to steer them back in the right direction. Sometimes I failed to pull them back and I would continue trying to find links with my other questions when I listened to them. One thing I found was that they often answered my other questions unconsciously, so I asked my other questions after they stopped talking. Another was that their replies were not related to my original or my other questions, in which case I would carefully interrupt and tell them that we could talk about this topic after our interview. They all accepted my suggestion and let me continue with my interview.
PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

In this section, I will describe my participant observation at Dharma Drum Mountain. The first part of the section explains how I got access to the volunteer groups and the second how my involvement in the field progressed. Throughout the section, I will reflect on my role which oscillated between observer and participant, outsider and insider.

ACCESS TO SETTINGS

When I knew I would be doing the thesis about Dharma Drum Mountain, I was very confused because I did not know how to research a group which I was familiar with. I did not know how to set boundaries between my research participants and me. This is a core question for the thesis, as it is hard to find interesting sociological findings from the position of being an insider.

The main reason for my confusion was due to my previous religious participation at Dharma Drum Mountain. When I began my PhD studies in 2006, I was already a member of the Young Buddhist Society. The first ever activity I attended at Dharma Drum Mountain was Chan meditation retreat and I attended Chan meditation retreats four times before I actually started to do volunteer work in 2004. Because I came to the UK to take a Master’s degree in 2005, my volunteer experience at Dharma Drum Mountain lasted only one and a half years. However, I experienced a marvellous
change of character through Buddhist meditation and volunteering, particularly doing volunteering. During this period, I spent 33 days volunteering at six big Dharma Drum Mountain events and also helped the Young Buddhist Society to deal with its routine affairs every day for two months. From these precious experiences, I became more confident and yet sensitive to others. My social interactions with people became more meaningful and useful, whether at work, or with family and friends. On the one hand, because I had established good relationships at Dharma Drum Mountain and made many meaningful and permanent relationships with Buddhist monastics and volunteers, I was confident of obtaining much useful and insightful information for the thesis. On the other hand, I was worried about how I could do objective and intellectually worthwhile research from an insider’s perspective.

After I entered into the field, I found I did not need to worry too much about the question of boundaries because my research participants would automatically make a distinction between them and me and made me feel that I was actually an outsider as far as Dharma Drum Mountain was concerned, particularly when I volunteered at the World Centre for Buddhist Education.

However, the advantage of me being a former insider was that it was easier to get access to research participants. I contacted the manager monk of the Young Buddhist Society and asked him to help me contact the manager nun and the manager monk of the two other volunteer groups. After I went back to Taiwan, I met with another two manager monastics within one month, who both approved my research. When I met with these two manager monastics, I told them that I became a member of the Young Buddhist Society about 8 years ago, and my mother and father were both volunteer staff in my hometown branch of Dharma Drum Mountain. My family background and
my membership of the Young Buddhist Society seemed to help me gain the trust of these two manager monastics quite quickly and they enthusiastically supported my search for interviewees. My social network at Dharma Drum Mountain was an advantage when it came to accessing my research objectives.

THE PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION PROCESS

My fieldwork took one year but I did not spend the whole year doing participant observation, because I had to arrange the interviews. The total length of my participant observation was nine months. Initially I hoped I could take part in three volunteer groups at the same time, but I found it was impossible because the activity times of the three volunteer groups often overlapped. Therefore, I arranged to do the participant observation at different times, starting with the Young Buddhist Society and then moving on to the World Centre for Buddhist Society and then the End-of-Life Chanting Group. Because the characteristics of the volunteer work done by these three groups are quite different, I have separated my description into three parts. The first one covers the time I spent with the Young Buddhist Society, the second one the World Centre for Buddhist Society and the third the End-of-Life Chanting Group.

*The Young Buddhist Society*

The main characteristic of volunteering at the Young Buddhist Society is that the majority of volunteer work involves holding large events for young people. I took part in five big events of the Young Buddhist Society in nine months, two one-day
activities and one six-day, five-day and three-day. During these nine months, my roles in volunteer teams changed a lot. I can classify the changes in my relationship with other volunteers and the Buddhist monastics into three stages. This classification of the participant observation only represents the conditions of my fieldwork in the Young Buddhist Society. It is not a classification of the whole fieldwork:

1. The earlier stage of participation: pure participant

In this stage, I felt my task as a participant observer was to accommodate to the culture of volunteering at the Young Buddhist Society and make friends with other volunteers. Although I had been involved with the Society for several years, I did not attend activities constantly. I knew many volunteers at the Society, but only few volunteers had cooperated with me before. I was not current volunteer staff and had never been volunteer staff in the Society before. This meant I could not enter the core of the Society and understand the realities of its routine operations.

Although I was not very familiar with the routine operations of the Young Buddhist Society, as an insider I still knew some of the things my research participants did such as the informal rules of Dharma Drum Mountain and much more than a pure outsider. However, my main challenge at this stage was how to distance myself from my research participants because I found it was very difficult to criticise what I experienced in volunteering. My previous experience of volunteering at the Young Buddhist Society made me easily take everything for granted and rarely reflect on the process of volunteering. In time, I started to record some things I felt interesting in terms of my research and wrote down my feelings about volunteering as field notes when I volunteered.
I joined the preparatory team of a three-day training course for volunteer staff. To attend the planning of the course from the beginning to the end, I elected to become a member of the course design section. The preparatory time for this activity was two months. We had meetings to discuss our progress once a week. My team leader and the other team members all knew about my research and our relationships were very good. However, I did not take any field notes at this stage because I spent all my time on my volunteer work and making friends with my volunteer team members. I tried to reflect on the process of volunteering and found some problems, but I found it was useless because I felt everything was totally new and interesting. When the activity took place, I took the position of photographer. The photographer had to move around and take pictures whenever and wherever. Although I had no time to record my feelings in the activity, I could observe the interactions between volunteers and attendant. It helped me understand the culture of the Young Buddhist Society better. After the activity, I was responsible for writing an official report on this activity, which helped me to reflect on the process of the activity.

2. The middle stage of participation: researcher and participant

In this stage, I attended two activities and undertook very important volunteer work. After intense interactions with other volunteers and Buddhist monastics in the first activity, our mutual understanding deepened. Volunteers and Buddhist monastics now knew my abilities and trusted me with important volunteer work, such as taking the position of the team leader in the second activity and managing a half of the volunteers of the preparatory team, about 15 volunteers. The advantage of doing this was that I
could observe volunteers’ interactions in activities without doing anything. I classified volunteer works into several sections and asked several senior volunteers to take charge of these sections. These senior volunteers became leaders of sections and they were in charge of managing several volunteers to do volunteer works. I had time to record my feelings and observations of the activity in my field notes and reflect on my relationships with these volunteers.

Although my relationships with other volunteers became closer than before, intellectually I was actually distancing myself from my research participants and searching for sociological theories with which to evaluate the dilemmas and problems in volunteering I was experiencing. For instance, I found that many new volunteer staff at the Young Buddhist Society complained to me that they did not understand why they had to take staff positions, even when they had only been volunteering for a short time, as senior members of staff tend to leave new staff to their own devices rather than easing them into their new responsibilities. This led to many new volunteer staff encountering difficulties worked on their activities, which made them very frustrated. When I heard their complaints, I was confused. However, I took note of their questions and will explore these in the chapter on friendships.

3. The final stage of participation: a researcher in volunteering

In the final stage of participant observation, I felt I became a pure researcher. Although I took part in two big activities and undertook important volunteer work, I was very familiar with the contents of my volunteer work and turned my focus towards observing interactions in volunteering. In this stage, I became involved in a conflict
with some volunteers who were sceptical about my dual status and told me that I should not be volunteering and researching at the same time. They doubted my volunteer motivation and thought the reason I was volunteering was purely because I wanted to research them. My involvement in volunteering made some people feel uncomfortable. I had hoped to attend and observe a training course for volunteer staff but the manager monastics refused my request and told me that I had no right to attend because I was not a volunteer member of staff. I felt the tension between the Young Buddhist Society and me.

**The World Centre for Buddhist Education**

I started to volunteer at the World Centre for Buddhist Education after I entered the final stage of participation at the Young Buddhist Society. I participated with the World Centre for Buddhist Society for just two weeks but in these two weeks, I not only volunteered but also arranged time to interview over 20 respondents. Some volunteer work is specialised, for example, I could not be a tour guide but I could follow the volunteer tour guides to observe how they interacted with visitors. I did some simple volunteer tasks such as gardening, cleaning toilets and planting flowers. Because the majority of volunteer work at the World Centre for Buddhist Education is performed alone, I rarely had a chance to talk with other volunteers but at the same time this allowed me to play the role of researcher and observe.

**The End-of-Life Chanting Group**
I started volunteering with the End-of-Life Chanting Group after my first week at the World Centre for Buddhist Education and continued volunteering with them for one month. Volunteering with the End-of-Life Chanting Group is not 9 to 5 work as people can die at anytime. Volunteers had to go to the dying person’s home to chant Buddha’s name for two hours and whilst volunteering, had no chance to talk with each other. After finishing their volunteer work, some would go home together by car but I felt they rarely talked with each other. I asked one senior volunteer at the End-of-Life Chanting Group about how they made friends in volunteering. He told me that they could get to know each other at Dharma Drum Mountain’s activities. Many volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting Group took part in the same Dharma Drum Mountain’s activity each week, so they built their relationships not on volunteering but at religious congregations.

After listening to his explanation, initially I wanted to attend some of Dharma Drum Mountain’s activities to observe the interaction in religious congregations. Unfortunately, I had to leave some time to interview, so I concentrated on the End-of-Life care process instead. With the help and guidance of a senior volunteer member of staff, I was able to witness and appreciate the whole process, from volunteers arranging Buddhist funeral rites with the dying person’s family to the burying of their ashes in the Life Garden at Dharma Drum Mountain. Throughout the whole process, I felt I was an outsider because this kind of volunteer work was so specialised that I could not do it myself without training. When this senior volunteer took me to the dying person’s home, she did not introduce me to their family but just let me watch how she negotiated with them. When the Buddhist funeral rite took place, I asked her whether I should wear the uniform usually worn by volunteers and she told me that there was no need for me to do that. Her intentions were very clear; she wanted
me to observe objectively, as an outsider and I believe this was the right thing to do, because I was able to concentrate on my observation and reflect on what I saw from a researcher’s perspective.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the research, I abided by the ethical regulations of the British Sociological Association (2002) in order to respect my respondents and protect their privacy:

RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS AND HONOURING TRUST

When I entered the field, a nun introduced me to the manager nun of Dharma Drum Mountain. I told her about my research plans and also submitted a written application to Dharma Drum Mountain describing my research aim, my potential interviewees and the volunteer groups I had selected to research. In addition, I also mentioned that I would protect my respondents’ privacy, keep their confidentiality and change their names for anonymity. Furthermore, I noted that before I publish my thesis, I will inform Dharma Drum Mountain of my intention and request its written consent. I hoped that they could trust me and assured them that I would not use the data collected in ways which would disadvantage them (Graveling 2008).

After getting permission from Dharma Drum Mountain, I contacted the volunteer groups and started to collect my data. Because every volunteer group has its own culture, I asked the senior volunteers or Buddhist monastics who led me into the
groups to tell me about the rules and customs of the groups. I followed their suggestions to collect data and opened my role as a researcher to every person I met at Dharma Drum Mountain, because I wanted to “avoid any possibility or sense of deception of respondents” and make it possible for them to trust me. (Graveling 2008: 73)

NEGOTIATING INFORMED CONTENT

When I contacted my potential interviewees by phone or face-to-face, I would let them know my research purpose, an outline of the interview questions and the length of the interview. I told them that they had the right to refuse to be interviewed, then or at a later date before our interview. When I began the interviews, I informed them I would be using a tape recorder and that they could cease the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable. I also told them that they could tell me which parts of their interview could not be cited. Next, I gave them the consent form and let them read and signed the form. All my respondents signed the consent form. Finally, I informed my respondents in advance that they had the right to decide which questions they wanted to answer or not, and they could decide how much they wanted to share with me.

CONFIDENTIALITY, PRIVACY AND ANONYMITY

I preserved the anonymity of my respondents through the removal of identifiers and the use of pseudonyms. In addition, I was the only person who listened to the recordings and I did all the transcription myself to avoid third parties knowing the
contents of the recordings. I will limit my usage of recordings to the academic field only.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

After I came back to the UK, I started to analyse the data. The most important and time consuming part of the data analysis was the transcription of my interviews. I spent around 10 months transcribing the 87 interviews. As for the translation, I did not translate my transcripts from Chinese into English, because my supervisor told me that I did not need to do it. I only translated parts of my transcripts when I needed to use it as my quotation in the thesis. I did not encounter problems of translating Buddhist concepts, because key Buddhist terms in which my respondents mentioned in the interview are common words in our daily lives, such as gratitude, care and respect. Although sociologists and Chinese Buddhists have different interpretations on these words, I was not confused with it and I have explained the definitions of these terms both from sociological and Buddhist perspectives in chapter two.

As for the process of coding, I began with “a wide range of topics, or nodes - substantive, case-related and conceptual - which were progressively funnelled into the underlying themes of the thesis” (Graveling 2008: 92). The process of coding was not a linear development due to the complexity of my interview questions. The main purpose of the coding was to find key concepts which could link respondents’ volunteering to their everyday lives. Initially I tried code in terms of theoretical ideas and I spent a lot of time reading articles and books but it was hard to find a religious theory which could be used in my thesis. Therefore, I gave up trying to code by
theories and started to code in terms of my own volunteer experiences. After reading through the transcripts many times, I noticed some issues appeared over and over again in different respondents’ interviews, issues that seem to be very important to volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain. I selected four core themes from the transcripts and started to develop my thesis, including family, friendship, volunteering and the development of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus.

Once I had found the themes of my thesis, I started to find some theories which could support my themes. I also made use of Dharma Drum Mountain’s online information and its publications as secondary documents to develop my thesis. The main challenge of researching this topic is that there are only a few scholars studying how people engage in religious practices in everyday life, and Buddhist studies in the West are rare. I have had to depend on my own religious practices and find appropriate sociological theories to develop my chapters. Another challenge of doing this kind of research is to find the balance between religious discourse and sociological discourse. Initially I did not pay enough attention to this distinction and unconsciously used much religious language in my chapter. I gradually decreased my use of religious language and developed my thesis in terms of sociological theory and finally I found the balance between religious discourse and sociological discourse.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have showed how I employed the interview and participation observation method to collect my research data. As for the sampling of the research group, Dharma Drum Mountain’s volunteer groups can be divided into branch-oriented
and function-oriented volunteer groups. For this thesis, I selected three volunteer groups to research. There were three criteria for selection. Firstly, I hoped to include both types of volunteer group. In other words, I wanted to select at least one branch-oriented and one function-oriented volunteer group. Secondly, I hoped that each of the volunteer groups I selected would have unique characteristics which could cover the different aspects of volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain. Thirdly, I wanted to select volunteer groups which I could easily get access to for the interviews. Eventually, I chose one branch-oriented volunteer group called the World Centre for Buddhist Education and two function-oriented volunteer groups called the End-of-Life Chanting Group and the Young Buddhist Society.

As for the interview questions, there are five sections in my interview sections, including volunteering, religious practice, Buddhist education, social networks, as well as background information. In addition, I made use of purposeful sampling to select my interview respondents, who were selected in terms of their roles in volunteer environments. I decided upon five main roles as my sampling objectives: Buddhist monastics, new volunteer member, current volunteer staff, senior volunteer and administrator. I then enlarged the number of my respondents by snowball sampling. In the interviews, I would ask my respondents to recommend the three volunteers closest to them at Dharma Drum Mountain, regardless of whether these people were in their own volunteer groups or volunteered elsewhere. I would then go on to interview the three volunteers recommended to me. In total I interviewed 87 respondents, including 10 new volunteers, 33 current volunteer staff, 27 senior volunteers, 8 Buddhist monastics and 9 administrators.

As for the interview process itself, 60 percent of respondents were interviewed at the
branches of Dharma Drum Mountain, 30 percent were interviewed at McDonalds or coffee shops and restaurants, 8 percent were interviewed in their homes and 2 percent were interviewed at their workplaces. This shows that the majority of my respondents viewed me as a stranger and wanted to conduct the interview in a familiar place, to feel more comfortable. Moreover, regarding the average length of the interviews, respondents from other volunteer groups took about 121 minutes, respondents from the Young Buddhist Society took about 103 minutes, respondents from the End-of-Life Chanting group took about 82 minutes, and respondents from the World Centre for Buddhist Education took about 73 minutes. On average, each interview took about 87 minutes. These differing timings reflect the fact that my relationship with the three volunteer groups was different. Because I knew the majority of my respondents from the Young Buddhist Society, they were willing to share more information to me. Conversely, I was least familiar with volunteers at the World Centre for Buddhist Education. Therefore, the average interview time was the shortest among the three groups.

As for my participation observation, my progress in the three volunteer groups varied depending on how familiar I was with the group. But, apart from the Young Buddhist Society, I mainly played the role of observer and outsider when I took part in the volunteer work of these two groups. There are two reasons for this. One is that I only spent a short time participant observing. I participated with the World Centre for Buddhist Education for just two weeks and with the volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting Group for one month. The other reason is that the volunteer work at these two groups is professional, in the sense that volunteers have to attend training courses for several months before they start to volunteer. I did not possess these professional skills or the knowledge required to become a full participant. Therefore, I could only
play the outsider observing how they volunteered.

The conditions surrounding my participation observation in the Young Buddhist Society were more complex than they were with the other volunteer groups, because I already had been a member of the Young Buddhist Society for seven years. My experiences of participation observation at the Young Buddhist Society can be divided into three stages. In the first stage, I was a pure participant. The main challenge at this stage was how to distance myself from my research participants. After being a researcher for some time, I started to record some things I felt were interesting in terms of my research and wrote down my feelings about volunteering as field notes when I volunteered. In the second stage, my role combined being a researcher and a participant. Because I was gradually becoming familiar with the volunteer staff and Buddhist monastics, I started to take some important positions in activities which meant I could observe volunteer work at the Young Buddhist Society as a whole. Although my relationships with other volunteers became closer than before, intellectually I was actually distancing myself from my research participants and searching for sociological theories with which to evaluate the dilemmas and problems in volunteering I was experiencing. In the final stage, I became a pure researcher. I was embroiled in a conflict with some volunteers who were sceptical about my dual status and told me that I should not be volunteering and researching at the same time. I felt the tension between the Young Buddhist Society and my own position as an objective outsider. However, I made full use of this feeling of tension in my interactions with other young volunteers and Buddhist monastics to explore volunteer work at the Society from a sociological perspective.
Three types of volunteer work at Dharma Drum Mountain

INTRODUCTION

The chapter explores how volunteers at three volunteer groups of Dharma Drum Mountain practice Sheng Yen’s notion of character education through practicing Chinese Buddhist moral concepts like care and respect and Chinese meditation and in their volunteer works, including the End-of-Life Chanting Group, the World Centre for Buddhist Education and the Young Buddhist Society. I have explained why I chose these volunteer groups in Chapter 1. From a sociological perspective, the attainment of harmonious relationships with others is the result of “intersubjectively coordinated negotiation” (Bottero 2010). Volunteers will make use of “evaluation” and “emotions” to serve their clients in volunteer works (Sayer 2005, 2011). Therefore, the chapter makes use of Sayer’s (2005, 2011) concepts of ethical dispositions and lay normativity, and Bottero’s (2010) idea of practice as the negotiated outcome of intersubjective coordination, which were introduced in Chapter 1, to explore how volunteers engage moral dispositions and moral emotions to interact with their clients and other volunteers. The chapter also explore how volunteers engage in intersubjective negotiation with other people in their volunteer works to resolve conflicts and achieve harmonious relationships.
The first section provides some information about the End-of-Life Chanting Group, including introducing the Taiwanese Buddhist end-of-life chanting context, the introduction of Dharma Drum Mountain’s End-of-Life Chanting Group and the introduction of volunteer works at the End-of-Life Chanting Group. The second section introduces volunteer works at the World Centre for Buddhist education and the final section introduces volunteer works at the Young Buddhist Society.

VOLUNTEER WORK AT THE END-OF-LIFE CHANTING GROUP

THE TAIWANESE BUDDHIST END-OF-LIFE CHANTING CONTEXT

Buddhist end-of-life chanting groups play an important role in Taiwanese funerals (Chang 2009; Shiu 2006; Tseng 2005; Wang 2004). The first Buddhist end-of-life chanting group established in Taiwan was the Taichung Buddhist Lotus Society, which was founded by Li Bing-Nan in 1951. At that time, end-of-life chanting was frowned upon (Wang 2004). In addition, the promotion of Buddhist end-of-life chanting was very difficult, because Buddhist attitudes towards death are quite different from mainstream beliefs in Taiwanese society. This often led to the advances of end-of-life chanting groups being rejected by the families of the dying. Buddhist organisations mainly offered end-of-life chanting to its members only. The situation started to change when newly emerging Buddhist organisations began to promote the notion of the end-of-life with new methods in the 1980s. For instance, Nona and Hwa-Tseng Temple offered the first 24-hour Buddhist end-of-life chanting service in Taiwan in
1987 and started to provide an end-of-life chanting service for the general public. Several important Buddhist end-of-life chanting groups were established in this period such as Chentian Temple in 1991, Dharma Drum Mountain in 1993 and Chengte Western Lotus Society in 1999 (Wang 2004).\footnote{Wang (2004) also points out that Tzu Chi’s end-of-life service is very popular in Taiwanese society and Cheng Yen’s (the founder of Tzu Chi) notion of end-of-life chanting has also been important in the development of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan. But Tzu Chi does not have an independent end-of-life chanting group and it is not clear when Tzu Chi started its end-of-life service.} In addition, Lotus Hospice Care Foundation was the first Buddhist organisation in Taiwan to promote Buddhist end-of-life palliative care in 1993. Other Buddhist end-of-life chanting groups started to include end-of-life care in their services; Dharma Drum Mountain has promoted end-of-life care since its establishment in 1993, Tzu Chi has had an end-of-life care ward in its hospital in 1996 and the Lotus Hospice Care Foundation introduced Buddhist end-of-life care to non-Buddhist hospitals - i.e. Taiwan University Hospital - in 1998 (Tseng 2005).

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE END-OF-LIFE CHANTING GROUP

Dharma Drum Mountain’s End-of-Life Chanting Group was established in 1993. Although the name of the group focuses on the end-of-life chanting, this is just one of the services offered by the End-of-Life Chanting Group. There are eight kinds of volunteer work are performed by the End-of-Life chanting group: (1) running an enquiry service for Buddhist funeral affairs; (2) end-of-life care; (3) end-of-life chanting at the moment after death; (4) routine care for the dead; (5) end-of-life
chanting at the funeral rite; (6) saluting the dead at the public memorial ceremony; (7) the management and operation of the Life Garden at the World Centre for Buddhist Education; (8) follow-up care for family members of the deceased. Currently the membership of Dharma Drum Mountain’s End-of-Life Chanting Group is around 4000 members.

Education and caring are the two main purposes of the End-of-Life Chanting Group and can be seen in terms of Sheng Yen’s concept of protecting the environment. Sheng Yen reinterprets the traditional concept of environment and argues that the natural environment is just one aspect of environmentalism. There are four kinds of environmentalism in his concept of environmentalism, including the spiritual environment, living environment, social environment and natural environment. Among these environmentalisms, the concept of protecting the spiritual environment underpins the other three kinds of environmentalism and is achieved through practicing Sheng Yen’s concept of character education and Chinese Buddhist meditation.  

Since its establishment in 1993, the End-of-Life Chanting Group has become a successful example of the practice of Sheng Yen’s four kinds of environmentalism. Firstly, in relation to the practice of protecting the spiritual environment, Sheng Yen argues that the “spirit” refers to the mind, and the goals of the protection of the spiritual environment are to transform people’s character education and create harmonious relationships between the self and others. The chapter will focus on this aspect of

2. As Sheng Yen puts it, “environmentalism begins with the spiritual environment, while the spiritual environmentalism is based on the concept of cause and effect in cherishing and nurturing blessing, in the concept of compassion in preserving life, in being kind to others as well as to oneself, in having the wisdom and insight in understanding that protecting nature is beneficial to all sentient beings, including oneself” (Sheng Yen 2004; cited in Hu 2005: 120).
environmentalism and explore how volunteers make use of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts and meditation to serve their clients and interact with other volunteers with the practice the concept of protecting the spiritual environment. Secondly, in terms of protecting the living environment, Sheng Yen argues that if we can live with simplicity, frugality and non-wastefulness, our life quality will improve and we can protect the natural environment by changing our life habits. When volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting Group give care to their clients, they will encourage their clients to use reusable utensils when they eat meals and take reusable bags when they go shopping.

Thirdly, Sheng Yen argues that there are two levels of protecting social environment. At the individual level, people should pay attention to courtesy when they interact with others. They should emphasise “being dependable, taking responsibility and behave properly” (Hu 2005: 85). At the social level, Sheng Yen argues that Chinese Buddhists should change some etiquette, customs and social norms. The social reputation of Dharma Drum Mountain’s End-of-Life Chanting Group is basically built upon the practice of protecting the social environment through the modernisation and promotion of Buddhist funeral rites, because Sheng Yen (2011) argues that traditional ideas about funeral rites not only destroy the natural environment by producing too many pollutants but also waste too much money on personal vanity. Through the practice of Sheng Yen’s concept of protecting social environment, the End-of-Life Chanting Group has made two major contributions to the modernisation of Buddhist funeral

3. Sheng Yen (2011) points out that modern Chinese Buddhist thought goes against many traditional ideas about funeral matters popular in Taiwanese society, for instance, wearing mourning apparel, beating gongs and drums, burning paper money, leaving meat and wine for the dead, decorating elegiac scrolls and wreaths and so forth.
rites in Taiwan. The first was the holding of a united Buddhist funeral rite in conjunction with the Taipei city government from 1994 to 2004. During this period, DDM successfully promoted its new idea of Buddhist funeral rite with simplicity, solemnity and frugality. The second contribution the group has made is the holding of the ash-burial ceremony since 2007. The ash-burial ceremony can be seen as an example of the practice of Sheng Yen’s concept of protecting natural environment, in this case by decreasing the amount of land set aside for burials and the ceremony’s use has increased since the death of Sheng Yen in 2009.4

VOLUNTEERING GUIDELINES FOR THE END-OF-LIFE SERVICE

Volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting Group play the role of mediators between the dead and the living. Volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting Group show relatives of the dying how to prepare for the Buddha’s name recitation ritual and engaging in chanting the Buddha’s name immediately after the death to help the dead be reborn into the Western Pure Land.5 Volunteers also explain to relatives how to arrange

4. The ash-burial ceremony is a type of natural funeral. The process involves burying the ashes of the dying at the DDM “Garden of Life” which covers an area of 1239 square metres. Relatives place the ashes of the dying into five separate holes, un-marked and buried two metres deep. Other features of the ash-burial funeral include the absence of monuments in the Garden, which helps to save space and allows it to be reused over and over again. Families are encouraged to bury their relatives without worship rites and remember the deceased without the use of tangible things such as flowers and fruits. When Master Sheng Yen passed away in 2009, Dharma Drum Mountain held an ash-burial funeral for him and buried his ashes in the Garden of Life; the number of ash-burial funerals rose dramatically in the months that followed.

5. According to Buddhist doctrines, the fate of the dead depends on their karma and which of the Six Realms of Samsara they are reborn into, the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss being the sought after destination. The concept of the Six Realms of Samsara indicates that “all living beings are
Buddhist funeral rites through family meetings, putting them in contact with Buddhist monastics and organising for volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting Group to chant the Buddha’s name during the funeral rites. Volunteers need to act as counsellors, offering emotional accompaniment to the dying and their families and alleviating their grief and anxiety with care and respect. They also need to play a role similar to that performed by the Buddhist monastic, teaching the dying and their families about the philosophy behind the funeral rite and name recitation with Buddhist knowledge. Furthermore, volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting Group teach that chanting is an important form of Buddhist meditation practice, that mourners can use their mouths and voices to sing the Buddha’s name and help the dead to be reborn into the Western Pure Land, at the same attaining inner peace for themselves with the rhythmic synchronization of the sounds.

The aim of volunteer work at the End-of-Life Chanting Group is to let family members know that the dead cannot have a good death or be reborn into the Western Pure Land without their involvement. The message is framed in terms of Buddhist concepts and emphasises that relatives are not merely “passive members of the audience” whose role is simply to sit back and watch deathworkers deal with their loved ones (Walter 2005:401). Rather, their role is the most important one of all, to accompany and help

born into one of the six states of existence: Deva (god), Asura (jealous god), human, animal, hungry ghost and hell. All beings within the Six Realms are doomed to death and rebirth in a recurring cycle over countless ages - unless they can break free from desire and attain enlightenment” (http://www.onmarkproductions.com/html/six-states.shtml). After people die, they are “reborn into a lower or a higher realm depending on their actions while they are still alive. This involves the concept of Karma” (Six Realms of Existence) (Ibid). Buddhists believe that the only way to escape from the cycle of Samsara is to be reborn in the Western Pure Land. The Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss is the place where people end the suffering of reincarnation and obtain ultimate bliss forever. Buddhism indicates that people can reach the Western Pure Land by chanting the Buddha’s name ‘Amitabha’ themselves or by having their relatives do this for them.
the dying to leave the world in peace and happiness. In the first part of following the section, I will explain how volunteers hold family meetings and caring for the dying at hospitals. Dharma Drum Mountain defines this stage of volunteer work as end-of-life care. I will then describe the process of reciting the Buddha’s name after the dying pass away and how volunteers integrate daily meditation practices into the chanting and lead family members in the recitation of the Buddha’ name for 8 hours. Through the rhythmic synchronization of sounds, family members see the change in the facial expression of the deceased, from pained to peaceful. Lastly, I will look at how volunteers give care to the family of the deceased through their bodily actions at the funeral rite.

END-OF-LIFE CARE

Volunteers start giving end-of-life care as soon as the group receives requests from relatives of the dying. The group immediately assigns volunteers who live close to the hospital to care for them. Hospitals are often the place where volunteers’ first encounter the dying and their family. Because the uncertainty surrounding death threatens the ontological security of the dying as well as their families, the most important thing for volunteers to do is to offer intimacy and empathy to alleviate their anxiety (Seale 1995). Establishing intimacy and mutual trust, confirming their willingness to adopt Buddhist funeral rites and creating a shared mood are main tasks of end-of-life care in this context (Seale 1995: 608).

Interaction with the dying
In terms of their caregiving with the person who is going to die, the bodily presence of volunteers is very important. As P21 put it,

> when I went to see one of my clients in the hospital for the first time, she saw I was wearing the volunteer uniform of Dharma Drum Mountain and she gave me a big smile immediately … her husband was very surprised and happy. He told me that she had not smiled for several months. (P21)

The volunteer’s body language conveyed the message that he was going to be there for the client and all volunteer communications with the sick begin with this simple act of bodily co-presence. Bodily co-presence in this case created a mutual focus of attention, “the awareness of contact with each other’s bodies and of the actions by which each other’s body affects the other” (Collins 2004: 231). P21 mentions that his client noticed the volunteer uniform of Dharma Drum Mountain and smiled, an expression of positive emotional feedback regarding P21’s presence. The volunteer uniform of Dharma Drum Mountain symbolises the Buddhist concepts that volunteers bring with them to care for the dying and seeing the uniform made the client feel like she was being cared for. P21 noted that he gave care to his clients through finding common topics with his clients to generate a shared mood and common experience. Although he did not tell me whether he had actually managed to achieve this, he did describe his client’s reaction when she heard P21 was leaving, ‘I said “goodbye” to my client, and told her that I would come back to see her. Suddenly she cried. Then I told her that “you should take care of yourself and listen to my words”, and she laughed.’ The client’s reaction shows that P21 had successfully cared for his clients.

Female volunteers in particular highlighted the importance of creating a shared mood through empathetic listening when accompanying the dying, so clients could accept that chanting the Buddha’s name would help them prepare for death. P59 indicated that
she will listen to her client’s pains and let them know that she understands their feelings of suffering before she introduces the idea of chanting to the client. P59 told one client, “I know you are in pain and feel very uncomfortable now. Perhaps you can take a hot shower”. P59 expressed empathy to her client and tried to put herself in her client’s shoes. She said that she did this to build an emotional bond with her client, before gradually bringing her client’s attention to the impending death. P59’s “empathy formed a bond” between P59 and her client and contributed to creating a shared mood between them (Crossley 2011). In addition, P59 encouraged the client to speak about her anxieties and fears. It helped P59 understood more about her client’s feelings and expectations: “Do you have anything you cannot let it go of or want to do before you death? Are you worried about your death? If you don’t want to tell me, I suggest you tell your son or daughter. Do you miss your friends? Let your friends do one thing you think is important for you now”. After reaching a mutual understanding and trust via empathetic conversation, P59 introduced the topic of chanting the Buddha’s name to release the client from pain and suffering,

let’s chant the Buddha’s name. The Buddha will pray for you and release you from your pain when he hears your sounds … You can imagine the place you will go is like a place where you study abroad with many Bodhisattvas. If you finish your studies, you will go back to the human realm. (P59)

According to P59, the majority of her clients accepted her suggestion and started to chant the Buddha’s name. The process of P59’s interaction with her client shows that volunteers’ care and empathy are very important to introduce the Buddha’s name chanting to clients, because they make the dying feel like volunteers’ actions are responding to their feelings. Therefore, they are willing to prepare for their death in terms of volunteers’ suggestions.
**Interactions with family members: the family meeting**

With respect to volunteers’ interactions with family members of the deceased, the first task is to hold a family meeting with them to discuss how to arrange the Buddhist funeral rites. The goal of the family meeting is to arrive at an intersubjective understanding between family members of the deceased and volunteers. From volunteers’ perspectives, their tasks are not only to tell family members what Buddhist funeral rites are but also to make use of Chinese Buddhist moral practices like caregiving and respect in terms of Sheng Yen’s concept of character education by empathising with their feelings and expressing respect for their decisions. This was done as volunteers negotiated with the family of the deceased. Volunteers endeavour to secure family members’ agreement to adopt Buddhist funeral rites.⁶

Volunteers first ask senior family members to gather together as many relatives as they can to discuss the funeral rite. Bodily co-presence provides volunteers with a stage to present Buddhist concepts to family members using their personalities.⁷ Through their sharing Buddhist knowledge with family members, they demonstrate that they are authorities on Buddhism, but it is their heightened emotional ability that allows volunteers to “get into shared rhythm, caught up in each other’s motions and emotions; and to signal and confirm a common focus of attention and thus a state of intersubjectivity”. (Collins 2004: 64) The volunteers I observed gave care to the family, and made an emotional commitment to be there for the family whenever they

---

6. The timing of the family meeting varied. If volunteers were approached while the deceased was still alive, the family meeting was held before the death. If the deceased had already passed away, then obviously they would hold the family meeting retrospectively.

7. Charismatic volunteers have a higher chance of getting family members to agree to Buddhist funeral rites.
encountered a problem, by being sincere and humble. They demonstrated their “unconditional positive regard” for family members and did not criticise or disparage family members’ original religious beliefs (Walter 2005: 405). This helped to generate a shared mood and create a common focus of attention on the question of what the best funeral rite for the dying was. As P59 put it:

The ultimate aim of the family meeting is to ensure that the relatives of the dying are happy to accept our suggestions about performing the Buddhist funeral rite. We will answer any questions asked by the members of dying person’s family and hope they can identify with our ideas through negotiation. In the process of family meeting, we must be very humble. It is not our place to tell family members that our method is the best and enforce family members to accept our help. Instead, we should respect the inclination of family members and help them with sincerity. We must bear in mind that our role is to be volunteers. We are not representatives of funeral companies, and we should not get involved in these areas. People can see it and will be moved if you care for them with sincerity, humility and compassion. It is what we should do for people in need. (P59)

Volunteers’ intersubjective negotiations with the families of the dying do not always successfully generate rhythmic synchronization or end with acceptance of the Buddhist funeral rite. Volunteers noted that the final decision about the funeral rite is highly influenced by the religious beliefs of the most senior family members. If these senior family members have religious beliefs other than Buddhism, it is hard to negotiate with them and the family may decline further help from the End-of-Life Chanting group. In such cases, volunteers must respect the family’s decision. However, the aim of the family meeting is to plant the seed of learning Buddhism, particularly amongst the younger family members. As P23 put it,

we do not expect each family to identify with the Buddhist funeral rite, but we hope that they will listen to the correct concept of the Buddhist funeral rite and reflect on it in the future, planting the seed of learning Buddhism in young people’s minds’. (P23)
When clients are about to die, the clients’ family will inform the volunteers and ask them come to lead them in the ritual of chanting the Buddha’s name for the deceased. When volunteers arrive at the deceased’s home or the hospital mortuary, they will offer two forms of assistance. If they have already met the deceased and their family before, and have held a family meeting, the volunteers will directly begin the recitation ritual because the family will know how to chant Buddha’s name from the instructions given at the family meeting. Volunteers will have successfully achieved group solidarity amongst the family members at the meeting and there shared mood will be sufficient to help the dead be reborn into the Western Pure Land.

If, on the other hand, volunteers are meeting with the family for the first time, they will gather the family members together and give them instructions on how to chant the Buddha’s name. They will focus on family members’ emotions, alleviating their grief and reducing their feelings of uncertainty about death matters by demonstrating the legitimacy of their knowledge about the name chanting process with sharing of Buddhist knowledge. Volunteers will not explain the name chanting process, which is a type of Buddhist meditation practice, in terms of the principles of meditation practice.³⁸

³⁸ Buddhists argue that chanting is one type of meditation (Gephel; Maezumi 2002; Won Buddhism of Manhattan). There are several steps towards chanting as meditation practice: “Firstly, straighten your back, neck and head and settle your energy. Secondly, do not make your chanting voice either too loud or too soft, but keep it at a level appropriate to your energy. Thirdly, concentrate on your own voice of chanting itself. Fourthly, when you chant, let go of each and every thought and maintain a relaxed mind. Finally, to get hold of the mind, keep a rhythm with a wooden fish” (Won Buddhism of Manhattan, at: http://www.wonbuddhist.org/meditation/chanting-meditation). Because chanting in Buddhist activities is always performed as a group activity, the success of chanting
Rather, volunteers will tell family members to concentrate on each syllable of Amitabha and relax their bodies, so that the deceased will realise the sincerity of their intentions because the dead have a supernatural power to hear each family member’s inner conversations. The sounds made by the family members offer emotional accompaniment to the deceased and have a calming effect. Volunteers want family members to communicate three things to the dead with their minds: firstly, to listen to their sounds; secondly, to believe that they can be reborn into the Western Pure Land; and thirdly, to chant the Buddha’s name together with the rest of the family members. Volunteers express their emotions passionately to creating a feeling of shared emotion and emotional commitment to chanting together through bodily co-presence and the mutual focus of attention on the rebirth into the Western Pure Land.

---

Meditation is highly dependent upon the rhythmic coordination between the chanters. Maezumi (2002:48) indicates that people should pay attention to several key points of chanting: ‘chant with your ears, not with your mouth. When chanting, be aware of the others who are also chanting. Blend your voice with their voices. Make one voice, all together … Take your pace from the senior practitioners, who will take the initiative … when chanting, always adjust yourself to the others, rather than expecting them to adjust to you. Then there is harmony. Chant as though each syllable were a drop of rain in a steady shower — very mild, consistent, and sustained … And as we chant together and hear other chanting, we are helpful further in joining our minds. This is harmony. This is practice together’.

The chanting of the Buddha’s name involves repeatedly intoning the word Amitabha slowly and solemnly. Amitabha has four syllables: ‘A’, ‘mi’, ‘tab’ and ‘ha’. In addition, According to Buddhist concepts, people’s souls and bodies will separate after they die. The process of separation takes 8 hours and the dead have supernatural power to hear people’s inner conversations during this time. Buddhists believe that people’s auditory abilities are the last sense to disappear. In addition, according to the Buddhist circle of life, when people die they are reborn into one of six realms depending on their karma, as gods, asuras, humans, animals, hungry ghosts or hell beings. If people are reborn into the Western Pure Land, they have emancipated themselves from the circle of the life, which is the ultimate ideal of Buddhism.
Finally, volunteers tell family members that their shared mood is the most important factor in helping the dead, because the deceased can hear every family member’s inner conversation. If family members have different moods, the dead will feel confused and reluctant to leave the world. Collins (2009: 683) argues that ritual is not “dependent on beliefs, ideas or values”. Rather, it is dependent on “the commitment and the acceptance of participants” (Ibid) to take part fully at that moment. In general, the families of the dead are not Buddhists but if they accept the explanations of volunteers and make an emotional commitment to chanting the Buddha’s name, it is believed they will help the dead to be reborn into the Western Pure Land. In my interviews, respondents noted that explaining this to the family leads to a feeling of group solidarity amongst family members and gives them hope and confidence required for the recitation.

When the ritual recitation begins, volunteers ask the family members to sit around the deceased; volunteers then sat behind them. The seating location of family members gives the deceased emotional accompaniment and allows the soul of the dead person to chant the Buddha’s name along with their family members. Here volunteers’ daily practice of meditation or Buddha’s name chanting will have an effect on the proceedings as their grasp of Buddhist meditation practice enables volunteers to fully concentrate on each syllable of Amitabha and gradually synchronise the rhythmic blend of the voices. As P44 put it:

‘The presence of rhythmic synchronisation is due to our religious practice in everyday life. It means our minds maintain calm in daily life and presents its effect in the ritual of reciting Buddha’s name’.

(P44)

Through the rhythmic coordination and synchronisation of participants’ voices, the sounds of the Buddha’s name being recited create an atmosphere of sacred harmony,
which reflects the accumulation of volunteers’ religious practices in everyday life and serves to generate collective effervescence. Buddhists argue that the effect of the ritual of name recitation can be seen in the change to the dying person’s facial expression, which indicates that the dead will be reborn into the Western Pure Land. Experientially, seeing the facial expression of the dead change after the ritual, from pained to peaceful, generally arouses family members’ emotions and generates a sense of group solidarity, further increasing their identification with Dharma Drum Mountain. McGuire (2003: 7-8, 2008: 103) also found that “visual sensations made spiritual experiences vividly real. Sight was linked with insight … people encountered religious meaning physically as well as spiritually”. Many family members convert to Buddhists and join Dharma Drum Mountain after going through the ritual, as P23 noted:

I think it is very easy for family members of the dead to become Buddhists, because many people join Dharma Drum Mountain due to their extraordinary experience in the Buddha’s name recitation ritual. For instance, I am one of the leaders of the fund-raising committee. All the supporters of Dharma Drum Mountain I have introduced are relatives of the dead. (P23)

**The Buddhist Funeral Rite**

The role of volunteers with the End-of-Life Chanting Group at the Buddhist funeral rite is to engage in a chanting ritual for around a half hour, and take care of family members during the ritual. According to my observations, the objects of the chanting ritual were all mourners in the mourning hall. The majority of mourners were seeing and hearing the End-of-Life Chanting Group for the first time. Because volunteers had no time to explain the meaning of the chanting ritual to mourners or to teach them how to chant, they used their voices in a way that enabled each mourner to perceive spirituality through their sensations, by listening to the sounds of volunteers, watching
them focus on their singing and seeing that their dress was neat and solemn. The Volunteers’ accumulated daily religious practice, of meditation or chanting, was transmitted into their chanting. The concentration of the chanting with meditation caused their sounds to rhythmically synchronise. The rhythmic synchronisation of sounds then generated a feeling of harmony causing the atmosphere of the mourning hall to become solemn and silent during the period of the chanting. Although it is hard to generate emotional arousal amongst all mourners due to the lack of a common mood or mutual focus of attention, the embodied religious ritual still has “the potential to activate deep emotion and social connectedness, as well as spiritual meanings” (McGuire 2003: 7). Volunteers maintained that they view their chanting in the funeral rite as a type of Buddhist education and it is enough to let mourners physically experience what Buddhism is through the Buddhist funeral rite, including the chanting itself.

In addition, volunteers offered embodied care for family members. Because volunteers had successfully aroused the emotions of family members directed towards Buddhism, and because the funeral rite must be conducted in silence the purpose of their embodied care was to increase solidarity of the group with non-verbal embodied practices. During the process of the funeral rite, family members of the dead cried and felt the pain of loss. When volunteers saw them crying, they cared for family members by touching, for example, by giving them hugs or tissues to dry their eyes. In addition, volunteers held mourners’ hands and patted their shoulders to alleviate their feelings of grief. Volunteers sat silently with family members throughout the rite, providing company with their physical presence. Through volunteers’ physical motions alone, the Buddhist funeral rite became a religious experience for all those that attended a processual ritual and experience became one within this chain.
VOLUNTEER WORK AT THE WORLD CENTRE FOR
BUDDHIST EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

There are 24 kinds of volunteer work at the World Centre for Buddhist Education and these can be divided into two types according to volunteers’ interaction objects. The first type is related to materials and includes building maintenance, planting, cooking and preparing for food, toilet cleaning, voice control and so forth. Dharma Drum Mountain hopes volunteers doing this kind of work will practice its Buddhist body technique when they volunteer. For instance, by concentrating on each body movement and relaxing their body at the same time when they are cleaning toilets or collecting fallen leaves. Many respondents maintained that they view volunteering at the World Centre for Buddhist Education as a form of spiritual pilgrimage because the Centre is the headquarters of Dharma Drum Mountain and is synonymous with DDM in mainstream society. Many respondents also claimed to have had therapeutic landscape experiences when they volunteer. The self-landscape encounter enables volunteers to renew themselves and recover from the stress and fatigue of the workplace (Conradson 2005a, 2005b). This experience of personal renewal from volunteer work is, in turn, emotionally arousing and increases volunteers’ emotional energy, as they develop a sense of group solidarity and identification with Dharma Drum Mountain.

Although I conducted several participant observations of volunteers performing landscape maintenance, toilet cleaning and preparing food, I will not be exploring
these in this section. Instead I will be focusing on the second type of volunteer work. Volunteer work related to human beings includes visitor tours, selling books in the bookstore, waiting/waitressing in the coffee shop, working at the customer service centre, traffic control and so on. The purpose of this kind of volunteer work is to transmit positive emotions to the customers they encounter. Successful volunteer work will emotionally arouse clients, who then generate group solidarity and learn Sheng Yen’s concept of character education in their interactions with volunteers.

According to the World Centre for Buddhist Education statistics, in 2008 there were 79,560 regular volunteers working 602,194 hours and recruiting 680 new volunteers per year. A feature of volunteer work at the World Centre for Buddhist Education is that Dharma Drum Mountain encourages its volunteers to view their work as religious practice and to engage in Buddhist meditation practice when volunteering. In this section, I will first describe the volunteers’ daily schedule. Unlike the work of other volunteer groups at Dharma Drum Mountain, volunteering at the World Centre for Buddhist Education is designed to be performed over the course of a single day.

THE DAILY SCHEDULE OF VOLUNTEERING

Although a variety of volunteer work is performed at the World Centre for Buddhist Education, there is a daily schedule for all volunteers. The majority of volunteers live in Taipei City and their journey to the World Centre for Buddhist Education by bus or car takes one to two hours or even longer. No matter how far away they live, they have

10. The statistics were given by the manager of the volunteer centre at the World Centre of Buddhist Education.
to arrive at the World Centre for Buddhist Education and register at the Volunteer Centre or other volunteer divisions (such as the Visitor Service Centre) by 8:00. At 8:00 there is a Dharma talk by Buddhist monastics in the Volunteer Centre for around one hour. Before the Dharma talk, there is a simple embodied Buddhist ritual. One volunteer will act as master of ceremonies to conduct the bowing ritual. The master of ceremonies asks attendants to: stand up, bow to the Dharma, bow to the Master Sheng Yen, bow to the monastic and bow to each other. After bowing, one volunteer will ask attendants to chant “the Common Ethos of Dharma Drum Mountain” and “the Common Endeavour of Buddhists”. Finally, the master of ceremonies will ask attendants to sit down.

The Dharma talk ends at 9:00. The master of ceremonies will then ask attendants to do the bowing ritual again. At 9:00 volunteers start work in their volunteer areas. At 10:00 there is a half-hour break. Volunteers can eat biscuits and drink tea or coffee in the Visitor Centre. Volunteers continue to work until 12:00 and then go to eat lunch. After eating lunch, they can take a rest in the Visitor Centre until 13:30. Volunteers continue to work until 16:00. Volunteers finish at 16:00 and can then go home. Some volunteer groups like the Visitor Service Centre will gather all volunteers together to share their feelings about volunteering with each other after 16:00.

Dharma Drum Mountain requires all volunteers to attend the Dharma talk at 8:00. The Dharma talk is a group assembly which gathers volunteers together. They have time to

11. Bowing includes several body movements: ‘fold your palms together, place your thumbs inside your cupped hands, place your cupped hands on your nose, then your index fingers in the space between your eyebrows and brow, then move your hands to your throat, and finally, place your hands folded at your heart’ (Show respect to the Buddha, at http://blog.xuite.net/dcec/dcec/22009257).
share their emotions and feelings about volunteering and make relationships through conversations. The most important function of the Dharma talk though is that it is a chance to engage in the Buddhist bodily rituals in bowing and chanting together. Buddhist bowing is a form of Buddhist body technique that is “a physical posture Buddhists use in their religious practices” (Young 2003: 14). Dharma Drum Mountain views bowing as a kind of meditation; it concentrates attention on every bodily movement and allows people to use their bodies and minds to show respect to, for example, the Buddha, Master Sheng Yen or the monastic giving the Dharma talk. The process of bowing can be likened to Lande’s (2007) study of soldier’s breathing, with one instructor standing in front of the attendants and calling out utterances like ‘bow to the Buddha’. Many new volunteers do not know how to bow and no one will teach them before the ritual of bowing.

However, as Goffman (1981:3-4) reminds us, “every utterance and its hearing have gestural accompaniments”. According to Goffman (1981) language has a feature called “embedding”, which refers to “the nesting of one linguistic unit within another” (Boulton 2001: 79). When an instructor’s utterances are heard by an attendant, the attendant “not only animates the words but is active in a particular social capacity, the words taking their authority from this capacity” (Goffman 1981: 147). Therefore, the utterance “bowing to the Buddha” acquires its meaning as a consequence of it being made by an instructor who is bowing that provides the attendants with an example of what it means to bow correctly (Lande 2007: 104). Unlike Lande’s body technique of soldier’s breathing, whereby cadre and senior cadets constantly adjust their breathing by touching the bodies of novice cadets, no one will adjust volunteers’ postures in the bowing ritual. However, because the bowing ritual is a collective action with all volunteers and the Buddhist monastic bowing together, it almost inevitably leads to the
rhythmic synchronisation and coordination of volunteers’ bodily movements. Through rhythmic entrainment, the bowing ritual also increases volunteers’ emotional arousal levels.\textsuperscript{12}

After the bowing ritual, the Buddhist monastic gives the Dharma talk to volunteers. The purpose of the Dharma talk is to heighten the emotional arousal generated by the previous bowing ritual. The Buddhist monastic teaches some Buddhist concepts which are relevant to volunteer work to create a common mood amongst the volunteers through mutual focus of attention. Through the emotional entrainment of the monastic’s Dharma talk, volunteers will also generate moral feelings like gratitude and repentance by learning some Buddhist concepts, increasing group solidarity and identification with the volunteer work at Dharma Drum Mountain. As a result of the talk, they will acquire the necessary positive emotions to engage in their volunteer work for the day.

VOLUNTEER WORK AT THE VISITOR SERVICE CENTRE

Volunteer work at the Visitor Service Centre involves taking visitors on a guided one-day tour of the World Centre for Buddhist Education. Because the World Centre is the headquarters of DDM, the reputation of Dharma Drum Mountain attracts many people from different social backgrounds and areas, who come to see what Dharma Drum Mountain is all about. In the volunteering context at the Visitor Service Centre, ___

\textsuperscript{12} According to the definition of Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, entrainment is the noun of entrain, and entrain refers to draw in and transport (as solid particles or gas) by the flow of a fluid, at: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/entrainment
care is the main Chinese Buddhist moral concept employed by volunteers to interact with their clients to enhance group solidarity. Furthermore, volunteers view care as a method of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation and learning to care for visitors as way of transforming their characters in terms of Sheng Yen’s concept of character education. Volunteers have to make use of several Chinese Buddhist moral dispositions to shorten the distance between themselves and visitors, including care, empathy and respect. Volunteers introduce some of Dharma Drum Mountain’s Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to their clients in the process of the guided tour, such as gratitude, care and respect. Volunteers will also teach visitors how to practice meditation during the tours.

*The first encounter with visitors*

The guided tour begins with the arrival of visitors’ coaches. Because it is one or two miles from the entrance of the World Centre of the Buddhist Education to the place where visitors get off the bus, volunteers meet the bus at the entrance and tell visitors some things they should bear in mind whilst they are at the Centre. When volunteers enter the visitors’ bus, this is the first time volunteers and visitors see each other, and an opportune moment for arousing visitors’ emotions. I observed volunteers standing in front of the bus to create a mutual focus of attention and so that all visitors could see them. Volunteers started to talk with visitors and tried to create a shared mood in their conversations with visitors. They first showed concern for the visitors with a smile and enthusiastic tone to make a good first impression. “Conversations of gestures” contribute to the mutual focus of attention and emotional entrainment (Mead 1934; cited in Crossley 2011: 80). Volunteers let visitors know that they understood their backgrounds and feelings with empathy and gratitude. Their conveyance of moral
emotions to visitors contributed to creating a shared mood to generate group solidarity.

To illustrate this point further, I will use an example from my participation observation. I observed a volunteer who was responsible for serving visitors from a meditation class at a local Dharma Drum Mountain branch. She told the visitors that “I understand that it is your graduation trip of meditation class. I guess your feelings now are very complicated, on the one hand, you feel very tired after taking 2-hour bus journey to Dharma Drum Mountain; on the other hand, you are looking forward to experiencing meditation in a clean and quiet environment. I represent Dharma Drum Mountain to say welcome home! Dharma Drum Mountain feels grateful for your involvement and views you all as the hope of Dharma Drum Mountain!” According to my observation, the volunteer’s talk successfully aroused the visitors, who were smiling and nodding their heads in response to the volunteer’s talk.

*The beginning of meditation practice*

Volunteers normally tell visitors that the key to understanding Dharma Drum Mountain is learning meditation and practicing whilst touring the landscape of the World Centre for Buddhist Education, such as Buddha and Guan Yin Bodhisattva statues, the Life Garden and other buildings. The meditation volunteers teach visitors is called the walking meditation. Volunteers tell visitors that the walking meditation involves concentrating on the sensations of moving in order to relax the body. Volunteers teach visitors three types of walking meditation. The first one relaxes the body. Volunteers

13. Although volunteers have no right to force visitors to practice meditation, volunteers encourage visitors to give themselves a chance to experience what Buddhism is through meditation teaching.
tell visitors to pay attention to how their shoulders feel when they walk and to relax them. The second technique is to stop talking for the entire period of the sightseeing. With the walking meditation, volunteers teach visitors to turn their attention from their mind to their body by stopping talking and to be aware of their bodily movements and bodily sensations during the tour. Lastly visitors are instructed to pay attention to “the sensations of their feet on the ground and gravity pulling down on their body” and “notice all sensations of moving from lifting, moving forward, and placing the foot” (Siegel 2010: 68).

**Different kinds of meditation teaching**

Because Dharma Drum Mountain hopes its visitors will learn meditation during their visit, then go on to practice Buddhism in their daily lives, the Visitor Service Centre has come up with several ways to teach visitors how to practice meditation and Chinese Buddhist morality in everyday life. First of all, volunteers show visitors the famous buildings of the World Centre for Buddhist Education. When they arrive at one building, volunteers will explain the history and the Buddhist meaning of this building to visitors. Volunteers make use of their own experiences of practicing meditation to illustrate how it is easy to meditate in everyday life. For example, I watched volunteers take visitors to see an important horizontal board on which is inscribed the words “once totally absorbed, the sound and the practitioner becomes one”. Volunteers told visitors that the words refer to a form of Buddhist body technique, to be aware of the impermanence of sound by meditating on sound. One volunteer shared the experience of practicing meditation in her daily life with visitors:

For example, when I heard my boss or my husband condemn me, I heard it and knew it, but I did not
focus on their words which made me angry or sad. Rather, I turned my attention to my breathing, concentrating on the sensations of breathing movements from rising and falling and counting the in-breath or out-breath. After I had counted my breath several times, I found the negative sound from my boss or husband disappeared from my mind. My angry or sad emotions no longer existed. (P86)

Although the words on the inscribed board were difficult to understand, the volunteers’ lived and personal narratives of practicing meditation in everyday life made meditation seem more useful and approachable to the visitors.

Secondly, volunteers often make use of moral dispositions like care in their conversation with visitors to increase their feelings of participation. Their caregiving in the tour guide often arouse visitors’ emotions and make them generate group solidarity to Dharma Drum Mountain. During their caregiving, volunteers have a chance to teach visitors Sheng Yen’s concept of character education and tell them how to practice Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in their everyday life. P86 told me about the way she gives care to her customers:

I took them to a horizontal inscribed board which said ‘the opening of Dharma Drum Mountain’. I told them that the meaning of the inscribed board is to open every person’s wisdom and compassion when they come to Dharma Drum Mountain. I asked one old man from one couple sitting in front of me: “How old are you?” “I’m 77 years old” “Have you ever put your compassion to use in your daily life?” “Of course I have”. I asked him: “can you share your example of how you use your compassion with us?” He laid his hands on his wife and said: “it was her!” His wife laughed loudly. I asked him: “tell us how you use your compassion on your wife”. He said: “after we married, I have never seen anyone complain all the day like my wife. If I did not have compassion, I would be divorced.” I complimented his achievement and asked other visitors to learn his endeavour.

At the end of the guided tour, because our time was limited I told my customers that we could not go to see the Guan-Yin Bodhisattva statues. This 77-year-old man asked me to change my mind and take the group to see the Guan-Yin Bodhisattva statues. He told me that he was very happy to come to Dharma Drum Mountain and felt he had experienced a personal renewal. He wanted to pray for his wife in the front of the Guan-Yin statues and hoped Guan-Yin Bodhisattva could make his wife stop complaining. I complimented him and encouraged him to come to Dharma Drum Mountain again in times of negative emotions. (P86).
In P86’s case, we found that how Buddhist laypeople interpreted Buddhist concepts in their own ways. Perhaps their interpretations of Buddhist concepts are not correct, but from volunteers’ perspective, they often praised visitors’ efforts to practice Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in their daily life. Volunteers’ praise to visitors in their caring practice is important to make visitors generate group solidarity and bring Buddhism back into their daily relational context. Although P86 did not tell me what the other visitors felt about the conversation with this couple, several respondents told me that they had seen many people leaving Dharma Drum Mountain feeling positive. These same people often come back again to join other activities or donate their money to Dharma Drum Mountain. This means that a feeling of group solidarity with Dharma Drum Mountain must have been generated and their donations can be seen as symbolising their respect and support for Dharma Drum Mountain.

Thirdly, after several building tours, volunteers take visitors to a lecture hall to see a 20 minute video which introduces meditation and the core concept of Dharma Drum Mountain: the protection of the spiritual environment. The video uses simple language to instruct visitors how to practice meditation when they visit Dharma Drum Mountain. The video’s meditation instructions are similar in content to the volunteers’ introduction to visitors. However, the rehearsal of the meditation instruction reinforces visitors’ impressions of how to practice meditation when they visit Dharma Drum Mountain. After the video, a Buddhist monastic will give visitors a Dharma talk. The purpose of the Dharma talk is to tell visitors that integrating Buddhist practices into their everyday lives is very straightforward. The Buddhist monastic advise them that “a harmonious world begins in the mind” and give visitors many examples of how to practice Buddhism in their daily lives (Sheng Yen 2008a: 102). I observed that the content of the Dharma talk mainly focused on introducing how to practice Sheng Yen’s
concept of character education in their relational contexts to achieve harmonious relationships with other people and transform their character. The Buddhist monastic introduced Sheng Yen’s concept of character education by asking them simple questions and attempting to establish an emotional bond. Through emotional entrainment, the monastic gradually increased visitors’ emotional arousal.

At the end of the Dharma talk, the monastic will ask every visitor to engage in a ritual of making a vow. The monastic asks visitors to press their palms together, close their eyes and make a vow to learn something from their visit and share what they have learnt with someone when they get back. After the ritual of making a vow, the monastic asks the visitors to clap their hands together to give themselves encouragement. Through the rhythmic coordination and synchronisation of body movements, visitors seem to acquire positive emotional energy and membership feelings. After the Dharma talk, volunteers teach visitors how to practice eating meditation. Volunteers tell visitors they should concentrate on their bodily movements and stop talking. Because the majority of visitors have generated collective effervescence in the Dharma talk, the atmosphere in the dining hall will be normally very quiet.

Meditation practice continued after lunch. To begin with, visitors practice the walking meditation holding a full bowl of water, walking for 50 metres twice, back and forth. Volunteers tell them that performing the walking meditation with a full bowl of water will train them how to concentrate on the water and avoid spilling it. Although the visitors will inevitably focus their attention on their bowls and tend to walk in

14. Eating mediation is a kind of Buddhist body technique through which people practice meditation when they eat a meal.
silence, as they walk together one by one they gradually generate rhythmic coordination and synchronize their footsteps. After the meditation, volunteers invite visitors to share their feelings about holding and walking with the bowls. But because the majority of visitors were shy to express their feelings, it was hard for a common mood to form during the discussion. So the volunteers shared their own experiences of meditation to heighten visitors’ sense of emotional arousal. The volunteers knew how to transmit their emotions to visitors and told visitors how to practice everyday meditation using examples of how they cope with common problems, for instance, how Buddhist practices enable them to balance work and life. They used these examples to create a mutual focus of attention and a common bond with the visitors. Although their efforts often cannot generate collective effervescence amongst the visitors, who tend to remain relatively silent, volunteers maintained that this is normal and hope visitors will attempt mediation in future.

After the walking meditation with a bowl full of water, volunteers lead visitors through wind meditation practice. This is the last and hardest meditation volunteers teach visitors in the guided tours:

Find a place to sit in a comfortable pose and take your eyeglasses off. Close your eyes, relax your body from head, shoulder, chest, to belly. Relax all your muscles from your thighs, knees, ankles and feet to your toes. Pay attention to the sensation of wind blowing on your skin - is it cool, warm, or hot? What kinds of sounds do you hear now? Is it the sound of birds, children’s sounds, or the sound in your mind? Although we hear a variety of sounds, we should keep relaxing our body. Clearly seeing and being aware of the sensations of our body relaxing. Open your eyes, move your body, and twist your hands.

The wind meditation is a Buddhist ritual. People perform the same body movements together following the orders given by volunteers. Visitors are rhythmically entrained by the body movements which will gradually coordinate and synchronise with the
volunteers’ orders. At the end of the meditation I observed, visitors clearly felt a sense of harmony in the atmosphere. The emergence of this sense of harmony can be seen as collective effervescence generated by the ritual of wind meditation.

VOLUNTEER WORK AT THE YOUNG BUDDHIST SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

Volunteer work at the Young Buddhist Society is mainly related to activities rather than the routine operations of the organisation. The Society was established in 1999 and there were 6518 young people attending Buddhist courses and 818 young people volunteering at the Taipei Young Buddhist Society in 2009. Activities of the Young Buddhist Society can be divided into two kinds of activities: (1) long-term activities: the headquarter of Young Buddhist Society holds long-term activities 2 to 4 times every year on the winter and summer vacation for young people from 18 to 35 years old. Currently, the Society holds two kinds of long-term activities, including the excellent youth Chan Camp and the Chan meditation retreat. The length of these activities is about 8 days. These long-term activities are annual big events of the Society and it opens young people at every local branch of the Young Buddhist Society in the world to attend these activities; (2) short-term activities: every local branch of the Young Buddhist Society holds its short-term activities around 1 or 2 times per month to bring members together to learn Buddhism, such as one-day outdoor walking meditation, movie meditation, celebrity lecture and Buddhist reading group. The length of these activities is from two hours to two days.
Volunteer work at the Society can be divided into three types: preparing short-term activity decorations, long-term activity organisation and religious performance such as drumming, dancing and short plays.\(^\text{15}\) Firstly, the Society recruits short-term and temporary volunteers for big annual activities, which are very easy to handle, such as decorating and cleaning activity venues. Volunteers doing this kind of work rarely attend religious congregations and services. They often appear at the Young Buddhist Society only when activities take place. Secondly, the Society recruits long-term volunteers to organise big annual activities lasting between one to seven days. Volunteers who accept this kind of work are often senior volunteers or volunteer staff. They have higher levels of group solidarity and group identity than other volunteers. This kind of volunteer work has two patterns depending on the length of activities. At one day or two day activities volunteer members of staff are responsible for planning and execution. Activities lasting more than two days require task-oriented planning and the Society allocates some senior volunteers to organise these. Thirdly, the Society recruits volunteers who are interested in performance activities. Religious performances are one of the unique characteristics of volunteer work at the Young Buddhist Society although I did not get a chance to observe this kind of activity.

Volunteer work at the Young Buddhist Society provides young adults with experience of volunteering in a group. As group members, young adults have to learn how to negotiate and cooperate with others to complete their volunteer tasks. Volunteering for Dharma Drum Mountain gives these young adults a chance to experience the different cultures of groups or areas in which they volunteer. Bodily presence in different

\(^{15}\) The Young Buddhist Society has established a drum team to train young adults three hours once a week over eight years. In addition, the Society has a performance team to organise dancing activities. As for the short plays, these are often designed and acted out by the volunteer staff team.
volunteer places allows young adults to learn how to embody religious practices in their volunteer work automatically. They also have a chance to present themselves in different performance activities such as drumming, religious dancing and short dramas. They learn to view themselves as performers and audience at the same time; they “perform and they see others as performers, they perform for an audience yet they are also members of a range of audiences” (Bagnall 2003: 87). Religious performance is an embodied practice transmitting performers’ emotions to audience. At the same time, it stems from being consciously aware of other performers’ body movements and bodily sensations when practicing Buddhism and engaging in Buddhist body technique.

Volunteer networks at the Young Buddhist Society can be seen as “loosely connected networks” (Lichterman 2005). Lichterman defines volunteering as “doing things together loosely” and some of these activities are not as successful as accomplished as interaction rituals as some of the other types of volunteering we have looked at above. Loosely connected networks exist in “the task-oriented, short-term, plug-in style of volunteering” (Lichterman 2005: 66-67). They prize “efficient, task-oriented volunteers and efficient, knowledgeable networker with lots of social connections” (Ibid). Volunteer groups with loosely connected networks “ask volunteers to commit to short-term tasks for a couple of hours a week. They do not require indefinite, loyal commitments to a group as a whole” (Ibid). Volunteers in this kind of setting often maintain “loose, easily detachable group bonds with other volunteers” and Lichterman describes this kind of volunteer group as “an aggregate of temporary comrades with whom one might strike up quick conversations and not see again … Speech norms were simple because speech was minimal: Volunteers limited conversation to genial chat” (Lichterman 2005: 88). Lichterman argues that in loosely connected networks it
is hard to build social capital which is “comprised of relationships in which people are doing with others, rather than doing for others” (Lichterman 2005: 82-83). Social capital implies volunteers “develop regular connections over time” but volunteering in a loosely connected network tends to lead to “brief interpersonal, sometimes very impersonal relationships” (Ibid).

In the section below, I focus mainly on the first and second types of volunteer work and explore how volunteers interact with each other during their volunteering. I will make use of Lichterman’s (2005) “loosely connected networks” concept to explore how young volunteers interact with other volunteers whilst performing the first and second types of volunteer duties distinguished above. I observed the first type, short-term one-day activities, in my role as team leader for decoration. Volunteers doing this kind of work find it hard to build social capital due to the lack of interaction. The second type, long-term activities, I observed as a team member and it was clear that because volunteers had more time to meet and chat, they were more likely to make friendships.

**Short-term activity organisation**

1. **Pre-activity preparations**

Activities organisers at the Young Buddhist Society have to negotiate and coordinate with many people to complete the tasks they are assigned. As team leader in charge of decoration, there were two things I had to do as part of the pre-activity preparations. Firstly, I had to write a work proposal and then submit it to the monastic. The content
of the proposal included a schedule and an itemised list of what I would need to borrow to prepare for decoration. Because the decoration of a one-day activity follows a fixed pattern, the only thing I needed to do was to learn this pattern and make sure I had borrowed and prepared all the necessary things. At this stage, the level of my social capital at the Society did not affect my progress as I was simply following the template.

Secondly, I had to recruit my volunteer team members by telephone. Apart from the 4 unit leaders of my teams, who were staff that volunteered for my team, all my team members were recruited by telephone. From my perspective, because I was not a member of volunteer staff at the Young Buddhist Society, my social capital in the volunteer staff team was low. However, because I was one of the most senior volunteers currently active at the Society, I understood many aspects of organisational culture of the Society and had accumulated a great deal of Buddhist knowledge. As Schneider (1999) points out, the mobilization of social capital depends on volunteers expressing their cultural values. In this case, the volunteer staff team not only knew my background but I had also shared my Buddhist knowledge with some staff in private. I could feel my social capital increasing whilst I was organising the activity, because of the support I received from volunteer staff, with whom I managed to gradually generate trust, reciprocity and, in Collins’ terms, emotional energy.

The activity took a month to organise but my accumulated social capital as part of the volunteer staff team was not put to use until the telephone recruitment phase the week before the activity. Many volunteer staff came to help me recruit volunteers by phone.

16. I was only familiar with 2 or 3 volunteer staff at that time but the total number of volunteer staff was over 20.
The Society gave me a four page list of members but I only knew about five of the members listed. Therefore, whenever somebody accepted our invitation to volunteer I put it down to the fact that they had previous experience of attending annual big activities or that the activity fitted in with their schedules at the time. I did not feel that they were responding to me personally. Although I was their team leader, my relationship with the majority of them was impersonal and I had never even met most of my team members. We were strangers, like Lichterman’s (2005: 72) volunteers “doing for others, rather than doing with others”.

2. Organisation on the day the activity took place

Apart from the four unit staff, my team members and I did not meet each other until the day activity took place. Because I trusted my four unit staff, I assigned each team member to one of the four units and let the unit staff lead them in their work. I then spent my time monitoring their activities and observing their interaction. I made several discoveries. Firstly, the majority of my team members did not know each other. Apart from the kitchen unit which had worked together for a day or so before, the volunteers in the other three units had previously spent less than one hour together, again demonstrating that the lack of interaction inherent to volunteering means that volunteers found it hard to build social capital and to make friendships. Secondly, at the end of their scheduled volunteering, the Society would often ask volunteers to join another activity rather than leave them to go home. I found that volunteers rarely had conversations during the activity due to the unwritten rule that they should stop

17. The source of member lists was from previous attendants of annual big activities.
talking. In Lichterman’s study, it was also found that “speech norms were simple because speech was minimal: Volunteers limited conversation to genial chat” (Lichterman 2005: 88). These two factors meant volunteers created “loose, easily detachable group bonds with other volunteers” (Ibid). Likewise, at the Young Buddhist Society short-term, task-oriented and temporary volunteers seemed to interact with others as part of “loosely connected networks” that lacked much of the strength of successful interaction rituals (Lichterman 2005).

**Long-term activity organisation**

1. **Pre-activity preparations**

Pre-activity preparations at The Young Buddhist Society are the responsibility of two units. The external unit is responsible for providing activities volunteers with practical support such as food and accommodation. I have already discussed this in the section on the pre-activity preparations for the short-term activity above. The internal unit is responsible for designing activities courses, which take around four months to prepare for, with 10 volunteers meeting together to discuss progress twice a month, in a team including senior and new volunteers. The group discussion sessions would normally be led by a monastic, who would choose a senior volunteer to be the team leader.

At the meetings, the monastics would expect team volunteers to exhibit their Buddhist knowledge and to know how to design vibrant and lively courses from a young person’s perspective. However, the meetings were often frustrating experience for all that attended. From the monastics’ perspective, the responses of young volunteers were
unsatisfactory because the young volunteers’ knowledge of Buddhist concepts was not extensive. Meanwhile young volunteers found it difficult to exhibit the appropriate Buddhist knowledge. Some monastics felt that it would be easier to generate a course proposal if young volunteers did not attend the meeting. From the young volunteers’ perspective, some felt that the monastics did not respect their opinions, as their course proposals were sometimes totally rejected by the monastics. Some volunteers mentioned that the most frustrating aspect of the meetings was that the monastics could not express clearly what they wanted, even when they rejected volunteers’ proposals. The attitude of the monastics increased volunteers’ feelings of uncertainty and gradually decreased their group solidarity. Some volunteers even mentioned privately that they were reluctant to attend again. Similarly, in Schneider’ study (1999: 289) “failure to understand the cultural practices led to withdrawal of social capital links on both side”.

After several weeks of conflict and negotiations, the monastics tried to organising a reading group instead. The monastics hoped that the reading group would create emotional bonds through the conversation, thus enhancing volunteers’ group solidarity. They gave one of Sheng Yen’s articles to the young volunteers’ to read as at home and discussed the article together in the next meeting. The reading group progressed through two stages. In the first stage, the monastics would patiently explain the Buddhist concepts contained in the articles, which were difficult to understand as they were full of Buddhist terminology. This gave young volunteers the chance to accumulate Buddhist knowledge which could then be transmitted to the discussions about the activity courses. In the second stage, the monastics let young volunteers share their feelings about the articles and encouraged the volunteers to use their personal experiences to interpret the Buddhist concepts being presented, which in turn
helped the volunteers to learn how to embody religious practice into their daily lives.

Monastics and the majority of volunteers shared their own touching stories and all attendants were deeply moved. These stories played an important role to increase intersubjectively understanding through letting attendants reflected their own life experiences and comparing their own opinions with other attendants’ perspectives in conversations. Through mutual entrainment of emotion and attention, the young volunteers and the monastics all had a sense of group solidarity. On the one hand, young volunteers felt that they obtained respect and care by the monastics. Some volunteers even expressed their gratitude to the monastics in the reading group. The reading group contributes young volunteers to generate moral feelings and increased Buddhist knowledge. On the other hand, the monastics also felt that they obtained respect because they saw volunteers making effort to increase their knowledge of Buddhism. Volunteers’ gratitude aroused monastics’ emotions and became the monastics’ motivation for allowing these young volunteers to be involved in the pre-activity preparations. The monastics also expressed their gratitude for the volunteers’ dedication and contribution to the activity.

From the theoretical perspective, gratitude and respect are two key Chinese Buddhist moral concepts used to increase intersubjective understanding and resolve conflict in the reading group. Firstly, gratitude as a kind of moral emotion plays an important role in motivating and supporting our actions (Nussbaum 2001). Gratitude also contributed to maintaining the social order of the reading group (States et al. 2008). Secondly, According to Sennett’s (2003) view of respect, he describes respect as an “expressive performance”, where we find “the words and gestures which make it felt and convincing (Sennett 2003: 207-226). Ritual exchanges can build mutual respect and
both young volunteers and the monastics showed respect to other to maintain their dignity. Therefore, the reading group gave volunteers and the monastics a space to communicate with each other. Volunteers and the monastics all gradually attuned themselves to coordinate each other’s opinions and generate a harmonious relationship which contributed to the pre-activity preparations. Volunteers and the monastics all practiced Sheng Yen’s concept of character education to learn how to make their relationships become harmonious.

2. Organisation on the day the activity took place

The volunteer work of the course unit during the activity is relatively simple. Because the proposed course was given by different lecturers, volunteers were assigned to do other volunteer work related to courses such as acoustics control, taking pictures, writing activity news and so forth. During the process of the activity, each member did their own duties individually. Volunteers gathered together to take part in the review meeting with monastics to examine the operation of the activity at each night of the long-term activity. Volunteers pointed out problems that needed to be corrected the following day, the monastics and course unit staff would also share anecdotes about the day’s activities, which helped to arouse their emotions and reinforce their commitment to the activity.

As for young volunteers, the importance of the review meeting offers them a good opportunity to consult the monastics about how to practice Chinese Buddhist moral concepts when they interact with attendants in terms of Sheng Yen’s concept of character education, particularly caring practices, because the majority of young
volunteers are too young to observe and correctly understand attendants’ feelings. According to my observation, some young volunteers mentioned that they were frustrated on how to give care to attendants appropriately and then earn attendants’ respect. Some young volunteers mentioned that it was their first time caring for others in a group. I found that Sheng Yen’s concept of character education contributed by helping young volunteers to learn how to solve their conflicts with other young volunteers or attendants and then achieve harmonious relationships with others through practicing Chinese Buddhist moral concepts.

**CONCLUSION**

The chapter explores how volunteers at three volunteer groups of Dharma Drum Mountain practice Sheng Yen’s notion of character education through practicing Chinese Buddhist moral concepts like care and respect and Chinese meditation and in their volunteer works, including the End-of-Life Chanting Group, the World Centre for Buddhist Education and the Young Buddhist Society. The chapter makes use of Sayer’s (2005, 2011) concepts of ethical dispositions and lay normativity and Bottero’s (2010) concept of practice as the negotiated outcome of intersubjective coordination to explore how volunteers make use of their moral dispositions and moral emotions to interact with their clients and other volunteers and how volunteers engage in intersubjective negotiation with other people in their volunteer works to resolve conflicts and achieve harmonious relationships.

One of the findings of the chapter is that volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting Group and the World Centre for Buddhist Education did practice Sheng Yen’s concept of
character education to serve their clients through practicing Chinese Buddhist moral concepts and meditation. The Chinese Buddhist moral practices of the two groups are similar in the sense that that volunteers all gave care to their clients, but the methods of caregiving were different, reflecting the different natures of their volunteer work. The difference between the two groups in terms of Buddhist moral practice is that volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting Group made use of empathy and respect to interact with their clients, whereas volunteers at the World Centre for Buddhist Education made use of gratitude.

Volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting Group played the role of mediator gathering information on funeral matters and presenting it to the dying and the families of the deceased with sharing of Buddhist knowledge. Care is the most important moral disposition and the Chinese Buddhist moral concept in which volunteers used to arouse the dying and family members’ emotions. When volunteers interacted with the dying, they mainly expressed their empathy through listening and conversation to create a shared mood and mutual focus of attention. The key to arousing the emotions of the dying is to build an emotional bond with clients via empathetic conversation to reach a mutual understanding and trust. When volunteers interacted with the family members of the deceased at the family meeting, their moral practices took place through negotiations with family members of the deceased to secure their agreement to adopt Buddhist funeral rites. Volunteers gave care to the family and made an emotional commitment to be there for the family whenever they encountered a problem. This helped to generate a shared mood and create a common focus of attention around the question of which funeral rite would be best for the dying. However, if the family declined further help, volunteers would express respect for the family members’ decision. Finally, volunteers offered embodied care for family members at the
Buddhist funeral rites. When volunteers saw family members crying, they showed by touching, for example, by giving hugs or tissues. Volunteers also held relatives’ hands and patted their shoulders to alleviate their feelings of grief. Volunteers sat silently with family members throughout the rite, providing company with their physical presence.

With respect to the volunteers at the World Centre for Buddhist Education, the chapter focused on exploring how volunteers at the Visitor Service Centre gave care to visitors. Volunteers viewed caring for visitors as a method of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation and an opportunity to transform their characters in terms of Sheng Yen’s concept of character education. According to the findings of the researcher, volunteers’ caregiving begins when they first encounter visitors, when volunteers enter visitors’ coaches to tell visitors things they should bear in mind whilst at the Centre. In the coaches, volunteers stand at the front of the bus to create a mutual focus of attention and to make themselves visible to each visitor. Their introductory talk and first conversations with visitors is designed to create a shared mood. They give care to visitors by smiling and speaking in enthusiastic tones, in order to make a good first impression. Conversations of gestures contribute to the mutual focus of attention and emotional entrainment. Volunteers acknowledge visitors’ backgrounds and feelings with empathy and gratitude. This expression of moral emotions to visitors contributes to the creation of the shared mood necessary to generate group solidarity.

As for the Young Buddhist Society, the young volunteers learned how to practice Sheng Yen’s concept of character education in their volunteer works, particularly in their interactions with Buddhist monastics. The chapter found that Buddhist monastics taught young volunteers Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in reading groups in a
pre-activity preparation for a long-term activity organisation and the review meeting as the activity took place. Firstly, the purpose of the reading group is to increase young volunteers’ Buddhist knowledge, including Chinese Buddhist moral concepts. The reading group gave volunteers and the monastics a space to communicate with each other for mutual understanding through story sharing. These stories played an important role in increasing intersubjectively understanding, enabling attendants to reflect on their own life experiences and compare their opinions with those of the other attendants’ in conversations. It was found that gratitude and respect were the two key Chinese Buddhist moral dispositions in Sheng Yen’s concept of character education used to increase intersubjective understanding and resolve conflict in the reading group. Finally, volunteers and the monastics all practiced Sheng Yen’s concept of character education to learn how to make their relationships become harmonious during the pre-activity preparation. Secondly, the chapter found young volunteers also learned Sheng Yen’s concept of character education from Buddhist monastics in a review meeting as the activity took place, particularly how to give care to their clients in activities, because the majority of young volunteers are too young to observe and correctly understand attendants’ feelings. Sheng Yen’s concept of character education contributed to young volunteers learning how to solve their conflicts with other young volunteers or attendants and then achieve harmonious relationships with others through practicing Chinese Buddhist moral concepts.

Lastly, the chapter explored how volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain made use of meditation practice to serve their clients. Volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting Group mainly made use of the name recitation ritual to arouse their clients’ emotions. For instance, at the moment of death, volunteers invited the family members of the deceased to chant the Buddha’s name with them. Here volunteers’ daily practice of
meditation or Buddha’s name chanting will have an effect on the proceedings as their grasp of Buddhist meditation practice enables volunteers to fully concentrate on each syllable of Amitabha and gradually synchronise the rhythmic blend of the voices. Through the rhythmic coordination and synchronisation of participants’ voices, the sounds of the Buddha’s name being recited created an atmosphere of sacred harmony and served to generate collective effervescence.
Family: Intergenerational and Marital Relationships

INTRODUCTION

The chapter explores how volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain practice Sheng Yen’s notion of character education in a family context. Sheng Yen highlights the importance of family ethics to Buddhist volunteering and many senior respondents mentioned in their interviews how Sheng Yen had reminded them to first take care of their families before engaging in Buddhist volunteering. In addition, Sheng Yen places family at the centre of Chinese Buddhist moral practice in his character education and encourages Chinese Buddhists to learn how to achieve harmony between the self and others through self-cultivation and the practice of family ethics within the family. These aspects were introduced in Chapter 1. Sheng Yen points out that each family member should play their family roles by fulfilling their duties and responsibilities and thinking about how to give care and respect to other family members, instead of calculating what they can gain from the relationship. As he puts it, “whatever roles we play, we should contribute ourselves for the sake of fulfilling our roles and responsibilities, instead of fighting for our interests; while seeking our own benefits we should respect others and care about them” (http://www.dharmadrum.org/content/about/about.aspx?sn=113).

In other words, according to Sheng Yen’s interpretation of family ethics, Chinese
Buddhists should make use of care and respect to interact with their family members for the sake of self-cultivation and social harmony through learning how to become a person in family context. As explained in Chapter 1, Sheng Yen maintains that if Chinese Buddhists want their relationships to be harmonious, they should practice pursuing their own interests and caring for others at the same time when they interact with others. Sheng Yen points out that care and respect are two Chinese Buddhist moral practices for transforming Chinese Buddhists’ characters and attain harmonious relationships with others. This chapter focuses on volunteers’ family context and explore how volunteers practice Sheng Yen’s notion of character education with care and respect in their interactions with family members.

From a sociological perspective, Sayer (2011) defines care and respect as moral dispositions in terms of his concept of lay normativity. Sayer makes use of his theory of lay normativity, introduced in Chapter 1, to explain the ethical dimension of everyday life. According to Sayer’s (2011) concept of lay normativity, people make use of several factors to flourish and achieve mutual well-being in daily life, including moral emotions, evaluation, moral dispositions and discourses. The chapter make use of Sayer’s theory to explore how volunteers make use of moral dispositions and moral emotions to interact with their family members. In addition, I will also make use of Bottero’s (2010) concept of practice as negotiated outcome of intersubjective coordination to explain how volunteers negotiate religious involvement with their family members for family harmony and mutual well-being. Many respondents told me that Buddhist volunteering often became the main source of tensions with their family members. Intersubjective negotiation is therefore important to volunteers attempting to attain harmonious relationships with their family members.
The chapter is organised into four sections. Firstly, I will introduce the family backgrounds of my respondents from the four types of volunteer groups (represented by the End-of-Life Chanting Group, the Young Buddhist Society, the World Centre for Buddhist Education and other volunteer groups such as the Chan Meditation Society and the Fasin society). Secondly, I will focus on intergenerational relationships to explore how Buddhism influences volunteers’ family lives through parents’ transmission of the volunteering ethos to their children and how adult children as volunteers help their parents. Finally, I explore how volunteers practice Sheng Yen’s concept of character education in marital relationships to solve marital conflicts and achieve harmony through intersubjective negotiation.

**THE FAMILY BACKGROUND OF VOLUNTEERS AT DHARMA DRUM MOUNTAIN**

This chapter introduces the family backgrounds of Buddhist volunteers by considering their family roles. The roles played by Buddhist volunteers in their families show how family ties affect their volunteering and their Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation through daily family interactions. In my fieldwork, the family roles of Buddhist volunteers include parent, child and partner. My empirical data are drawn mainly from three volunteer groups of DDM: the Young Buddhist Society, the End-of-Life Chanting group and the World Centre for Buddhist Education. In addition, I interviewed several volunteers from the Chan Meditation Society and the Fasin Society (the “think-tank” of Dharma Drum Mountain).
Table 5.1: Indicators of family backgrounds of DDM volunteers (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Young</th>
<th>End-of-Life</th>
<th>World Centre for Buddhist Education</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist Society</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-of-Life Chanting Group</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Centre for Buddhist Education</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under-35</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.1 shows that the characteristics of the volunteers in these groups vary with respect to family background. In terms of age, the volunteers of the Young Buddhist Society are young people, whose ages are equal to or lower than 35, reflecting the restricted entry criteria of the Society. The Young Buddhist Society is the only volunteer group at Dharma Drum Mountain which has an age limitation. Although not every volunteer of the Young Buddhist Society is single, only a minority of volunteers of the Society are married.

As for the other volunteer groups, all their volunteers are over 35 years old apart from those from the World Centre for Buddhist Education. In terms of marital status, all the volunteers of the Young Buddhist Society are single, the volunteers from the End-of-Life Chanting Group as well as the other volunteer groups are all married, and half of the volunteers from the World Centre for Buddhist Education are single; the rest of the volunteers at the World Centre for Buddhist Education are married. With respect to work status, 25 percent of those volunteering at the Young Buddhist Society are unemployed and 75 percent are employed. As for the End-of-Life Chanting group, 18 percent of its volunteers are employed and 82 percent are unemployed. Its unemployed volunteers are all housewives. As for other volunteer groups, 33 percent of volunteers are employed and 67 percent are unemployed, one is a retired woman and the other one is a housewife. At the World Centre for Buddhist Education, 67 percent of volunteers are employed and 33 percent are unemployed. Amongst my interviewees, some unemployed volunteers are young adults who have just left their previous jobs and are waiting for another one, and some are full-time volunteers who live at the World Centre for Buddhist Education. The World Centre for Buddhist society provides some accommodation for volunteers to live in. Some retired people choose to become long-term volunteers and live in the accommodation offered by the
World Centre for Buddhist Education.

Finally, in terms of the male-female balance of the interviewees 37 percent of volunteers interviewed from The Young Buddhist Society were male, 18 percent from the End-of-Life Chanting group, 32 percent from the World Centre for Buddhist Education, and 33 percent from other volunteer groups. Correspondingly, the percentages of female volunteers interviewed are as follows: 63 percent of volunteers from The Young Buddhist Society were female, 82 percent from the End-of-Life Chanting group, 68 percent of volunteers from the World Centre for Buddhist Education, and 67 percent from other volunteer groups.

INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

INTRODUCTION

This section explores how volunteers play two kinds of roles in their intergenerational family relationships in order to practice Sheng Yen’s notion of character education through moral dispositions like care and respect to family members in the domains of daily family routines and life events, as parents and children. The following section is divided into two parts. Firstly, I consider how parents as volunteers make use of Buddhist knowledge to care for their children through transmitting religiosity. Secondly, I explore how religion affects intergenerational relationships in daily family routines in Buddhist families and non-Buddhist families, and how adult children as volunteers care for their parents with their religious resources.
PARENTS AS VOLUNTEERS

Daily family routines

In daily family routines, parents as Buddhist volunteers often transmit religiosity to their children through role modelling for “value internalisation” (Bekkers 2007). Parents, being good examples of religious volunteers themselves, show their children how to sacrifice their leisure time to help a religious organisation reach its goals. Bekkers (2007: 100) maintains that “children who see their parents volunteer become accustomed to the idea that personal sacrifice for some greater good has intrinsic value. To the extent that children internalize prosocial values, they will be more likely to engage in volunteering behaviour when they grow up”.

P27 is a fresh-faced and active youth volunteer, and he provided me with a detailed explanation of how his father exemplified Buddhist volunteering and affected his decision to become a volunteer:

As for the reason why I want to be a volunteer, my first thought is my father. My father became an active Tzuchi volunteer when I was in primary school. I remember he often went directly to do recycling in Tzuchi without going home first, from Monday to Friday. He often went to Tzuchi to attend the meeting or the reading group at the weekend. I was deeply moved by his involvement with recycling in Tzuchi. His behaviour and spirit affected me a lot. For instance, one senior high school classmate was chatting with me yesterday and asked me why I always cared for others? He mentioned as an example how I always empty the trash when the trash bin is full. I think I do it because it’s something I learned from my father. He really practiced the spirit of recycling at home and in his everyday life. After seeing my father recycling the trash for many years since my childhood, I feel that to become a volunteer is very natural and necessary. (P27)

The ways volunteering parents at Dharma Drum Mountain transmit religiosity to their
children vary by gender. Male volunteers often transmit religiosity to their children through joint family or religious activities:

When my wife and I do prostrations to Buddha at home, my daughter often practices the prostrations with us. (P11).

When my son was a primary school student, I often brought him to volunteer at Dharma Drum Mountain. (P7).

Conversely, according to my interviews, female parent respondents never mentioned bringing their children to volunteer or attending religious activities together. Rather, they would recommend Dharma Drum Mountain’s activities to their children but maintained that it was their children’s decision whether they attended the activities or not:

The way I transmitted Buddhism to my children was to recommend they joined the Young Buddhist Society. (P86)

I only tried to tell my children that there would be some religious activities at Dharma Drum Mountain. I accepted and respected their final decisions about attending activities. I thought their decisions were affected by causes and conditions. The only thing I could do was to bless them. (P70).

Because I liked Dharma Drum Mountain and I have benefited a lot from DDM, I hope my daughter can attend the activities of Dharma Drum Mountain to learn Buddhism through their favourite ways. Because she is a young person, I have suggested she attend the Chan Meditation Retreat or related Dharma Camps. I thought these activities would fit her needs. (P64).

Pagis (2009) maintains that Buddhism is a reflexive practice anchored in bodily sensations and calls Buddhist body pedagogics “embodied self-reflexivity”. This refers to “the conscious turning of the individual toward himself, simultaneously being the observing subject and the observed object, a process that includes both self-knowledge and self-monitoring” (Pagis 2009: 266). Because volunteers’ children can only make sense of the meanings of their parents’ practices of embodied self-reflexivity when
they learn to practice Buddhism themselves, my parent respondents maintained that the best way to teach their children Buddhist values and practices is to demonstrate their religiosity with their bodies when they interact with their children, rather than teaching their children abstract Buddhist concepts. In other words, my respondents’ parental religious socialisation practices start from the premise that example is better than precept. One active female respondent told me details of how she transmitted religiosity to her children:

The way I introduced my children to Buddhism was to share volunteer opportunities and information on Buddhist activities with them, and let my children see my growth from my Buddhist practice which showed in the quality of our mother-child relationships. My interaction with my second son, for example, he disliked my attendance of Buddhist service and felt that I was very superstitious. I listened to his criticism and made use of Buddhist concepts to let it go. Buddhist values taught me to view everyone as Bodhisattva, so I viewed him as a Bodhisattva in my life and respected his opinion. I did not quarrel with him, condemn his criticism or force him to accept my religious involvement. Rather, sometimes I shared some Buddhist concepts which had affected me a lot with him, sharing my feelings about attending Buddhist activities and endeavouring to improve my relationship with my second son with warmth and caring. I tried to make him feel the difference in the way I treated him after I learned Buddhism. I tried to evoke a sense of curiosity in him about Dharma Drum Mountain and attending Buddhist activities as well. Gradually, he accepted my suggestion to attend some Buddhist activities at Dharma Drum Mountain. (P70)

P70’s case shows how a volunteering mother can transmit her religiosity to her son in daily family routines. P70’s interview suggests that her parental religious socialisation is embedded in her everyday communication with her son. She maintains a positive parent-child relationship by avoiding quarrels to do with her religious involvement and interacts with her son with warmth and caring. Tolerance with her son is P70’s solution in her tension with her son in her religious transmission. P70’s case of caring practice with tolerance can be seen as apotheosis of Buddhist care in terms of Sheng Yen’s concept of Buddhist care, which I were introduced in Chapter 2, because Sheng Yen points out that our capacity for tolerance reveals that we can respect different voices
and cultivate our Chinese Buddhist moral self. In addition, according to Sheng Yen’s notion of character education, P70’s solution of her tension with her son with tolerance contributes her to transform her character and attain harmonious relationship with her son.

P7 is a senior male volunteer. His parental religious socialisation practices also rely on cultivating good quality parent-child relationships with his children. This is done through joint family activities:

The way I transmitted Buddhism to my children was to care for them and spend time doing things with them. If I had to work shifts, I would take my children to my company. If I was free, I would take them climbing or to do exercise outdoors. My wife always accused me of not treating my children like ‘children’. She thought it was weird. However, I thought it was because I treated my children as my friends that we could talk about any topic with each other. Now they have grown up and left home, but we are still very close. I thought the way I interacted with my children was in terms of Buddhist concepts and values. I tried to practice Buddhism in my everyday life. (P7).

P70 and P7 show the quality of the parent-child relationship partly determines the results of religious socialisation. P70 and P7’s description of their parent-child relationships also concur with Wuthnow’s (1995) findings that joint parent-child family activities and communication can bring about successful religious socialisation. To cultivate positive parent-child relationships, “the amount of time spent together need not be long, but it must be time that both the child and the parents enjoy”. (Wuthnow 1995: 44) As for the content of parent-child communication, “parents and child need not discuss anything specific, but an element of trust and openness must be present so that the child feels comfortable talking to the parent” (Ibid).

However, P70 mainly shared her religious experiences rather than her volunteer experiences with her son. P64 is another active female respondent. She maintained that
she tried to share her volunteer experiences with her children but admitted that there were seldom opportunities to broach volunteer matters because “there are many more significant topics to talk about and discuss, such as schooling and their children’s friendships”. P64 has a daughter who is an active young volunteer at the Young Buddhist Society now. P64 shared with me how she discussed her experiences of religious volunteering with her daughter:

I did not talk about my volunteer experience with my daughter very often. My daughter and I rarely discussed topics related to Buddhism. I often shared my volunteer experience with my daughter indirectly through my conversations with other volunteers on the phone. I have many phone calls from volunteer members of the End-of-Life Chanting Group in one day. When she was at home, naturally she could hear my conversations with other volunteers and gradually learned how I employed Buddhist concepts to solve the difficulties of other people volunteering (P64).

Although P64 did not often share her volunteer experiences with her daughter directly, she would attempt to transmit Buddhist values to her daughter when they talked about what her daughter had gained from religious volunteering and activities:

I often discussed what my daughter had gained from the activities of the Young Buddhist Society when she got home. I often asked her ‘how was the activity? Do you want to share something with me?’ For instance, she just attended an activity a few days ago, and she told me that one unit of the activity was to discuss ‘who was the most significant person in your life?’ Her answer was her mother. She shared her daily interactions with me with the other young people. (P64)

The parent respondents’ descriptions above demonstrate that positive parent-child relationships, communication in an atmosphere of warmth, and caring in family daily routines foster continuity in religious behaviours between generations (Boyatzis and Janicki 2003; Day et al. 2009; Dudley and Wisbey 2000; Myers 1996:865; Taris and Semin 1997). From the lay normativity perspective, all the respondents’ accounts support Sayer’s (2011) notion of care as a type of lay normativity. Sayer argues that care is important to our socialization, because we “depend on the quality of care and
the formation of supportive attachments” to grow up (Sayer 2011: 148). Care is thus a social disposition practiced in relationships. Caring relationships enhance our ability to relate to others and find the balance between self-interest and altruism for mutually beneficial attachments. Through caregiving, each of the respondents above successfully fostered their relationships with family members.

**Life events**

When life events happen to their children, parent volunteers often look around for useful resources with which to care for their children. Their experiences of religious volunteering generally help them to find what they need to solve problems successfully. This process can be divided into two aspects: firstly, parents view dealing with their children’s problems as a form of religious practice and make use of the Buddhist concepts they learn from volunteering to find solutions: secondly, parents also make use of the practical resources they have accumulated whilst volunteering, particularly personal social ties, to help their children. When volunteers engage in parental care for their children, they often need to intersubjectively negotiate with other people to coordinate their opinions for their children’s problems. Volunteers also tend to view the practice of intersubjectively coordinated negotiation as a part of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation and the way to attain harmonious relationships with others in terms of Sheng Yen’s notion of character education.

**Buddhist practice as a form of mutual caretaking**
Everyday religion encompasses “all the ways in which non-experts experience religion” (Ammerman 2007: 4). People’s daily religious practice is thus “constituted by cultural bricolage” where religious ideas are “invented, taken, borrowed, and improvised at the intersections of life” (Orsi 1997: 7-8). As for the parent volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain, although they learn Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in their volunteer work or Dharma class, they often interpret what they learn in their own way and practice Buddhism in their family life using their own unique resources and methods. This reflects the fact that for ordinary people religious beliefs “have no stable or intrinsic truth values that can be defined outside of contexts of use” (Jackson 1989:63; cited in Orsi 1997: 9). Parents’ daily religious practices are therefore acts of religious creativity and they clearly treasure their own religious experiences because they help them to successfully solve their children’s problems.

P7’s case is a good example of how ordinary people interpret religious practices to guide their children safely through major life events. P7 is a single father who has had to care for his four children since his wife died when his first child was just eight years old. He provided me with details of how he made use of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to deal with the difficulties his children encountered at primary school. He interpreted Buddhist practice as taking care of each other. He engaged in parental care by intersubjectively negotiating with his daughter’s teacher to coordinate their opinions and resolve his daughter’s tendency to flout class norms. P7 views family as a place of caring (Wuthnow 1995) and believes that the best way to practice Buddhism in parent-child relationships is to give emotional support to resolve the practical problems his children encounter in their everyday life:

I think Buddhist practice in daily life is to take care of each other. For instance, one day my third daughter’s first grade homeroom teacher at her primary school called me and complained to me about
my third daughter’s behaviour. I listened to her complaint and explained to her that my daughter was from a single parent family, but I was willing to cooperate with her to find the reasons for her bad behaviour at school. Her homeroom teacher told me that my daughter had refused to enter the class and just stood at the door for three days in a row. On the fourth day, the teacher found a way to make her enter the class. When lunchtime arrived, however, my daughter suddenly got angry. She threw her books at her classmates sitting around her, grabbed her classmates’ books and refused to return. After a discussion with her teacher, we found that it was all due to my daughter’s habit of eating snacks. My daughter was cared for by my wife’s parents for a while after she died and she was used to eating snacks several times a day in their home. However, she could not maintain her habit in school. Her hungriness made her angry and she attacked her classmates. After finding her problem, I provided my daughter with two breakfasts and let her take one breakfast to school. This solution successfully solved my daughter’s problem. (P7)

Using social capital to help children

Religious volunteering can generate social capital as volunteers build social connections through volunteer work which provide them with different kinds of resources. These resources are embedded in volunteers’ personal networks (Wilson and Musick 1997). There are a number of definitions of social capital (Alder and Kwon 2002; Portes 1998) but Coleman’s (1988) definition is the most cited in family studies (Dyk and Wilson 1999; Hagan et al. 1996; Mitchell 1994; Portes 1998; Zontini 2004). The chapter applies Coleman’s concept of social capital to the Chinese Buddhist family context. Coleman (1988) defines social capital as a resource which “inheres in

1. Alder and Kwon (2002:20) provide a table of definitions of social capital which includes 20 definitions from several of the most important scholars working in this area.
2. Falk (2000: 2) makes use of learning as an example to explain the difference between human and social capital. Falk argues that human capital refers to “the skills and knowledge we gather in formal and informal learning”. Social capital “built through meaningful interactions between people, facilitates the learning and use of these skills and knowledge”. Schuller compares different definitions of social capital from different scholars and points out that social capital is often “defined in terms of networks, norms and trust, and the way these allow agents and institutions to be more effective in achieving common objectives”. Human capital, by contrast, Schuller points out
the structure of relations between actors and among actors”. Social capital can “facilitate certain actions of actors - whether persons or corporate actors - within the structure”. It is “productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible” (Coleman 1988: 97-100). Coleman also maintains that social capital within the family is “necessary for the child to profit from access to other kinds of resources” (Mitchell 1994:653). ³ Coleman (1988) indicates that social capital is “appropriable” and, for instance, “an actor's network of, say, friendship ties can be used for other purposes, such as information gathering or advice” (Alder and Kwon 2002:21).

Parent volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain accumulate considerable religious resources as a result of their volunteer work and when their children encounter problems in daily life, they will naturally make use of their bridging social capital to help their children solve problems related to life events.⁴ They do not use their social networks from the religious volunteer group to help themselves but for their children. In other words, parent volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain view their bridging social capital as “appropriable” (Coleman 1988) when it comes to their children. P21 is an

³ Coleman (1988:110) maintains that “the social capital of the family is the relations between children and parents ... if the human capital possessed by parents is not complemented by social capital embodied in family relations, it is irrelevant to the child's educational growth that the parent has a great deal, or a small amount of human capital”.

⁴ Scholars have similar opinions on the definitions of bridging social capital. For instance, Michael Woolcock (2001:13-14) argues that bridging social capital “encompasses more distant ties of like persons, such as loose friendships and workmates”. Robert Putnam (2000: 22-23) argues that bridging social capital is “better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion … Moreover, bridging social capital can generate broader identities and reciprocity.”
active volunteer. He provided me with a story of how he made use of his social networks at Dharma Drum Mountain to help his daughter solve her housing problems and find somewhere to live whilst studying abroad:

My volunteer resources at Dharma Drum Mountain helped me solve my daughter’s problems. For instance, when my daughter studied abroad in the United State several years ago, initially both my wife and I were very worried about her situation, because she is a girl, and she was arriving in New York at midnight. We did not have any friends and relatives who could help her settle down in New York. This problem was resolved after I requested assistance from the manager of the End-of-Life Chanting Group. I am the leader of the End-of-Life Chanting Group. I told him about the situation in a short meeting with him. After listening to my problem, he promised me he would find someone in New York to help my daughter. I remembered I was deeply moved when I received a call from my daughter in the United States telling me she had safely arrived at the place she was staying through the assistance of local volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain. In addition, she encountered some problems with housing but monks helped her to find a place to live with a Taiwanese woman. This place was cheaper than the previous one. To sum up, because of the assistance of the manager of the End-of-Life Chanting Group, my daughter was able to settle down quickly and smoothly. (P21).

ADULT CHILDREN AS VOLUNTEERS

Introduction

Although only a few volunteer respondents at Dharma Drum Mountain are parents, all are adult children of their families. Only 14 percent of respondents’ parents are Buddhists and 86 percent of respondents were the first to become Buddhists in their family. Respondents from both these two family backgrounds showed intergenerational ambivalence towards their parent-child relationships. The accounts of the adult children from Buddhist families demonstrate that the quality of parent-child relationships affects the results of religious socialisation. Parents from Buddhist
families often socialise their children through joint religious activities and their own embodied religious practices in life regularity. Buddhism becomes an important part of the family culture of Buddhist families and an important source of intergenerational solidarity. However, sometimes adult respondents’ parents will be opposed to their children religious volunteering due to their concerns about their children’s studies.

Conversely, the accounts of adult respondents who are the first Buddhists in their families suggest that ambivalence is common in their intergenerational relationships. Ambivalence in adult respondents’ intergenerational relationships, particularly adult respondents from non-Buddhist families, shows that there are three kinds of tensions between Buddhist values and secular values in Taiwan, such as the institution of Buddhist ordination, vegetarian diet and approach towards material well-being, which were discussed in Chapter 1. In order to take part in religious volunteering and maintain harmonious relationships with their parents, adult children and their parents will intersubjectively negotiate to resolve their ambivalence. Adult children can gradually transform their character in their intersubjective negotiation with their parents in terms of Sheng Yen’s notion of character education. Although all the adult respondents mentioned that they had remained involved in religious volunteering even when they encountered the objection of their older parents, the results of parent-child

---

5. Bengtson et al. (2002:572) define solidarity as “a classification scheme that systematically identifies the building blocks of intergenerational relations as the core elements of sentiment, structure, and behaviour” (Bengtson et al. 2002:572). Bengtson et al. argue that solidarity is multidimensional. “The dimensions of solidarity are synergistically related to one another in ways that can be quite complex”. Bengtson et al. propose six dimensions of intergenerational solidarity. “Each of the multiple dimensions of solidarity is distinct (orthogonal) and each represents a dialectic: intimacy and distance (affectual solidarity), agreement and dissent (consensual solidarity), dependence and autonomy (functional solidarity), integration and isolation (associational solidarity), opportunities and barriers (structural solidarity), familism and individualism (normative solidarity).”
relationships in different families ranged from solidarity through conflict and ongoing
ambivalence.

The following section is organised into two parts. The first part of the section explores
intergenerational relationships in daily family routines. I introduce Buddhist families
and show parental religious socialisation practices from an adult child’s perspective. I
then explore intergenerational ambivalence in non-Buddhist families. The second part
of the section explores how adult children give care to their parents during major life
events using their religious resources.

**Table 5.2**

Parental religious volunteering in Buddhist families at Dharma Drum Mountain
(percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Only Mother</th>
<th>Only Father</th>
<th>Mother &amp; Father</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious volunteering</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Daily family routines**

**Adult children from Buddhist families**

Fourteen percent of my respondents are from Buddhist families. The population
distribution of my respondents is 1 from the World Centre for Buddhist Education, and
9 from the Young Buddhist Society. Table 5.2 shows the parental role of religious
volunteering in Buddhist families. In sixty percent of the Buddhist families only the mother is a Buddhist volunteer, in 10 percent only the father is a Buddhist volunteer, in 20 percent both parents are volunteers and 10 percent of Buddhist families were not involved in religious volunteering. The data shows the mother plays the main parental role in socialising the children in Buddhist families.\(^6\) However, both mothers and fathers can become role models for their adult children volunteers and may have been instructing their adult children to become involved in religious volunteering since their childhood:

Doing volunteering is very natural to me, because my parents have been bringing me to Buddhist temples since my childhood. It was very natural to do something in the environment of Buddhist temples. I remembered that I was a babysitter taking care of the children of Buddhist attendants when these parents took part in religious activities. My mother opened a barber shop herself. She was very busy and needed someone to help, but she asked my sister and I to volunteer in our winter and summer vacation, because she thought volunteering was very good thing to do. (P37).

I volunteered with my father when I was in primary school. I did not know the meaning of volunteering but just followed my father’s guidance to recycle and attend activities. (P27)

My mother took me to convert to Buddhism when I was ten years old, although I did not know the meaning of conversion. My mother took me to volunteer with her as well. She also signed me up for Buddhist children’s camps. (P54)

According to my respondents’ descriptions, religious volunteering became an important part of their family routines. Their parents took them with them when they volunteered. Joint religious activities allowed these adult children’s parents to successfully instil the prosocial value of volunteering through value internalisation (Bekkers 2007). P42 is a senior volunteer at the Young Buddhist Society and her father is the volunteer leader at Dharma Drum Mountain. She described how her father

\(^6\) In Buddhist organisations like Dharma Drum Mountain, it is the woman who is the main source of religiosity in the family, transmitting to both her husband and children.
transmitted religiosity to her and her family through conversation in daily family routines:

When I was a child, my father often asked all my family members to gather together in the dining room and shared Buddhist concepts with us. He also told me how to transform my mood with Buddhist concepts when I was sad. (P42).

However, not every adult child accepted their parents’ attempts at religious socialisation. P41 is an active volunteer at the Young Buddhist Society and she claims that her mother’s religious behaviour had a negative impact upon her attitude towards Buddhism:

I did not have a good impression of Dharma Drum Mountain due to my mother’s religious behaviour. I was converted to Buddhism when I was ten years old. However, I felt I was forced to convert by my mother but I thought it was not necessary for me to do it. My mother is an employee of Dharma Drum Mountain and she is very keen to donate money to Dharma Drum Mountain. But I think it was because my mother donated so much money to Dharma Drum Mountain that my family was always in financial trouble. For example, she would donate 4500 dollars to Dharma Drum Mountain even when we only had 5000 dollars left. I could not accept it. (P41)

*Can you describe your relationship with your mother?*

Since my childhood, my mother rarely cared for me. On the one hand, she hoped her children would be independent. On the other hand, she could have more time for herself. Quite frankly, my mother is not like a normal mother. But I did get a great deal of space to develop myself. (P41)

P41’s attitude towards Buddhism was shaped by intergenerational ambivalence in her mother-child relationship. Pillemer et al. (2007: 779) argue that “a key dilemma producing intergenerational ambivalence is conflict between the norm of solidarity with children and the normative expectation that children develop independent lives”. P41 mentioned that her mother rarely cared for her, which at least meant P41 could make her own decisions independently. However, her mother’s parenting behaviour did not match with P41’s normative expectations of the mother-child relationship. P41
expected her mother to care for her more and wanted to be able to depend on her mother rather than develop her autonomy. She described her mother as being “not like a normal mother” and although she did not tell me whether she had discussed her ambivalent feelings with her mother, P41’s mother-child relationship was clearly not enough to generate intergenerational solidarity. This lack of intergenerational solidarity has also clearly affected her attitude towards Buddhism.

Conversely, P3 has a very good relationship with her mother P64 who is an active member of the End-of-Life Chanting Group. The quality of the mother-child relationship is crucial in parental religious socialisation. P64’s embodied religious practices in her negotiation of the mother-child relationship and in her interaction with other volunteers provided a positive model of religious practice for P3. P3 mentioned that witnessing her mother’s habits change in daily family routines stimulated her own interest in Buddhism and was the source of her desire to volunteer:

My mother was involved with Dharma Drum Mountain for many years. I have seen how she practiced Buddhism in everyday life and how her religious practice changed her a lot. I also felt happy when I saw her help others. Once I got a phone call from a layperson of Dharma Drum Mountain, for example, and she told me that my mother was a great person because they would never have understood just how good the Buddhist Dharma was without my mother guiding them. I hope I can influence others by learning Buddhism in the same way as my mother. I feel that Buddhism gives me the power to benefit others and I saw myself in a different way after becoming a volunteer. (P3)

*Can you describe your relationship with your mother?*

My mother is my best friend whom I can share anything with her. My mother is like a sister who is my most ardent and passionate supporter. My mother is willing to listen to me anytime when I want to talk. My mother is the most trusted person in my life and the first person I want to share with when I encounter difficulties or feel sad. I have a great feeling of security when I stay with my mother. (P3)

P41 and P3’s mother-child relationships show that the quality of parent-child
relationship deeply affects the results of religious socialisation (Pearce and Axinn 1998; Taris and Semin 1997)

When each of the respondents from the Buddhist families reached adolescence, they became active religious volunteers at the Young Buddhist Society. Their parents have obviously managed to successfully transmit their religiosity to them. However, there was still some intergenerational ambivalence present in their parent-child relationships, particularly in their parents’ attitudes towards their religious involvement:

My mother is very proud of my involvement in volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain. Conversely, my father is very concerned about the impact of volunteering upon my studies. I feel my father is under pressure when he and his relatives compare their children’s educational attainment. He is deeply affected by the profane values that offspring should study hard to get a good job. (P37)

Although my parents support me volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain, they still think that I should decrease my religious involvement in the last year of college. I think my mother and father have similar attitudes towards my religious involvement. I know my mother’s opinion, but I have not talked about this topic with my father. I have only heard my father tell me something like that when I was busy studying or very tired: ‘you should rearrange the time of your religious volunteering. You should refuse to take the volunteer task if you are very busy’. (P42)

My mother supports my religious volunteering and my father’s attitude is not against me. However, if the results of my studies are not good, he will complain (P14)

My mother and father have different attitudes towards my religious volunteering. Because my mother brought me to Dharma Drum Mountain she likes me to volunteer but she feels that I should take care of my studies as well. She rarely interferes in my volunteering. Conversely, my father thinks studying is very important. He does not want me to spend too much time on volunteering. Although he does not talk about it with me, he will complain to my mother ‘why does she spend so much time volunteering?’ (P54)

Pillemer et al. (2007:779) maintain that “a general underlying cause of parental ambivalence lies in the conflict between the norm of intergenerational solidarity mandating help for adult children in need, and normative expectations that children
should be successfully launched in adulthood”. Adult respondents’ parents have mixed feelings about their adult children’s religious volunteering. On the one hand, these parents are happy to see their adult children actively involved in religious volunteering. They believe that religious activity will help their adult children towards a better life in the future. On the other hand, parents are still concerned about whether their religious volunteering will affect their adult children’s studies. The data shows that mothers and fathers have different attitudes towards their adult children’s studies. All four respondents’ mothers were emotionally supportive with regard to their religious volunteering and whilst P54’s mother was concerned about his studies, she rarely interfered in his volunteering. Conversely, all four respondents’ fathers were concerned about their adult children’s studies and thought that they should put their studies before their religious volunteering. I did not ask my respondents whether they had attempted to negotiate this with their parents. However, all my respondents other than P42 mentioned that they had persisted in their religious volunteering even though they knew their fathers’ attitudes, which has led to intergenerational ambivalence in their father-child relationships.  

ADULT CHILDREN FROM NON-BUDDHIST FAMILIES

Unlike the Buddhist families, intergenerational relationships in non-Buddhist families in daily family routines are characterised by constant intersubjective negotiation. The causes of intergenerational ambivalence in non-Buddhist families are complex. When adult children become Buddhist volunteers, their religious involvement often leads __________

7. P42 states that she will automatically limit herself to the attendance of long-term volunteer activities.
to conflict in parent-child relationships as the transformation of their lifestyles to reflect their new identities and the older form, which the rest of the family is used to, is cast off. For adult children who become Buddhists, the experience of self-transformation is a positive result of their new-found religiosity. However, from the perspective of their parents, this transformation in their life attitudes and behaviours is problematic. The changes are felt in daily family routines, where the adult children’s new religious lifestyles collide with the family’s original values and normative expectations. Because the family system can be seen as “a sociological institution characterised by a specific structure as well as by norms and procedures that represent the values and conditions of the larger society in a specific cultural era and geographic place”, profane social values are naturally reproduced in the family and its normative expectations (Luescher 1999; cited in Rappoport and Lowenstein 2007:14-15). When adult children want to change their original family values and normative expectations, their parents may be opposed and this creates intergenerational ambivalence, which Connidis and McMullin (2002: 565) define as “socially structured contradictions made manifest in interaction”.

A variety of parental attitudes towards their adult children’s religious involvements are evident in the accounts of the respondents from non-Buddhist families. All my respondents mentioned that their parents eventually gave their emotional support to their religious involvements, but the degree of parental emotional support given varies. For instance, P59’s mother supported her adult children immediately; P82’ parents were against her religious volunteering because her behaviour did not meet with her parents’ normative expectations; P86’s mother was initially opposed to her religious involvement but then became a Buddhist through P86’s religious intergenerational assistance; P60’s parents were initially against his religious involvement, but P60
negotiated it with her parents. After several negotiations to foster intersubjective understanding, P60’s mother gradually changed her attitude from objection to acceptance. Although these respondents did not tell me what they learned from their intersubjective negotiations with their parents, their relationships with their parents saliently became more harmonious than before. According to Sheng Yen’s notion of character education, the attainment of harmonious relationships between the self and others and character transformation are the goals of character education. These respondents managed to successfully carry out Sheng Yen’s notion of character education in their family context:

When my mother was still alive, if I called her, she would ask me ‘did you go to Amitabha?’ She did not know what the End-of-Life Chanting is, but she knew that to chant the Buddha’s name for the deceased was the Amitabha. If I went back home to see her, she asked me the same question: ‘did you go to Amitabha?’ In my view, it was her way of expressing her support for my volunteering. She did not talk much about the topic of volunteering with me and did not speak highly of volunteer matters, but she smiled and encouraged my volunteering. (P59).

When I was 28 years old, I started to volunteer at the Young Buddhist Society. After volunteering for several months, I reduced my hours at my job and dropped out of my graduate school. I felt I wanted to stop at that moment, because I felt that I was like a spinning top, going round and around. I suddenly felt why I should make a lot of money to support the financial needs of my parents? Actually I was very frugal and I found it was meaningless in terms of Buddhist values. My behaviour gave my parents a great shock. My parents did not know the true reasons for my change and concluded that it must be religious volunteering bringing about my strange behaviour. Therefore, they were vehemently against my volunteering. Now their attitudes have changed to acceptance of my religious volunteering. (P82).

The first two times I told my mother that I wanted to convert to Buddhism she was against it. The third time I did not tell her and converted to Buddhism. After my conversion, I really practiced Buddhism in my everyday life. Before I went back home to see her, I waited for her to cook for me. I rarely put my focus on my mother. Now when I went back home to see her, I really accompanied my mother from my heart and considered what I can do for her needs? The change in my interaction with my mother has meant she has become a Buddhist now. (P86).
My parents supported my volunteering, but they did not support my involvement at Dharma Drum Mountain. When I started to learn Chan practice at Dharma Drum Mountain, I told my parents and they were against it. After my attempt at negotiating with my parents, I continued to attend Chan course at Dharma Drum Mountain. I then started to volunteer at the Young Buddhist Society, but they were still vehemently against it. The situation changed when I wrote a letter to my mother as gift for Mother’s Day. In this letter, I expressed my deepest gratitude to my mother and explained what I was doing at Dharma Drum Mountain. I introduced Buddhism to my mother and answered some questions about Buddhism my mother had always been worried about, because she thought Buddhism would be harmful to me and that I would be asked to become a Buddhist priest and donate money. After she read this letter, she changed her attitude. (P60).

Apart from P59 whose mother supported P59’s religious involvement from the beginning, the respondents’ accounts suggest ambivalence in parent-child relationships resulting from contradictory social attitudes towards Buddhism. Although Buddhism is the largest religion in Taiwan some Buddhist values are still not acceptable for ordinary people, in particular the institution of Buddhist ordination, the vegetarian diet and approach towards material well-being. This research shows that there are tensions between Buddhist values and secular values in Taiwan, as discussed in Chapter 1. In P82’s parent-child relationship, her religious involvement collided with her parents’ family values and normative expectations that children should make money as much as possible for the sake of the family. Her parents were not impressed with her religious volunteering and were against it because of the negative impact it might have on P82’s career. In P60’s parent-child relationship, his mother expected P60 to have children and viewed Buddhism as a plot to convince the laity to donate money to monks and religious leaders. P60’s religious involvement collided with his mother’s family values and normative expectations and resulted in her objections to P60’s religious involvement. Both P82 and P60’s families’ values and normative expectations reproduced social stereotypes of Buddhism and viewed the anti-materialism and potential Buddhist ordination of Buddhist volunteers with suspicion, which resulted in intergenerational ambivalence in P82 and P60’s parent-child relationships. However,
P60 made use of an innovative way to negotiate with his mother and resolve the ambivalence between them.

_Life events_

**Introduction**

Adult children often make use of their religious resources to care for their parents, their partners’ parents or other elders in their families when they encounter life events like illness and death. Buddhist knowledge and social capital are the main religious resources volunteers use to help their parents. These religious resources can be seen as a kind of functional support for elders that can be instrumental and emotional (Chen and Silverstein 2000). In addition, traditional norms of filial support for older relatives are the basis of intergenerational assistance, because these volunteers talked about supporting family elders very naturally. They did not show any hesitation or reluctance when they talked about it with me. Conversely, they viewed their ability to use Buddhist knowledge and social capital to care for their family elders as the practice of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation and the practice of Sheng Yen’s notion of character education for harmonious relationships and character transformation. Adult children give their parents structural support. The structural aspect of social support refers to “the composition of the social network and the availability of people in the network who may help the individual, including the number of children, their gender, and their geographic proximity” (Chen and Silverstein 2000:47). The majority of adult children are proximate to their parents. Some adult children live with their older parents; some adult children and their parents live in the same or neighbouring areas. Adult children
can give their parents support very quickly when their parents need help.

In this section, I will explore how adult children help their parents through two kinds of life events. The first one is illness, and the second one is death.

**Illness**

In my interviews, two respondents mentioned caring for their parents when their parents became ill. P11 is a senior volunteer at the World Centre for Buddhist Education. He described how he took care of his mother:

My mother had dementia several years ago. Her symptoms were being suspicious of everything and long-term memory loss. For example, she could spend all day from morning to the evening learning how to open the door. Sometimes she walked out of the house herself but could not get back alone. The police brought her back several times. Sometimes she would beat me with a stick and became suspicious of everything. Because I had to go to work in the morning, her behaviour made me very angry and upset. Although we knew her behaviour was due to her illness, we found it hard to forgive her because we thought my mother made my life a big mess. My messy family situation changed after Buddhist priests in my volunteer group suggested I chant the mantra for my mother. The mantra chanting really alleviated my mother’s symptoms and gradually resolved our contradiction with my mother. (P11)

P11 lived with his mother, so he could give his mother structural support by taking care of her in person. However, caring for her created ambivalence in their relationship and P11 was placed in the structurally awkward position of having to care for his mother as if she was a child and at the same time play the role of breadwinner to provide for his family. P11 was angry about his mother’s suspicion of everything and tendency to get lost but he knew that this was due to the symptoms of her illness, which could not be negotiated with. Buddhist practice helped P11 alleviate his mother’s symptoms and decreased his ambivalence towards his mother. His chanting
of the mantra in this emergent condition can be seen as a product of P11’s accumulation of both social capital and Buddhist knowledge through volunteering. He consulted Buddhist monastics he knew from volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain and was rewarded with a potential solution to his problem. P11 accepted the Buddhist monastics’ suggestion and transmitted this Buddhist practice to his mother. The mantra chanting can thus be seen as a form of functional support.

The other account of intergenerational assistance was provided by P84. P84 has been a senior member of the End-of-Life Chanting Group for more than 20 years. In this case his father had a serious illness and was taken to the hospital. Because her father’s illness was very serious, P84 made use of the social capital she had accumulated and Buddhist knowledge she had learned from volunteering with the End-of-Life Chanting Group to help her father prepare for his death. Fortunately, her father eventually recovered from the illness:

The most challenging task in my volunteer experience was caring for my father. When he was taken to the hospital, the doctors told me that I should be prepared for his death due to the seriousness of his condition. The feeling of taking care of my family was quite different from looking after other people. In my view, it is a big test to apply my learning from volunteering to my family smoothly and appropriately. In addition, it is a big test to face a truth that everyone will die. It is hard for us to accept it peacefully, particularly the death of our families. How could I make my family calm when I was anxious? The care given by the Buddhist monastics was important to me, because the monastics told me that I should stay calm first, and then you can let your father stay calm. I also used the Buddha’s name chanting to make me calm and pray for my father. I felt very surprised that his illness was controlled by the medical treatment in the end. Now he has returned home from the hospital. (P84)

Ambivalence was created by P84’s caring for her father. Although P84’s Buddhist knowledge - the skills and knowledge of End-of-Life care accumulated over 20 years

---

8. Because P84’s father actually recovered from his illness, I will introduce how P84 instructed her father to prepare for his death in the death section.
of volunteering - definitely helped her to cope with her father’s illness and even enabled her to instruct her father how to prepare for his death, P84’s contradictory roles as a daughter and as a volunteer gave rise to mixed emotions about her intergenerational assistance. As Luescher and Pillemer (1998:561) put it “ambivalence results when these norms require contradictory attitudes and actions”. P84’s ambivalence resulted from her contradictory feelings about her dual identity and she found herself “involved in defining and negotiating situations that are complex and problematic”, struggling with both her father’s illness and “an ongoing intimate and often complicated relationship with a significant other” (MacRae 1998:140). According to P84’s account, her social capital and Buddhist knowledge acquired in the End-of-Life Chanting Group helped her go through this difficult period and allowed her to call on Buddhist monastics to care for her and pray for her father. The monastics reminded P84 how to deal with the death of a family member with her own Buddhist knowledge. Finally, P84 successfully transmitted her Buddhist knowledge and social capital in the religious organisation to her father and helped her father recover from a serious illness.

Death

Adult children as volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain will care for their parents or other relatives to arrange funeral rituals, particularly volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting Group. These adult children often make use of the social capital and Buddhist knowledge accumulated in volunteer work with the End-of-Life Chanting Group to care for their family elders when they pass away:

I just held the ritual of Buddha name chanting for the death of my father with other volunteers at the
End-of-Life Chanting Group one week ago. (P23)

I helped my husband’s mother to hold the Buddhist funeral ritual with the help of other friends in the End-of-Life Chanting Group. (P78)

With respect to the end-of-life guidance for my father, initially I wondered how I could guide my father to discuss death matters with me naturally, but I felt the process of guidance was very smooth. I think it is because I often shared my feelings and learning from volunteering with my parents in everyday life. They seemed to gradually identify with my volunteering involvement in Dharma Drum Mountain. My father started to tell me how to prepare for his funeral. I asked my father ‘can you trust me?’ He responded to me and said ‘yes’. I told him that I would make a good job of the funeral arrangements. I appreciated his trust. In addition, I think the most fantastic thing I did for my father was to do a life review. I guided him to review his whole life and let him feel he had a wonderful life. I told him that our families are proud of him and thanked him for his great contribution to our family. Each member of my family showed their gratitude to my father. It was an unforgettable and touching moment. (P84)

Each of these three respondents volunteers with the End-of-Life Chanting Group. When their parents or other family elders approach death or have passed away, they can transmit their social capital and Buddhist knowledge to their parents or family elders. They can give their parents, or other family elders, instrumental and emotional support (functional support). P84’s case is special in that her father’s doctors warned that her father might die in a few days due to the seriousness of his illness. Her father recovered but P84 had already transmitted her Buddhist knowledge to her father to help him prepare for his death. Here the data shows that intersubjective negotiation in intergenerational relationships is important to the success of intergenerational assistance, because P84 mentioned that the reason her father was willing to let her take care of his funeral was due to her previous sharing of her feelings and learning from volunteering with her father in everyday life. Her intersubjective negotiations with her father in daily family routines meant that her father was able to entrust his daughter with preparations for a Buddhist funeral ritual in keeping with his wishes. It shows that P84 did practice Sheng Yen’s notion of character education to attain harmonious
relationship with her father.

MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

INTRODUCTION

In this section, I will consider male and female volunteers separately with respect to daily family routines, given that male volunteers often have the same religious beliefs as their wives, but female volunteers often have different religious beliefs to their husbands. Thus Buddhist volunteering has become the main source of marital conflicts in female volunteers’ marital relationships. I focus on how volunteers intersubjectively negotiate with their partners with Buddhist knowledge to resolve marital conflicts and achieve harmony in terms of Sheng Yen’s notion of character education. In addition, I explore how volunteers make use of Buddhist knowledge to care for their partners through life events.

DAILY FAMILY ROUTINES

For couples where one partner is a volunteer at Dharma Drum Mountain, religion is the core issue affecting the marital relationship in daily family routines. This is because religious involvement will change the original marital values and norms and then generate marital conflicts, particularly in female volunteers’ marital relationship. There are two kinds of marital conflicts appeared in respondents’ marital relationships. Firstly, religious heterogamy becomes a cause of marital conflicts, as Lichter and Carmalt
(2009: 170) maintain that “religious differences - in beliefs and behaviour - may inhibit emotional intimacy, diminish shared activities and companionship, and increase marital conflict”. Volunteers often want their partners have the same religious belief with them after their Buddhist volunteering. However, in my thesis, the majority of volunteers did not have the same religious beliefs as their partners when they started religious volunteering, particularly the female volunteers. Male volunteers often have the same religious beliefs as their wives but there are only 9 married male volunteers, which represents only 32 percent of married volunteers. Nevertheless, for the majority of my respondents religious homogamy is the result of long-term negotiation in their marital relationships. Sheng Yen’s notion of character education helped respondents resolve marital conflicts with their partners and gradually changed the partner’s religious attitudes until they were ready to convert to Buddhism. Some couples volunteer together in the end.

Secondly, marital conflicts show that there are tensions between secular family values and Buddhist beliefs in Chinese Buddhist family in Taiwan. In Chinese Buddhist family in Taiwan, the female volunteers often take charge of household labour and home care. The majority of female volunteers mentioned that they had got into conflicts with their husbands over how to balance their volunteer interests at Dharma Drum Mountain with their childrearing obligations in daily family routines. From female volunteers’ partners’ perspectives, they highlighted patriarchal family structures and maintain that their wives have obligations to do childrearing and housework duties before their wives engaged in their religious interests. They viewed their wives’ Buddhist belief and Buddhist volunteering as challenges of patriarchal norms. From female volunteers’ perspective, in order to solve conflicts and reconstruct a new marital relationship, negotiation becomes the key method to achieve harmony between
themselves and their partners, which is the goal of Sheng Yen’s notion of character education.

**Married male volunteers**

According to the statistics on the motives of married male respondents, their wives’ religious volunteering deeply affected their motivation to volunteer. Thirty three percent of male respondents joined volunteer groups with their partners, 44 percent of married male respondents were introduced by their partners, and 22 percent of married male respondents joined the volunteer groups alone. For those married male respondents who volunteered with their partners, joint religious activities saliently increased their marital quality and satisfaction:

Because my wife and I both volunteer with the Buddhist Chanting Group, our relationship is good. We have many topics to talk about, and we can talk voluntary stuff in bed from the night to the morning. If we cannot find people to do the Buddha’s name chanting two persons are enough. (P21)

Doing Buddhist volunteering together enhanced our marital relationship. We will take care of each other and support each other to do volunteering, because we have the same religious beliefs, the same conversation topics and the same life goals. Doing Buddhist volunteering deeply enhances our marital quality and family wellbeing. (P11).

Some married male respondents’ partners did not volunteer with them. However, they also mentioned that their partners’ emotional support is important to them. Married male respondents will share Buddhist concepts with their partners. They transmitted Buddhist knowledge to their partners and helped their partners resolve problems in Daily family routines. P44 is the leader of the End-of-Life Chanting Group. He described how his religious volunteering affected his marital relationship:
Sometimes my volunteer work for the End-of-Life Chanting means I have to work in the middle of the night, which will interfere with my wife’s sleep. But has she told me that she understands it is my job and she supports me. Sometimes I share my volunteer experiences with my wife and she learns from it and knows how to do it. My wife applied her learning to help her relatives arrange the Buddhist funeral ritual. (P44)

Some married male respondents were introduced to volunteer groups by their partners. Initially their partners invited them to volunteer, but these male respondents mentioned that they refused at first. Their partners negotiated with the male respondents through their embodied religious practices, for instance, they took good care of all the people around them before they did volunteering, such as their parents and their children. In other words, their partners did apply Sheng Yen’s concept of Buddhist volunteering to their own family i.e. that one should first take care of one’s own family before engaging in Buddhist volunteering. Their partners also practiced Sheng Yen’s notion of character education about Buddhist care that the first step towards caring for others is to care for oneself. This made male respondents aware that Buddhist practice could really make a difference, because religious volunteering did not destroy their families but created harmonious marital relationships and improved families’ wellbeing. These married male respondents gradually changed their attitudes towards religious volunteering and started to volunteer with their partners:

I remembered my wife invited me to volunteer with her for the first time. She told me that Buddhist practice is good for us. It can make us calm and healthier. I responded to her that you go your way, and I will go mine. You cannot ask me to be interested in what you are interested in. One year later, I thought it was time to see what she was doing at Dharma Drum Mountain. I learned some Buddhist concepts there and found that it really helped me calm and healthier. I then started to volunteer several months later and I am still volunteering now. (P6)

I became a volunteer at Dharma Drum Mountain due to my wife. Initially I refused to go with her and was against her volunteering. However, I found that she took good care of the family first and then she volunteered. Our families were not affected by her volunteering. In addition, she led many local people into Dharma Drum Mountain, including my mother and her mother. I gradually realised that I had
misunderstood Buddhism, and then I started to understand Buddhism and did Buddhist volunteering. (P18)

**Married Female volunteers**

The majority of volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain are female. In volunteers’ marital relationships, women often become volunteers first and play the role of introducers leading their partners into Dharma Drum Mountain. However, female respondents mentioned that the nature of their religious involvement is highly influenced by their partners’ attitudes. Female respondents’ partners feel that their familial and marital relationships are threatened by female respondents’ religious involvement, because it might interfere with their childrearing and housework duties. Negotiating marital relationships with their partners is the method all female respondents will use to resolve their marital conflicts. For female respondents, negotiation involves regular conversations about their partners’ concerns whilst demonstrating the functionality of Sheng Yen notion of character education to their partners by resolving marital conflicts with their embodied actions. These female respondents did practice Sheng Yen’s concept of Buddhist care that the first step towards caring for others is to care for oneself, which was introduced in Chapter 2. Female respondents mentioned that eventually their partners would give their emotional support and consent to their religious involvements. Some male partners even volunteered together with female respondents:

When I started to volunteer, my husband suspicious of why I had to do it, because our children were young. I asked my mother to care for my children when I volunteered for the End-of-Life chanting. I shared my volunteer experiences with my husband, and let him feel that chanting the Buddha name for the deceased was not a bad thing. Now he feels it is okay for me to do it. (P84).
Initially, I wanted to do volunteering but my husband was against me, because he did not have religious belief. Therefore, I could not go out to volunteer. After he passed away, I decided to volunteer at Dharma Drum Mountain with all my heart. (P24).

I think negotiation with my husband is important to my volunteering. When I started to volunteer, our child was very young. My husband was not happy to see me volunteering, because he thought I had to take care of my child. With the growth of our child, I no longer had the pressure of childrearing. I changed my husband’s attitude towards my volunteering due to my assistance with his mother’s Buddhist funeral ritual. The funeral ritual was very successful, so he gradually encouraged me to volunteer. (P78)

When I began to volunteer, my husband was angry and asked me not to go out. My children were very young at that time. My husband would be angry and say that you did not take care of our family, and do you think Dharma Drum Mountain is more important than our family? When I encountered his complaints, I would say sorry to him and explain that the volunteering of the End-of-Life chanting often takes place unexpectedly and suddenly, because we cannot predict who will die today. I hoped he could forgive me. After negotiating with him, his emotions would calm down a little. I would observe his reaction. If his anger continued for a long time, I would stop volunteering. If he calmed down, I would go out again. This seesaw battle between my husband and I continued for several years. However, the frequency of the seesaw battle decreased gradually. In recent years the battle has died down. My husband gradually identified with and accepted me as a volunteer. Now he will take me to Taipei by car when I have a conference. Sometimes he will even share his opinion on Buddhism to me. (P64)

P64’s negotiation with her partner is a special case, because she made use of apology to attune with her husband. Scheff (2006) points out that apologising is a reconciliation ritual used to repair a disruption in social bonds. When people engage in apology rituals, they acknowledge the impact of their injurious acts on the injured and take responsibility for repairing their relationship through intersubjectively coordinating their worlds, gestures thoughts and feelings with those of others. This ritual is both acceptable to and expected by the injured, who will in turn normally feel obliged to express their forgiveness to the injurers. P64’s account shows that P64 often made use of apologies to share Buddhist knowledge with her husband and negotiated with him to intersubjectively coordinate their opinions to come to an agreement. P64’s apologies to her husband were effective because she obtained genuine forgiveness from her
husband, who not only came to accept her Buddhist volunteering but also agreed to take P64 to volunteer conferences.

Conversely, some female respondents’ partners were ready to give them emotional support when they started volunteering. P59 is a senior member of the End-of-Life Chanting Group. She described how she obtained the support of her husband:

My husband is a lay person of Master Sheng Yen. He is one of the honorary presidents of Dharma Drum Mountain. Whatever circumstances I encounter in Dharma Drum Mountain, he always supports me. However, sometimes he tells me that ‘you are working too hard. You will be the expert of the volunteers!’ His words show his concern for me, but he is not against me volunteering. He tells me that he is not interested in taking part in volunteering, but he knows how to sustain Dharma Drum Mountain. He knows Dharma Drum Mountain needs money to promote Buddhism as well. He has helped me ask his classmates for donations to Dharma Drum Mountain. It is his way of expressing his support. (P59)

**Life events**

In my interviews, only two married respondents shared how they transmitted their accumulated Buddhist knowledge at Dharma Drum Mountain to their partners in life events. P11 is a male volunteer from the World Centre for Buddhist Education and P70 is a female volunteer from the Chan Meditation Society. These two married respondents both used their Buddhist knowledge and their emotional and physical transformative effects to help their partners negotiate life events. P11 viewed the mantra chanting for their baby as a joint religious activity that would enhance their marital relationship; P70 viewed taking care of her husband as Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation. Their partners’ life events are also big events in their marital relationships. P11 accompanied his wife when she gave birth to their child and P70 cared for her husband during his recovery. The methods volunteers used to help their
partners also deeply affected the quality of their marriages. In addition, from Buddhist perspective, P70 viewed caregiving as Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation and her caring practice in husband’s illness can be seen as a demonstration of volunteers’ practice of Sheng Yen’s concept of Buddhist care that Buddhist self-cultivation is at the core of Buddhist care. As I have mentioned in Chapter 2, Sheng Yen argues that the more we cultivate the ability of self-evaluation and self-awareness, the more empathy we will show for people in need.

I made use of mantra chanting to take care of my wife while she was giving birth to our child. When I sent my wife to the hospital, I told my wife that I would chant the mantra for her and asked her to relax and to chant with me. The process of giving birth went very well. The sound of the mantra chanting made her comfortable. She felt that she had not suffered from the pain of the delivery. After our baby was born, we could feel that our baby was very calm, because he only cried for a few minutes, which we all felt was amazing. We felt the good condition of our baby was due to the mantra chanting. (P11)

Caring for my husband after his operation was a very special experience of Chan practice in everyday life. He stayed in the hospital several days after the operation. During this period, I did everything for my husband. For instance, he needed someone to give him a sponge bath. When I did it, I viewed cleaning the body of my husband as being like cleaning a table in my volunteering and made use of the method of working Chan to relax my body and mind when I did it. I took care of my husband with all the methods I knew and prayed to the Buddha to help him recover. I often reminded myself to relax the body and make clear what I am doing. That was the teaching of the Buddha and I felt it was very helpful and important to carry me through the difficulties. (P70)

CONCLUSION

The chapter explores how volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain practice Sheng Yen’s notion of character education in their interaction with their family members in daily family routines and life events, and by analysing three kinds of family roles: parent, adult child and partner. According to Sheng Yen’s interpretation of family ethics,
Chinese Buddhists should make use of care and respect to interact with their family members for the sake of self-cultivation and social harmony through learning how to become a person in family context. Dharma Drum Mountain sees religious volunteering as conducive to family relationships, if its volunteers take care of their family first and then volunteer later. Volunteers make use of moral dispositions like care and respect, while intersubjective negotiation in their intergenerational and marital relationships to achieve harmony between themselves and other family members is viewed as the best way to practice Sheng Yen’s concept of character education.

The chapter found that tensions between secular values and Buddhist beliefs in Taiwan were clearly tangible in DDM’s volunteers’ intergenerational and marital relationships. In Chapter 1, I discussed why there are tensions between secular values and Buddhist beliefs in Taiwan, and in this chapter I focused on describing what kinds of tensions volunteers encountered in their family relationships and how they solve these tensions. Firstly, in volunteers’ intergenerational relationships, tensions between secular values and Buddhist beliefs in Taiwan often lead to intergenerational ambivalence. The chapter found that the sources of intergenerational ambivalence in Buddhist family and non-Buddhist family are different. In Buddhist family, children’s studies are the main cause of intergenerational ambivalence, because adult respondents’ parents often insisted that their children should take care of their studies before they engaged in Buddhist volunteering, particularly adult respondents’ fathers. In non-Buddhist families, on the contrary, religious volunteering itself often becomes the source of intergenerational ambivalence, and there are three kinds of tensions between parent-children relationships, including the institution of Buddhist ordination, vegetarian diet, and approach towards material well-being. I have discussed why these three factors become sources of conflicts in volunteers’ interpersonal relationships in
Secondly, in volunteers’ marital relationships, tensions between secular values and Buddhist beliefs in Taiwan often lead to marital conflicts, particularly female volunteers’ marital relationships. The chapter found that the female volunteers often take charge of household labour and home care. The majority of female volunteers mentioned that they had got into conflicts with their husbands over how to balance their volunteer interests at Dharma Drum Mountain with their childrearing obligations in daily family routines. From female volunteers’ partners’ perspectives, they highlighted patriarchal family structures and maintain that their wives have obligations to do childrearing and housework duties before their wives engaged in their religious interests. They viewed their wives’ Buddhist beliefs and Buddhist volunteering as challenges to patriarchal norms.

The chapter found that in order to solve tensions between secular values and Buddhist beliefs in Taiwan in volunteers’ family relationships, Sheng Yen’s concept of character education was successfully used to solve intergenerational ambivalence and marital conflicts. Sheng Yen argues that the goal of character education is to achieve harmony between the self and others through learning how to be a person; by practicing Chinese Buddhist moral practices like care and respect, volunteers can learn how to pursue their own interests and care for others at the same time if they want their relationships to be harmonious, as explained in Chapter 1. The chapter found that volunteers often make use of intersubjective negotiation and moral dispositions like care and respect to coordinate their actions or opinions with their family members and reconstruct family relationships in harmony. As for intergenerational relationships, intersubjective negotiation and moral dispositions influence the ways in which adult volunteers as
parents transmit religiosity to their children and how adult volunteers as children reduce their parents’ concerns about their religious involvements. The results of parent-child relationships in different families ranged from solidarity through conflict and ongoing ambivalence. As for marital relationships, intersubjective negotiation and moral dispositions contributed to female adult volunteers turning religious heterogamy into religious homogamy, resolving marital conflicts with their partners and gradually changing the partner’s religious attitudes until they were ready to convert to Buddhism. Some couples even volunteered together in the end.
Friendships: Buddhist Friendships and Non-Buddhist Friendships

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores how Buddhist volunteering affects volunteers’ relationships with non-Buddhist friends and leads them to build new friendships with other Buddhist volunteers through volunteer work. As I have mentioned before, in Chapters 1 and 2, Sheng Yen views the practice of Chinese Buddhist morality in everyday life as the secret to actualising his theory of character education for character transformation, as well attaining harmonious relationships with others. This chapter explores how Chinese Buddhist moral concepts including care, respect and gratitude affect volunteers’ friendship building and maintenance. Volunteers learn Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in religious congregations at Dharma Drum Mountain and will use these moral concepts to interact with their friends. From a sociological perspective, the attainment of harmonious relationships with others is the result of “intersubjectively coordinated negotiation” (Bottero 2010). Volunteers will make use of “evaluation” and “emotions” to build up their friendships in volunteering and their daily life (Sayer 2005, 2011). Therefore, the chapter makes use of Sayer’s (2005, 2011) concepts of ethical dispositions and lay normativity, and Bottero’s (2010) idea of practice as the negotiated outcome of intersubjective coordination, first introduced in Chapter 1, to explore how volunteers re-evaluate their existing friendships and relationships with
colleagues. It is suggested that because of their religious volunteering, they have improved their relationships with existing friends and colleagues through what can be understood as intersubjectively coordinated negotiation.

In this section, I first analyse volunteers’ Buddhist friendships from three angles: by examining Buddhist norms of friendships and the organisational norms of Dharma Drum Mountain; how Buddhist friendships develop through religious congregations and religious volunteering; and how the conditions of volunteering and volunteer motivations affect the development of Buddhist friendships and engender in them increasing complexity. Secondly, I consider the transformations that occur in volunteers’ existing friendships as a result of their volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain. Lastly, I look at how religious volunteering affects volunteers’ relationships with their colleagues at work.

**BUDDHIST FRIENDSHIPS**

**INTRODUCTION**

Volunteers’ Buddhist friendships at Dharma Drum Mountain are quite different from their other non-Buddhist friendships due to the Buddhist norms that regulate the interaction of volunteers. These norms are the basis for Buddhist friendships and underpin all forms of behaviours in the religious context. Buddhist friendships can be generated from each interaction in volunteering. However, because the nature of Buddhist volunteering is doing things for others rather than with others, volunteers are
not usually motivated by the prospect of making new friends. Rather, like the volunteers in Lichterman’s (2005) study of the Humane Response Alliance shows, they are happy to join what is a best a “loosely connected network” and in this sense Buddhist volunteering is no different. It too relies upon “loosely connected networks”, which create “brief interpersonal - sometimes very impersonal - relationships” (Lichterman 2005: 82-83). Buddhist volunteering does not “require volunteers to become part of ongoing, instituted relationships” or “to develop regular connections with other volunteers or with the people served” (Ibid). Therefore, Buddhist volunteers’ relationships with other volunteers are essentially acquaintances, with low levels of reciprocity, frequency of contact and disclosure.

Nevertheless, as Morgan (2009) points out, acquaintances are probably more valuable in modern society than they were in the past. Morgan (2009: 108-112) defines acquaintanceship as a social relationship that “lies somewhere between intimates and strangers … a particular form of knowledge of the other, distinct from the categorical knowledge that exists between strangers or the complex meshing of biographies that characterizes relationships between intimates.” He also notes that the practice of acquaintanceships is affected by the nature of the conversations acquaintances have with each other. This is because “the boundaries between strangers, acquaintances and intimates are fuzzy”(Ibid), which means that our social relationships can be altered by greater or lesser amounts of disclosure, contact or reciprocity in conversation.

In this section, firstly, I consider the nature of Buddhist friendship. Secondly, I describe how Buddhist friendships develop. Thirdly, I explore the complexity of Buddhist friendships.
To build Buddhist friendships in volunteer groups at Dharma Drum Mountain, volunteers first have to learn and comply with the norms of the religious context which they find themselves in. These norms are both Buddhist and organisational, the norms of volunteer groups at Dharma Drum Mountain. With respect to Buddhist norms, Kalyana Mitta offers a Buddhist perspective on friendship and the practice of what can be translated as “spiritual friendship”.¹ Spiritual friendship is a significant part of the practice of Buddhism in everyday life. In the *Sigalovada Sutta*, the Buddha states that we have five duties towards our friends: (1) we should share with our friends whatever we have; (2) we should speak to our friends kindly and affectionately; (3) we should look after the welfare of our friends; (4) we should treat our friends in the same way that we treat ourselves; (5) we should keep our word to our friends (Sangharakshita). As friendship is a reciprocal relationship, our friends are under the same obligations.

The concept of spiritual friendship is the Buddhist norm regulating volunteers’ interactions with other volunteers and the majority of my respondents mentioned that their spiritual friendships were important to their religious volunteering and religious practice. They also felt that their spiritual friendships were quite different from their non-Buddhist friendships:

---

¹ Kalyana means beautiful, charming, auspicious, helpful and morally good. Mitta means companionship and friendship.
I think the volunteers I met at Dharma Drum Mountain are all spiritual friends, because they helped me a lot when I encountered problems in my religious practice. They would share Buddhist concepts they learned with me … I would not share my private affairs with my spiritual friends … I think after I began practicing Buddhism, I could handle many things myself and did not need a friend to share my pains with like I did in college. The practice of Buddhism was useful for dealing with my emotions, and my emotions fluctuated less than before. (P77)

I do not often call the volunteers I was familiar with at Dharma Drum Mountain good friends. Rather, I think they are all spiritual friends. We often define our good friends or close friends in terms of emotional attachment. After learning Buddhism, however, I found that our emotions are very unstable. Therefore, when I noticed my negative emotions, the way I deal with my negative emotion is to dissolve the emotion, rather than to find good friends to complain about my situation. I think I no longer need this kind of friend now. But I think spiritual friends are still very important to me, because we can share our religious experiences with each other. (P52).

I didn’t share anything with the volunteers I just told you about. I didn’t share my private affairs with them. Our topics of conversation focused on our religious practices and anything related to volunteering. (P59).

Morgan (2009) maintains that the extent of conversations affects the practice of acquaintanceship and here P77 and P59 indicate that their disclosures were limited to discussions about Buddhism. Their conversations did not extend to private matters and their accounts suggest they did not become emotionally attached to their spiritual friends. Their connection was instrumental rather than emotional, which resulted in a lack of emotional intimacy in their interactions with other volunteers. It might also be inferred from their accounts that Buddhist volunteers do not generally trust their spiritual friends. Spencer and Pahl (2006: 67) maintain that “asking for or accepting emotional support involves showing some vulnerability” with others in terms of trust but P77 and P52 mentioned that they would not seek emotional support from their spiritual friends. However, this tendency for Buddhist volunteers to avoid seeking emotional support in their interactions with spiritual friends is clearly a product of Buddhist norms, which require individuals to take responsibility for their own spiritual
growth and to learn to “intuitively sense felt experience within the body and to trust the validity of what is sensed” through “turning our energies inward, where we can use them for healing, clarity, and change” (Crane 2009: 152; Haas and Levin 2006:927). In other words, Buddhist norms direct Buddhists to look inside themselves for support, to listen to and trust their bodies and minds, rather than rely on external assistance when they encounter difficulties. Buddhist norms regulate volunteers’ interactions with their spiritual friends and this means Buddhist volunteers’ relationships with their spiritual friends are almost inevitably acquaintanceships, due to the small amount of personal details disclosed and the lack of emotional intimacy in spiritual friendships.

The organisational norms of volunteer groups at Dharma Drum Mountain also affect how volunteers build friendships through volunteering. Dharma Drum Mountain is a Buddhist organisation which views education and care as its two core organisational norms. It systematically encourages volunteers to accumulate Buddhist knowledge through religious practice in everyday life, volunteer work and by attending Dharma class to learn Buddhism. These organisational norms can be seen in the accounts of almost all respondents, who maintain that learning and practicing Buddhism together helps foster their relationships with other volunteers. Moreover, when volunteers and their spiritual friends become good friends after volunteering together for a while they do so because they have something to learn from each other. I will discuss the transformation of Buddhist friendships in the next two sections:

I remembered I saw many volunteers automatically did the landscape maintenance in the World Centre for Buddhist Education but no one assigned them to do it. I felt very weird and wondered why they are willing to do it? I couldn’t do it, but I learned from their spirit. When I felt annoyed and bored volunteering, I would remember these volunteers. It made me change my mood and encourage myself to stick with it. (P16)
I think every volunteer at Dharma Drum Mountain is my spiritual friend. I think spiritual friends are people who can give you positive feedback about your religious practice and knowledge. Although I don’t define them as my good friends, I can learn many things from our interactions which I cannot learn from someone else. I feel that the majority of volunteers are very open-minded and they can share anything with each other without establishing relationships first. (P63).

I learned a lot from my spiritual friends when I volunteered with them. I feel many spiritual friends accompanied me to go through many difficulties. Sometimes only one word from my spiritual friends can help me resolve my problems. For instance, one spiritual friend told me that Buddhists have obligations to support each other and inspire others. I always remember this, because it was when I was at my most vulnerable. (P64)

Dharma Drum Mountain also emphasises the importance of practicing Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in volunteer works, particularly caring practices. According to my respondents’ statements, care has become an integral part of the organisational culture of volunteer groups at Dharma Drum Mountain. In Chapter 2, I discussed how Sheng Yen institutionalized his notion of care into religious congregations at Dharma Drum Mountain. Many volunteers join Dharma Drum Mountain as a result of the care they receive from senior volunteers and many Buddhist friendships are generated by care behaviours. This shows that Sheng Yen’s policy on the institutionalization of caregiving in organisational culture works and can be further demonstrated with the words of three respondents. P86, P84 and P59 are all senior volunteers and leaders in their volunteer groups. They engaged in Chinese Buddhist moral practices when they interacted with other volunteers through caregiving. P59 also pointed out that she expressed respect to other volunteers when she cared for them. P59’s showing respect to other volunteers deepened her friendships with other volunteers as family. This matches up with Sheng Yen’s concept of respect that showing respect to others is essential if we are to flourish and attain harmonious relationships with others, which again was first introduced in Chapter 2:
Long-term care is very important in Buddhist volunteering. You know why I have to talk on the phone all night after volunteering all day - because I have to care for the conditions of other volunteers. We have to employ Buddhist concepts to care for volunteers at all times, from inviting them join volunteer groups to resolving their difficulties. I am particularly interested in creating opportunities for the volunteers I care for to learn and mature. In addition, we should care for volunteers from our heart. The people we care for are not only the volunteers themselves but also their whole family. For instance, when their parents become ill, we have to go to see their parents and pray for them. (P86)

I think it is important to let other volunteers feel that they are cared for. I particularly want to have direct contact with the volunteers I care for. For instance, I am one of the leaders of the End-of-Life Chanting Group and when volunteers from areas I am in charge of want to visit the World Centre for Buddhist Education, I have to accompany them. I can understand their difficulties in volunteering directly. (P84)

I think care accumulates over time. Care is shown every time I interact with other volunteers. All the things related to the volunteers can be care. For instance, when they need any help with Buddhist matters, I will help them. The way I treat my volunteers is like a family. I respect them very much and often compliment them in public to let everybody know and encourage them to compliment these volunteers as well in our regular meeting. (P59)

Respondents’ accounts show that care has become an important way of building Buddhist friendships at Dharma Drum Mountain. They illustrate how respondents practice Sheng Yen’s concepts of caring for all people we encounter and all people in our relational context, which were introduced in Chapter 2. By practicing care in volunteer work, DDM hopes its volunteers will view their peers as family. The concept of the “religious family” is a phenomenon commonly found in Buddhist organisations in Taiwan. Lu (1997, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2002b) explored Tzu Chi’s method of promoting ‘the family in religion’ and found that Tzu Chi constructs its volunteer hierarchy in terms of secular family structure and defines senior male and female volunteers as fathers and mothers and junior volunteers as sons. Although Dharma Drum Mountain has not institutionalized the family roles into its volunteer hierarchy, many senior respondents maintain that they have come to view other volunteers as
their family after volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain for several years.

When I come to Dharma Drum Mountain, I always smile at people until I leave. I know every volunteer I meet on the road, and everyone greets me with a smile. This feeling is so great and just makes me feel at home. (P22).

I remember I told my wife that I sometimes feel my relationships with volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain are closer than my family, because we do not have any conflict of interest. Although we rarely contact each other, if we meet, I will ask them whether they can give me a hand. They will say no problem. If you are in trouble, they do their best to help you. It makes me very moved. (P44).

I feel my friends at The Young Buddhist Society are very good. They’re like my family. I treat every volunteer as my family, and I think there are no problems in our interactions. (P60)

This feeling of having a family connection with other volunteers does not mean that volunteers view their relationships with other volunteers as close friendships. The respondents above all see other volunteers as spiritual friends and in terms of Buddhist norms. Their relationships with other volunteers change from acquaintanceship to friendship through religious conversations. Religious conversations are very different from other kinds of conversations because they often involve a great deal of self-exposure albeit couched in terms of religious practices. When Buddhist volunteers share their religious practices with other volunteers in conversation, they often focus on how they deal with their negative emotions or difficulties in their daily life. This kind of sharing is very personal because it involves revealing a considerable amount of private information to other volunteers.

Many volunteer groups at Dharma Drum Mountain have institutionalised the sharing of religious conversations into the routines of volunteer work and give volunteers chances to share their practices and learning of Buddhism with other volunteers in a
kindly and friendly conversational space, for example, at regular volunteer training courses or a group discussion after volunteers have finished their work for the day. This sharing gives volunteers the chance to learn how other volunteers practice Buddhism in their volunteering and their daily life. They will quickly come to realise that there are many people like themselves, all endeavouring to practice Buddhism in volunteering and their daily life. Their spiritual friends will often “give them positive feedback” after the sharing. After listening to spiritual friends’ sharing, volunteers can evaluate their volunteering conditions and intersubjectively coordinate their opinions with other volunteers. Other spiritual friends’ emotional support with Buddhist concepts encourages volunteers to open their minds and share their deepest emotions with other spiritual friends. For volunteers, deep conversation is the key factor in building friendships with their spiritual friends at Dharma Drum Mountain.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST FRIENDSHIPS: ATTENDING RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS AND DOING FOR OTHERS TOGETHER IN VOLUNTEERING

Buddhist friendships in volunteer groups at Dharma Drum Mountain mainly develop as a result of volunteers attending religious congregations or doing things for others together. Because of the characteristics of volunteer work at Dharma Drum Mountain, volunteers have no chance to fully interact with each other whilst volunteering. For example, volunteers at the End-of-Life Chanting Groups cannot talk whilst they are chanting the Buddha’s name for the dead, which begins immediately after they have arrived at the deathbed. After their chanting, there is little opportunity for verbal interaction because they have to leave silently and the majority of volunteers also have
to leave in a hurry because they have other business to attend to after volunteering. Similarly volunteer work at the World Centre for Buddhist Education also precludes extended interaction between volunteers but for different reasons. Here volunteer work is often done on an individual basis and the only chance volunteers have to interact with each other is when they take a break for their duties, but this leaves little time for conversation and interaction is generally confined to a greeting or gossip.

The types of volunteer work described above are built upon and perpetuate “loosely connected networks” which are characterised by “brief interpersonal - sometimes very impersonal - relationships”. They do not “require volunteers to become part of ongoing, instituted relationships” or “to develop regular connections with other volunteers or with the people served” (Lichterman 2005: 82-83). They ensure that volunteers’ relationships with other volunteers tend towards acquaintanceships, because of the low degree of reciprocity, infrequency of contact and small amounts of personal information disclosed in these types of Buddhist volunteering. However, volunteers whose tasks have to be executed individually or with a minimum of verbal interaction often build their Buddhist friendships in religious congregations. As one respondent from the End-of-Life Chanting group puts it, “although we do not interact much in our volunteering, we often know each other through the joint practice of Buddhism, such as attending Dharma class or the Buddha’s name recitation every week”. This finding is supported by previous research, which has found that personal relationships formed in religious congregations become a motivation for further volunteering. For example, Becker and Dhingra (2001: 329) found that social networks are not only “the mechanism leading to volunteering” but also “it is the social networks formed within congregations that make congregation members more likely to volunteer”. Park and Smith (2000) also found that having friends within religious organisations and
participating in church activities increases the likelihood of volunteering for church-related programmes.

Some volunteer work at Dharma Drum Mountain allows volunteers to work together as a team serving others, particularly the volunteer work undertaking at the Young Buddhist Society. In this type of scenario volunteers can build friendships because they have enough time to interact with each other. At the Young Buddhist Society, activity organisation and religious performances are the main types of volunteer work. Volunteers will be gathered together to organise activities or train for religious performances at regular intervals, perhaps several times a week or a month. These regular congregations over a long period of time increase the frequency with which volunteers come into contact with each other, as well as the amount of personal information shared and degree of reciprocity possible. It also means that conversations no longer have to be confined to Buddhist matters only and volunteers may be encouraged to risk more self-exposure, even ask for emotional support from other volunteers. This in turn leads to emotional intimacy in their relationships with other volunteers. Congregating on a regular basis thus give volunteers a chance to move relationships with other volunteers beyond the acquaintanceship stage, to become friends, even close friends. Young volunteers also like to eat together in restaurants or hang out at each others’ homes after volunteering. If volunteers become ill, other volunteers will take care of them. This continuation of the relationship outside of the volunteer environment is crucial. Morgan (2009: 112) maintains that “acquaintanceship is strongly associated with public spaces”, but by engaging in more domesticated activities such as eating or visiting each other’s homes volunteers, and becoming increasingly involved in other volunteers’ private lives, their relationships with other volunteers change from acquaintanceships to friendships. Caring practices
play an important role in volunteers’ transformation of friendship. Several respondents told me how team working had helped them to make new friends:

My first volunteer task at the Young Buddhist Society was to attend a training course for a religious performance in public. It was a very intense training course which continued for three months, and I liked the feeling of everybody working together for one thing. I started to know people on our training course, and made friends with several volunteers on the course. They were great and they treated me very well. I was ill during the training course, and two friends I had made on the course took me to see the doctor by taxi and then we went to eat dinner together. They often came to see me when I was sick. I felt very touched by their behaviour because they are the kind of people who give without asking for anything in return. Because they treated me so well, I started to like them. I liked being with them and I told them that I liked them. (P41)

I was in charge of a section at the Young Buddhist Society. My team member was very supportive of me. I invited them to my house to chat and eat once a month. The content of our conversations often included things we rarely shared with everybody else. I really liked the feeling of our conversations because it made me discover my true self. Actually the only thing I wanted was to care for my team members and encourage them to attend activities. I feel that I learned a lot from my work, because my relationships with my team have changed from pure associates to very close friends. (P58)

I volunteered to run a Dharma camp with some other volunteers. After two weeks at the camp with these volunteers, we became very good friends. After our meeting at night, we often chatted until one in the morning. After our volunteering, we regularly meet together to eat or have a drink. Since volunteering at the Young Buddhist Society for several years, I have found the majority of friends in my circle are from the Young Buddhist Society. (P54).

However this picture of strong and good friendships to be found in the Young Buddhist Society is not the whole story as we will see below as the complex demands of the volunteering process make evident.

THE COMPLEXITY OF BUDDHIST FRIENDSHIPS

Attending religious congregations and volunteering are the two main ways in which
Buddhist friendships develop. However, because religious congregations are outside of the scope of this thesis, I will mainly be focusing here on the complexities of Buddhist friendships engendered by religious volunteering. The process of building friendships in the volunteer environment is highly influenced by the organisational culture of the volunteer group, the conditions of volunteering and volunteers’ motivations. Although Dharma Drum Mountain views care as the core of its organisational culture, the age factor affects volunteers’ performances of care in volunteering and this has led to a sub-culture developing in the volunteer groups at Dharma Drum Mountain. Young volunteers at the Young Buddhist Society, because of their lack of social experience and self-oriented motivation for volunteering i.e. for personal growth do not generally view care for other volunteers as one of their obligations. New volunteers find it hard to build friendships in this religious context. As P34 puts it,

I think no one has time to care for new members, because there are too many activities, which means that volunteer staff themselves can only concentrate on their own jobs rather than care for new members. (P34)

P60 is a senior volunteer at The Young Buddhist Society. He told me how lonely he felt when he started to volunteer at the Young Buddhist Society and his account demonstrates that this kind of indifference amongst volunteers has become the organisational norm at the Young Buddhist Society:

I feel the organisational culture of the Young Buddhist Society is that volunteers gather together to organise and hold activities. After the activities, however, everyone leaves and does not contact with each other privately. It was a big shock for me, because everyone treats you very well during the activities, but everything changes afterwards. I felt lonely when I experienced this. (P60)

There is another characteristic of the organisational culture of the Young Buddhist Society which makes it hard for young volunteers to build friendships. The Society
encourages new volunteers to take staff positions even when they have only been volunteering for a short time but senior members of staff tend to leave new staff to their own devices rather than easing them into their new responsibilities. This leads to a great deal of frustration amongst newer members of staff as well as making it more difficult for them to build Buddhist friendships:

I think the reason I was put in charge of a team at the Young Buddhist Society was due to a misunderstanding. I think it was due to the organisational culture of the Young Buddhist Society. The Young Buddhist Society likes to promote new members who do not understand its values and norms very well to staff positions. After I took the job, I found everyone had different ways of working and they often defended their habits and persisted in working in their own ways, refusing to accept others’ suggestions. I felt very frustrated and wondered why was I always blamed by senior staff? I felt I could not make friends in my staff team, and no one wanted to approach me or understood my situation. Actually some staff members have cared for me, but I felt their care was out of a sense of duty not friendship. (P82).

After I took charge of a team at the Young Buddhist Society, I found that the staff members I was familiar with and who used to encourage me disappeared one by one. I felt terrible because the reason I took the position was because of these staff members. I could not leave my job because I felt it was my duty, but I felt very frustrated and cried many times at that time. No one could tell me how to run the staff team, and I had to find my own way to do it. (P58)

The conditions of volunteer work also affect the building of Buddhist friendships at the Young Buddhist Society. Some volunteers, particularly new volunteers, make mistakes when volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain for the first time. Their poor performance often attracts the attention of senior volunteers, who openly reprimand them in front of other volunteers and many new recruits leave Dharma Drum Mountain because of this. Those who stay but who feel frustrated by their first taste of volunteering will of course tend not to build Buddhist friendships. P86 is a senior volunteer who is very good at caring for new volunteers. She explained why new volunteers often want to leave after this kind of experience:
Everyone has different volunteer habits. There are many friends around me who volunteered at Dharma Drum Mountain but felt very frustrated by their first experience of volunteering. This is because the other senior volunteers they encountered did not understand their volunteer backgrounds. These senior volunteers did not show respect or compassion for the efforts of these new volunteers. Therefore, many volunteers leave and no longer volunteer for Dharma Drum Mountain. One example is one of my relatives who volunteered at the World Centre for Buddhist Education for the first time several days ago. She made some mistakes in her volunteer work and was treated quite harshly by the more senior volunteers, who did not know she was a new volunteer. (P86)

As for volunteer motivation, this affects the building of friendships in that every volunteer has their own volunteer motivation; if their gains from volunteering do not match with their original volunteer motivations, some volunteers will decide to stop volunteering and leave the organisation, particularly young volunteers at the Young Buddhist Society. Smith and Snell (2009: 75-79) found that emerging adults’ religious involvements tend to be influenced by: (1) disruptions: disruptions of religious involvement by divorce, death of family members, moving home, career changes, and so forth; (2) distractions: emerging adults do not see religion as priority when compared with school, work and play; (3) identity differentiation: emerging adults typically do not seek identity differentiation by adopting their parents’ religious beliefs outright. They retain many of their religious beliefs but have their own ideas about attending religious congregations or services, and how to practice religion. According to Smith and Snell’s (2009) framework, it could be argued that P27 was distracted from religion by his pursuit of personal growth. What he was learning from Buddhist practices in volunteering did not match up to his original expectations and he therefore decided to change his priorities and pursued personal growth with other organisations. P34’s religious involvement was disrupted by her father’s illness. She was motivated to learn more about Buddhism through volunteering in order to help her father recover from his illness. However, her volunteer experiences did not match up with her expectations. She decided to leave the Young Buddhist Society and find other methods.
to help her father. The disruptions and distractions of religious involvements resulted in P27 and P34 finding it hard to build Buddhist friendships in the Young Buddhist Society:

I know the purpose of The Young Buddhist Society is to introduce Buddhism to young people in the hope that they will have a better life after learning about Buddhism. According to my personal experience of religious practice, however, I only experienced few instances of living in the present. I wondered how I could give people good reasons to convert to Buddhism with only a few religious experiences. After the generation of the idea above, I hesitated about whether I should continue to attend the activities of The Young Buddhist Society because there were so many other options and organisations to choose from. In other words, if I do not have the ability to introduce Buddhism to other people, I will put my personal growth first and consider which other organisations I could learn a lot from (P27)

I got hurt volunteering at The Young Buddhist Society. After I had been at The Young Buddhist Society for a while, my father got sick. I hoped that I could learn how to help my father by attending the activities of The Young Buddhist Society and my father’s suffering would make me stronger. However, I was suffering from the huge contrast between other young people and me, because the majority of young people at The Young Buddhist Society were always laughing and joking. I could not find the right people to share my feelings with. In addition, I became a volunteer member of staff and held many activities. During the period of my volunteering, I was not happy and very confused. I expected to learn the Dharma in volunteering, but I didn’t learn anything and just continually spent all my time holding activities. I felt very frustrated because I didn’t receive any support and care from other volunteers and priests. Therefore, I decided to leave. (P34)

In contrast with the accounts above, some respondents pointed out that they had built up best friendships with other volunteers during their volunteer work. P5 and P37 are best friends. They both mentioned that they rarely see each other face to face but keep in touch with each other and are emotionally intimate whenever they meet. P41 mentioned that she liked her best friends because their personalities were very different from them. They felt like they could learn a lot from these people. P41’s best friendship was built via joint volunteer work. They worked together and became best friends over time. In addition, two respondents mentioned that they saw their best
friends as family:

I feel that my relationship with P37 is like sister and family, and our relationships can be maintained at a distance, because we are both very busy. If your relationship is not like a family, you cannot understand the meaning of the distance. We need some distance to pray for others and bless others’ achievement. Because I view her as family, I expect P37 to follow her dreams for her life. I don’t feel like I have to meet or contact my best friend all the time. But when we meet, we can share our deepest emotions with each other. (P5).

I think P5’s personality is very different to mine but we are also very similar. We have the same values and opinions on some things we are very interested in. I think we are very complementary but we both feel very comfortable when we are with each other. You feel very excited to meet a very good person in your life. It’s amazing! It’s hard to describe this feeling. It seems like you can give her a big hug and tell her that I like you! I feel like I trust her very much. I learn a lot from her personality and habits. For example, P5 likes to make pastry at home, but I can’t! It’s great! I can learn it from her. (P37).

I made one best friend in the Young Buddhist Society. She totally views me as her family. Her personality is totally different with me. She is a very cautious person and does everything to schedule. I think our personalities are complementary. I have learned a lot from her because I see another world from her behaviours. We are in the same team in the Young Buddhist Society. I am responsible for care for others and she is responsible for holding the meeting. Our relationship is like lovers because we talk for around two hours on the phone every night. (P41)

NON-BUDDHIST FRIENDSHIPS

INTRODUCTION

Volunteers’ non-Buddhist friendships are built upon different fields, such as workplaces and schools. Because each field has its particular patterns of communication, specific norms and social supports, volunteers’ friendships with their non-Buddhist friends are embedded in the same field and based on shared common
values and interests. After volunteer leave fields, their friendships are maintained through ongoing focused activities such as meeting to eat or drink. However, when volunteers start volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain, their practices of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation resulted in their change of lifestyles. Because lifestyles are “routinised practices which are incorporated into habits of dress, eating, modes of acting and favoured milieu for encountering others” (Giddens 1991: 81), when volunteers change their lifestyles they also decrease the amount of time they spend participating in focused activities with their non-Buddhist friends. This absence of ongoing focused activities, which were what brought volunteers and their non-Buddhist friends together in the first place, eventually results in the transformation of their friendships in a similar way to that described by Giddens (1991: 81).

The attitudes of volunteers’ non-Buddhist friends towards Buddhism also contribute to the transformation process. Their conversations, which would have rarely been about religion in the pre-Dharma Drum Mountain phase of their friendships, come to be dominated by religion as this is now a central part of volunteers’ live and volunteers quite naturally want to share their new found beliefs with their non-Buddhist friends. In the interviews, respondents from the End-of-Life Chanting group and the World Centre for Buddhist Society maintained that the majority of their non-Buddhist friends have reacted positively towards their conversion to Buddhism. Their friends respect their involvement with Dharma Drum Mountain and only a few respondents told me they had disembedded from their previous circle of friends. The majority had managed to maintain their non-Buddhist friendships and the quality of their relationships had improved. However, respondents from the Young Buddhist Society claimed that their non-Buddhist friends in their original circle of friends and colleagues were less impressed. The problem seems to be that young people see Buddhism as very
conservative and out-dated, and cannot accept that it is necessary to become a vegetarian after conversion to Buddhism. This perception about the nature of Buddhism shows the extent of the cognitive gap between social imagination and the actual practice of the religion but nevertheless results in many young volunteers feeling very confused about their religious volunteering and becoming disembedded from their circle of friends.

In the following section, I will explore how volunteers’ relationships with their circle of friends change as a consequence of volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain from three perspectives. I then investigate volunteers’ relationships with their colleagues.

**VOLUNTEERS’ INTERACTION WITH THEIR CIRCLE OF FRIENDS**

*Introduction*

In this section, I categorise volunteers’ interactions with their circle of friends into two types and propose a three-stage friendship transformation process. I then explore how volunteers introduce Buddhism to their circle of friends and invite them to volunteer.

*Typology of volunteers’ interactions with their circle of friends*

There are two types of interaction between volunteers and their friendship circles. The first is represented by respondents who did not talk about experiencing any changes to or transformation of their circle of friends. Only one respondent concretely indicated
that she has maintained close relationships with her circle of friends since she became a volunteer. P37, a senior member of the Young Buddhist Society, has been volunteering for around ten years. According to P37’s narrative, she thinks that she can make a distinction between her volunteer work and her friendships in her circle of friends. Although P37 is an active volunteer and important member of the Young Buddhist Society staff, her narrative shows that volunteer work has not affected her existing friendships:

I feel that I have met many good friends in my life. Some of them are in the Young Buddhist Society and some of them I met at school. Not every good friend of mine is from the Young Buddhist Society. There is not a conflict between my volunteering with the Young Buddhist Society and my friendships in my original circle of friends, and I think we are still very close. I don’t have much contact with them, but I still feel the same about them as I used to. (P37)

The second type of interaction is represented by those respondents who have experienced a transformation in their existing friendships due to what they have learned from volunteering and practicing Buddhism. The institutionalisation of the accumulation of Buddhist knowledge into the organisational norms of Dharma Drum Mountain’s volunteer groups means that volunteers have to learn and practice Buddhism in volunteering and their everyday lives. The accumulation of Buddhist knowledge gradually changes volunteers’ lifestyles, which in turn means that volunteers and their non-Buddhist friends find they no longer have common interests and values, because there is a gap between Buddhism and mainstream social values. Some volunteers’ non-Buddhist friends are against their involvement in Buddhism and this may lead to the dissolution of their friendships. In addition, volunteers’ embeddedness in religious volunteer groups makes it difficult to maintain earlier friendships because volunteers rarely have enough time to contact their non-Buddhist friends or to see them face to face, which results in volunteers becoming gradually
disembedded from their circle of friends. P24, P11 and P34 are all senior volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain. P24 and P11 claimed that the change in their lifestyles from leisure based to religious resulted in a reduction in contact with existing friends and eventually brought about the suspension or end of the friendship. P34 maintained that the change in her habits after volunteering was the key factor bringing about the transformation of her friendships with her circle of friends. P34’s friends could not get used to her new habits such as becoming “a vegetarian” and “a bit serious”. Their reaction was frustrating for P34 but she did not feel she could do anything about it. So she “chose not to stay in contact with them”

Before I became a volunteer at Dharma Drum Mountain, I often went out and played cards with my friends. After becoming a volunteer, I was not interested in doing this. I would rather donate the money I used for playing cards with my friends to the temple. Therefore, my non-Buddhist friends no longer invited me to go out with them. We see each other less than before. (P24)

I feel that I have still not balanced the relationship between my volunteer work and my non-Buddhist friends very well. Before I learned the Dharma, I was the one who always made my friends laugh. However, after I learned the Dharma, I became a bit serious due to abiding by Buddhist precepts. I felt that when my friends mentioned me, they described me as a boring person because I always wanted to share Buddhist knowledge with them and I am a vegetarian. I felt very frustrated and I chose not to stay in contact with them, because I did not want them to blame Buddhism. (P34)

Before I joined Dharma Drum Mountain, the friends I made were all fair-weather friends. Our entire relationship was based on drinking and playing cards together. We only got together for fun. When I met people at Dharma Drum Mountain, I felt these people were quite different from the friends I had made before. They belonged to different levels. After being involved in volunteer work for a while, I lost contact with my previous friends. (P11)

The three-stage transformation of friendships with circle of friends

Allan (1993) argues that friendships are dynamic. They can “persist over some period
of time” but “tend to wane as well as wax as people’s circumstances alter and their lives develop in new directions” (Allan 1993: 6-7). This is certainly the case for two senior respondents at the Young Buddhist Society, who proposed a three-stage transformation of friendships with the circle of friends. According to their accounts of the first stage of friendship transformation, it is clear that becoming volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain was the new development or direction which changed their previous lifestyles. Allan’s arguments can be applied to describe their friendship transformation: “through change of circumstance, the opportunities for interaction and consequently for sustaining the relationship diminish, then the friendship itself is effectively, though generally not deliberately, undermined and begins to lapse” (Allan, 1993: 6-7).

In the second stage, respondents stopped contacting with their friends. Their friendships might have ended forever or just be temporarily suspended. My respondents did not give me detailed information about the outcomes of their friendships and focused on illustrating their new friendships at Dharma Drum Mountain. Their friendships in the second stage can be seen as “latent friendships”, which means that “there is still a sense of presence but only irregular and infrequent contact” (Spencer and Pahl 2006: 74). Spencer and Pahl use the term “fossil friends” to describe latent friendships. “Fossil friends” can be re-activated or end gradually. Savage et al (2005: 149) criticize the concept of fossil friends and note that “real friendship depends on being reactivated” which means that fossil friendship “is not the real thing”. They also note that best friendship is an abstract form of friendship because it “is disembedded from pragmatic daily routines” (Savage et al 2005: 151). These arguments can be applied to the two respondents’ accounts because, although they do not use the term “best friendship” to describe their friends, their accounts show
they that still value their friendships. Phrases such as: “I think if we are good friends, we don’t need to gather together every day, and our friendships will continue for a long time” make this clear.

The narratives of the third stage of their friendship transformation demonstrate that the respondents re-activated their friendships to share their growth with their circles of friends and want their friends to grow through the practice of Buddhism. Respondents intersubjectively negotiated with their friends to evaluate how to help their friends go through life difficulties with Buddhist knowledge. Their friendships deepened through the process of intersubjectively coordinating their opinions to come to a negotiated agreement:

I think the transformation of my friendships with my circle of friends has three stages. Firstly, after I became a volunteer, my friends gradually no longer asked me to hang out with them. I entered into a pure environment from a complicated environment and distanced myself from my friendship circle. Secondly, I stopped contacting these friends and started to make new friends at Dharma Drum Mountain. I have met many good friends here. Thirdly, I found these spiritual friends affected me a lot, and the Buddhism which I learned from Dharma Drum Mountain was so great. Therefore, I came back to my friendship circle in the complicated environment and tried to affect them with Buddhist concepts (P5).

With respect to my friendships with my circle of friends, I can classify this into three stages. Firstly, after I joined the Young Buddhist Society, I became disembedded from my friends. They felt that they had lost a friend because I never went out with them, and then we didn’t keep in contact as much as we used to. I thought that if we are good friends, we don’t need to meet every day, and our friendships will continue for a long time. Although the characteristics of my friends from the Young Buddhist Society are different from my non-Buddhist friends, it doesn’t mean that these friends are bad guys but it’s just because we have different interests. They might be interested in bowling or pool, and I am interested in chanting the Buddhist mantras. Secondly, after volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain for a while, I graduated from college and found a job. When we met again after the several years we were separated, they found that I had changed a lot during these years. Thirdly, after seeing my growth in Dharma Drum Mountain, my non-Buddhist friends started to ask me help them solve problems in which they encountered in their jobs and personal relationships. I felt it was time to introduce Buddhism to my non-Buddhist friends and tried to bring them to Dharma Drum Mountain
The introduction of Buddhist volunteering to the circle of friends

For most respondents, it was very natural to invite their circle of friends to volunteer because of the positive changes they had undergone as a result of learning and practicing Buddhism. Buddhism thus became the medium for enhancing or reactivating respondents’ friendships with their circle of friends. However, the majority of respondents noted that it was actually quite difficult to introduce Buddhism to their non-Buddhist friends. When they encountered rejection from their non-Buddhist friends, respondents often interpreted the results of their invitations not as forms of personal rejection but in terms of Buddhist concepts. The principle of dependent origination, which refers to “phenomena come into being in dependence upon other phenomena” was the Buddhist concept most respondents used (The Dalai Lama 2009: 29). Accepting the principle of dependent origination allows respondents to view rejection as normal and part of a much broader context and the practice of introducing Buddhism is as a religious practice in itself, regardless of the outcome. As one respondent puts it, “our attitude is to seize every chance to be of service. We view our behaviours as a way of giving”. As I have introduced in chapter 2 that Sheng Yen defines Buddhist care is an extension of giving and care is one of moral disposition in his concept of character education, respondents did practice Sheng Yen’s concept of character education through making use of care as the way to introduce Buddhism to their friends:

Successfully introducing my friends to Dharma Drum Mountain depends on whether their causal conditions are sufficient. If their causal conditions are sufficient, it is easy for us to introduce them to Dharma Drum Mountain with our care and concern. (P86)
In fact, it is hard to bring them into Dharma Drum Mountain. Volunteer recruitment, for instance, I think depends on the principle of dependent origination. If it is the time for them to become volunteers, they might continuously volunteer over a long term. If you force them to become volunteers, they might leave this place very soon (P84).

Most respondents are willing to share Buddhism with their circle of friends and introduce them to the organization, but they note that it does not matter whether their friends attend activities of Dharma Drum Mountain after their introduction. They pay more attention to the action of introducing Buddhism than the results of the introduction. Respondents view the practice of Buddhism as part of their life. Sharing Buddhism with their friends is equivalent to sharing their lives. Respondents view it as a topic of conversation suitable for their friendships and that it is very natural to talk about this:

If I feel some of our activities are good for them, I will share this information with them. It doesn’t matter whether they want to listen to me; I just want to share it with them. For instance, we had an activity of walking meditation last week and we saw many butterflies there. I would share the process of walking meditation and my feelings when I saw butterflies with them, and then I would stop with this topic. If they are interested in it and ask me some questions related to this activity, I will share more details about it. If they seem to not want to talk about this topic, it’s okay with me and we can change to other topics. I will not deliberately share this information with my friends (P60).

I will not deliberately move the topic of conversation onto volunteering when I meet with my non-Buddhist friends. I never think about it. But when we meet, it is very natural to share my volunteering experiences with them. If they are interested in it, I will share more details on my volunteering, if they are not interested in it, we can talk about other topics. I think it depends on causes and conditions. For instance, some friends of mine who know I volunteer at Dharma Drum Mountain and have been feeling frustrated recently might ask me whether we have any activity related to Chan practice? I tell them that I will send the website address of the Young Buddhist Society to them. I will not bring up volunteer matters with my friends. I just give them a source and let them find what they need by themselves. (P37).
INTRODUCTION

In this section, I will first discuss how respondents introduce Buddhism to their colleagues. Then I will explore how they evaluate their relationships with colleagues and how respondents introduced Buddhism through intersubjective negotiation.

INTRODUCING BUDDHISM TO COLLEAGUES

Respondents introduce Buddhism to their colleagues in a variety of ways. To begin with, if their colleagues have religious backgrounds, it is easy for respondents to introduce Buddhism to them. P7 is a senior male volunteer at the World Centre for Buddhist Education. His boss is also a Buddhist. Their common religious background means P7 and his boss agreed on more than just work matters and this enhanced P7’s relationships with both his boss and other colleagues:

My boss is a Buddhist, and I joined Dharma Drum Mountain because of his introduction. He gave me information about Dharma Drum Mountain and we attended the meditation class held by Dharma Drum Mountain together. In addition, I held a meditation class of my own. He joined my class as well. Moreover, the secretary general of my company also became a volunteer at Dharma Drum Mountain. Sometimes we volunteer together at Dharma Drum Mountain (P7).

P77 is a senior female volunteer at the Chan Meditation Centre. Some of P77’s colleagues, however, have different religious beliefs. P77 would like to share Buddhism with them because she thinks that it is good to encourage greater understanding between the religions and has attended the funerals of her Catholic
colleagues’ relatives as well:

Although some colleagues of mine have different religious beliefs, I still like to share Buddhism with them. For instance, one of my colleagues is a Christian and after I learned new Buddhist concepts, I always shared them with him. He would develop a dialogue between Christian concepts and Buddhist concepts as feedback for me. I think it is amazing! In addition, some of my colleagues are Catholics. They hold memorial ceremonies when their relatives pass away. I will attend these activities and say ‘amen’ with them. Because of this, these friends have told me that ‘we like to hear you talk about the Dharma. Your sharing of the Dharma is very good’ (P77).

Moreover, if respondents’ colleagues have no religious beliefs, respondents will find suitable ways to introduce Buddhism to their colleagues when their colleagues need assistance or are interested in Buddhism. P77 introduced Buddhism to their colleagues when she found that one of her colleagues needed help for preparing his funeral ritual. P54 introduced Buddhism to his colleagues when they asked P54 some questions related to Buddhism. P21’s account is interesting because he uses a variety of ways to introduce Buddhism to his colleagues even though his colleagues continue to refuse him:

One of my colleagues got gastric cancer and he sent an email asking if any staff in my school could help him deal with his funeral? I read this email and replied to him that I could help if he agreed to the Buddhist ritual performed by Dharma Drum Mountain. He accepted my suggestion, and I started contacted the Buddhist Recitation Group for him. At that time I was a volunteer at the End-of-Life Chanting Group. From then on, some sisters of the End-of-Life Chanting Group and I went to the hospital and gave hospice care to my colleague. Several days later, we got a call from his wife who told us my colleague had passed away. We went to his home and chanted the Buddha name for him and helped his wife to deal with the funeral. My colleague’s wife and relatives all appreciated our help (P77).

When my colleagues found out I was a Buddhist, they were very surprised because I was so vivacious that did not look like how they imagined Buddhists in their minds. They thought Buddhists all look very serious and old, and I should be a Christian rather than a Buddhist. I told them that ‘you misunderstood Buddhists. If you are interested in what real Buddhists look like, I can take you to a special place.’ I then took them to the Young Buddhist Society, and they told me that they changed
their attitudes towards Buddhism after attending the activities of the Young Buddhist Society (P54).

I often want to invite my colleagues to attend Buddhist recitation with me. For instance, I have told one of my colleagues that we are very similar and maybe we were brothers in our previous incarnation. He told me that he didn’t believe in the concept of reincarnation. I told him that if you don’t believe in it, we won’t talk about it. When we encounter this condition, we should find other ways of introducing Buddhism to him. I then asked him ‘why don’t you donate some money to Dharma Drum Mountain? One hundred NT dollars is okay, one thousand NT dollars is good.’ He told me that ‘I will donate money when I become wealthy.’ After hearing this, I then told him that ‘if you don’t have money, let’s attends activities of Dharma Drum Mountain instead.’ He told me that ‘I cannot go with you because I am very busy right now’ (P21).

Some respondents are leaders at their workplaces and therefore in a privileged position when it comes to introducing Buddhism to their colleagues. Their roles enable them to introduce Buddhism to their colleagues in more subtle ways and by focusing on changing their ways of interacting with their colleagues rather than directly inviting their colleagues to attend the activities of Dharma Drum Mountain. Because they have considerable influence in their companies, they have the capacity to affect and even change the habits of their colleagues gradually. P18 and P22 are both presidents of their companies. They describe how they influence their colleagues by changing themselves first. P22 set an example to his employees with embodied religious practice and P18 engaged in Chinese Buddhist moral practice to express his gratitude to his employees as he interacted with them:

I am a leader in the society. When my employees around me see I am changing my habits, they might change themselves as well because I won’t dispute with them now. When I see their weakness, previously I might have scolded them, now I will remind them instead of scolding. I want to lead my employees through my own behaviours and affect them gradually (P22).

I often share what I learn at Dharma Drum Mountain with my colleagues, particularly the phrase ‘face it, accept it, deal with it and let it go’. In addition, I interact with my colleagues with a grateful heart. I appreciate that they help me deal with work matters and let me have time to volunteer without a care (P18).
SELF-EVALUATION AND INTERSUBJECTIVE NEGOTIATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES

For employed Buddhist volunteers, the best way to examine their confidence in their religious beliefs is through their interactions with their colleagues. The family and social backgrounds of volunteers’ colleagues are varied, and volunteers frequently interact with their colleagues in the working environment. Morgan (2009) notes that sociologists tend to adopt two approaches to acquaintances at work. Some scholars argue that people can develop enduring friendships with their colleagues. Others argue that people can only maintain looser and casual relationships with co-workers. In my interviews, only two respondents from the Young Buddhist Society claimed to have engaged in self-evaluation when they wanted to share Buddhism with their colleagues. P43’s self-evaluation was brought about by her unfamiliarity with the workplace culture of her company, compared with the culture of the Young Buddhist Society. P43 was finding it difficult to adapt to her new circumstances and break into her colleague circle. P58’s self-evaluation, on the other hand, stemmed from the fact that although she treasures her relationships with her colleagues, her involvement in the Young Buddhist Society has made it more difficult for her to interact with them on a regular basis. Their relationships were still being maintained but they are now connected in a way that P58 never expected.

P43 is a senior member of the Young Buddhist Society. She pointed out that it was very hard to evaluate how to deal with her colleagues and at the same time keep up her Buddhist habits in her interactions with them:
I feel all members of The Young Buddhist Society are very kind and simple, and I feel very comfortable interacting with them. You don’t need to worry about what you say in front of them. I feel they are all like my family. However, the people I’m acquainted with in my workplace are quite different. I am not used to the workplace culture of my company yet. My colleagues see me as a freak, because my behaviour is quite different from theirs. For instance, all my colleagues like to gossip, but I don’t want to join them. In addition, I like to wear very casual clothes and my colleagues are suspicious and ask me ‘why do you dress like a nun? Why don’t you change and wear something else?’ What’s more, I have a blog which has some pictures of our Buddhist priests on it, my colleagues saw it and asked me: ‘Wow, you are a Buddhist! I think you want to be a nun in the future! You have definitely encountered some difficulties and now you want to be a nun!’ I feel in this society, people naturally tighten up their criteria when they know you are a Buddhist. They will watch your every move when they talk to you. It makes me very cautious about expressing my opinions in public and I hope they will not misunderstand Buddhism and Dharma Drum Mountain because of what I say. (P43)

Roy’s (1960) research on “banana time” reveals that every workplace has its unique culture which consists of “a daily sequence of rituals and the repetition of phrases and jokes” (Morgan 2009: 39). Banana time can be seen as one of the institutional factors in which the interaction of employees is formulated. It is an opportunity for employees to establish relationships with colleagues in a causal setting. Sharing of gossip and rumours becomes a part of workplace culture. According to P43’s account, she had not adapted to the working environment because she did want to gossip and share rumours with her colleagues. P43’s uneasiness in conversation with her colleagues was caused by her inner guidance by Buddhist disciplines, such as abiding by the Buddhist precept which indicates that Buddhists should abstain from false speech. In addition, although she was not very familiar with her colleagues, her weak ties with her colleagues gave P43 a great deal of information about general social attitudes towards Buddhism. Her

___

2. False speech is “any type of speech that is harmful, abusive, mean-spirited, gratuitously negative, or otherwise harmful to oneself or others” (Quirk 2008, available at http://buddhist-beliefs.suite101.com/article.cfm/the_five_precepts_of_buddhism#ixzz0hKzPkvypM)
colleagues’ comments imply that many people still have negative attitudes towards Buddhist priests and think being a nun is unacceptable and that the appearance of the nun is ridiculous. P43’s colleagues’ criticism of Buddhist clothing and appearance have caused her to reflect on the gap between her Buddhist beliefs and social perspectives on Buddhism. Her account suggests that the reason she has not been able to build good relationships with her colleagues, despite the shared focus of activity, is her religious volunteering and the affect this has on their interactions within the workplace context. P43’s religious volunteering means that she is not fully embedded in the web of her colleagueship.

P58 is a currently a member of staff at the Young Buddhist Society and her account sheds a different light on the colleague relationship:

Being staff at the Young Buddhist Society has had a tremendous impact on my relationship with colleagues. Previously I had to work the night shift, and I often talked with my colleagues all night. However, after I became a member of staff, I rarely talked to them and only did my routine work in my workplace. I wanted to change them by sharing Buddhism with them. Some senior colleagues thought my way of introducing Buddhism was too over the top and put too much pressure on them. In addition, they thought I should put my life focus on making more money rather than doing volunteer work because of my age. Several months later, however, they felt that my attitude towards them had changed a lot, because I gradually I no longer admonished their behaviour and just changed my own behaviour. They started to ask me questions when they were in trouble. For instance, they asked me many questions about how to covert to Buddhism? I told them that there will be a ceremony for taking Buddhist refuge in October. I also shared some moving stories taken place in my volunteer works with them. One colleague asked me to help her alleviate her sorrow in her father’s illness with Buddhist concepts. I suggested her to engage in sutra chanting. She then discussed with me what kind of Buddhist sutra is suitable to her condition. After our discussions, she selected one sutra to chant. (P58)

P58 was forced to evaluate how to handle her colleagues when her colleagues started
complaining about her way of sharing Buddhism. Her colleagues’ responses were based on social expectations that young people should pursue material advancement rather than get involved in volunteering for spiritual growth and couched in terms of ordinary people’s values. The conversations between P58 and her colleagues reveal the gap between religious beliefs and secular values. However, although P58’s colleagues complained that she “put too much pressure on them” to accept Buddhist concepts, they were ultimately persuaded by the changes they could see happening to P58 herself. She was not able to directly influence the behaviour of her colleagues but by changing her own attitude towards her colleagues she was able to stimulate their interest in Buddhism. P58 started to introduce Buddhism to her colleagues through intersubjective negotiation. They intersubjectively coordinated their opinions to come to an agreement about how to solve their life difficulties with Buddhist sutra chanting. Through intersubjective coordination, P58 successfully introduced Buddhism to her colleagues and as a result her relationships with her colleagues also improved.

CONCLUSION

The chapter explores how Chinese Buddhist moral concepts affect volunteers’ friendship building and maintenance in terms of Sheng Yen’s concept of character education. Volunteers learned Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in religious congregations at Dharma Drum Mountain and will use these moral concepts to interact with their friends. The chapter found that care is the most important Chinese Buddhist moral concept used by volunteers to build friendships in their volunteer work. Care is also the core organisational norm of Dharma Drum Mountain, which were introduced in chapter 2. It systematically encourages its volunteers to care for other volunteers.
Through the practice of caring in volunteer work, Dharma Drum Mountain hopes its volunteers will come to view other volunteers as family.

The chapter proposes that characteristics of Buddhist friendships should be understood in terms of Buddhist norms and the organisational norms of Dharma Drum Mountain in the religious context. Buddhist norms define Buddhist friendships as spiritual friendships and view spiritual friendship as both necessary and sufficient for a spiritual life. Under the guidance of Buddhist norms, volunteers often give instrumental support to their spiritual friends with their social capital and Buddhist knowledge but are less likely to ask for emotional support. In addition, Dharma Drum Mountain views education and caring as its two core organisational norms. It systematically encourages its volunteers to accumulate Buddhist knowledge through the practice of religion in their everyday lives, volunteer work and attendance of the Dharma class, where they are formally taught Buddhism. The result of this is that almost all respondents maintained learning and practicing Buddhism together forms the core of their interactions with other volunteers. In addition, it institutionalises religious conversation into the routines of volunteer work and gives volunteers chances to share their practices and learning of Buddhism with other volunteers in a kindly and friendly conversational space, either at regular volunteer training courses or in group discussions when volunteers finish their work for the day. Volunteers have a chance to upgrade their relationships with other volunteers from acquaintanceship to friendships via religious conversation.

The thesis shows the complexities of Buddhist friendships, which are affected by the organisational culture of the volunteer groups, the conditions of volunteering and volunteer motivation. For example, the particular organisational culture of the Young
Buddhist Society means that young volunteers may find it hard to build friendships. This is mainly to do with senior volunteers not paying enough attention to new volunteers or criticising the mistakes that new volunteers almost inevitably make when volunteering for the first time. Many volunteers are put off by their initial experience of volunteering and leave Dharma Drum Mountain because of the way they are treated by staff. Volunteer motivation also affects the ways volunteers build friendships. Every volunteer has their own motivation for volunteering but if what they get from volunteering does not meet their expectations, then some will decide to stop volunteering and leave the organisation altogether, particularly if they are young volunteers at the Young Buddhist Society. These volunteers find it hard to build friendships whereas other volunteers maintained that they had made good or even best friends through volunteering. Volunteers view these best friends as family.

With respect to the impact of religious volunteering on volunteers’ relationships with their circles of friends, the chapter found that there are two types of interaction between volunteers and their circles of friends. The first is represented by those respondents who did not talk about experiencing any changes to or transformation in their relationships with their circle of friends. The second type of interaction is represented by those respondents who have experienced a transformation in their friendships with their circle of friends as a consequence of learning and practicing of Buddhism. Their practices of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation resulted in their change of lifestyles. When volunteers change their lifestyles, they also decrease the amount of time they spend participating in focused activities with their circle of friends. This absence of ongoing focused activities, which were brought volunteers and their non-Buddhist friends together in the first place, eventually results in the transformation of their friendships.
The chapter also explores how Buddhist volunteering affects volunteers’ relationships with their colleagues. It was found that respondents often want to introduce Buddhism to their colleagues, but the results of this varied in terms of respondents’ status in their workplaces and their colleagues’ needs. Respondents in senior positions within their organisations can make use of their status in their workplaces to introduce Buddhism to their colleagues. Because they have considerable influence in their companies, they have the capacity to affect and even change the habits of their colleagues gradually. Meanwhile, when their colleagues need assistance or are interested in learning more about Buddhism, respondents will find suitable ways of introducing Buddhism to them.

The chapter found that Buddhist volunteering encourages volunteers to engage in self-evaluation and intersubjective coordination when they interact with their colleagues. They have encountered some criticism from their colleagues, who hold mainstream social values about what young people should be doing i.e. pursuing material advancement rather than getting involved in volunteering for spiritual growth. Their criticism of Buddhism reveals the gap between religious beliefs and secular values and caused respondents to reflect on the meanings of religious volunteering. One respondent maintained that her interaction with her colleagues in the workplace, which theoretically provides a focus of activity, was not hampered by her religious volunteering, which prevented her from becoming fully embedded in the web of her colleagueship. Another respondent was forced to re-evaluate how to treat her colleagues if she wanted to share Buddhism with them. She found that she was not able to directly influence the behaviour of her colleagues but by changing her own attitude towards her colleagues she was able to stimulate their interest in Buddhism.
When her colleagues asked her some questions about Buddhism, she intersubjectively coordinated their opinions to come to an agreement about how to solve their life difficulties with Buddhist methods. Through intersubjective coordination, she successfully introduced Buddhism to her colleagues and as a result her relationships with her colleagues also improved.
The development of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus at Dharma Drum Mountain

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters, the thesis focused on exploring how volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain make use of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to affect or help people in their relational context for the improvement of mutual well-being, including that of other volunteers, family and friends. This chapter takes another approach to exploring how volunteers develop their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus with Sheng Yen’s notion of Chinese Buddhist morality in their relational context to flourish by using care, respect, empathy, gratitude, shame and repentance. From the Buddhist perspective, volunteers make use of several Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in Sheng Yen’s notion of character education for the purpose of self-cultivation. The goal of volunteers’ self-cultivation is to practice Sheng Yen’s concept of character education, which means to transform their characters through learning how to achieve harmonious relationships with others through intersubjective negotiation.

Volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain mainly learn Sheng Yen’s notion of Chinese Buddhist morality from their experiences within three kinds of religious congregations at Dharma Drum Mountain: Buddhist reading groups, Dharma class and volunteer groups. They apply Dharma Drum Mountain’s moral concepts into their daily lives in
their interactions with family and circles of friends. The chapter makes use of Sayer’s (2005, 2011) theory of ethical dispositions and lay normativity, Bottero’s (2010) idea of practice as the negotiated outcome of intersubjective coordination and Scheff’s (2006) arguments about awareness and the attunement of moral emotions, which were introduced in Chapter 1 and chapter 2, to explore how volunteers develop their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus and transform their characters through their interactions with other volunteers, family and friends. The first of the four sections focuses on Dharma Drum Mountain’s Buddhist reading groups and explores what volunteers learn from these groups and how they help develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus. The second section explores how volunteers learn from Dharma class to apply Buddhist knowledge to their volunteer work and daily life. The third looks at how volunteers develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in their interactions with other volunteers and Buddhist monastics during volunteer work. Lastly, how volunteers develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in the relational dimensions of their daily lives, with their families and circles of friends, is considered in the fourth section.

**BUDDHIST READING GROUPS**

Buddhist reading groups are one of the “small groups” at Dharma Drum Mountain and are organised so that Buddhist volunteers can read Buddhist texts together and share ideas about how to practice religion in everyday life with other members (Wuthnow 1994). The reading groups play an important part in the development of members’ Chinese Buddhist moral habitus, allowing attendants to acquire Sheng Yen’s notion of Chinese Buddhist morality by reading and discussing Buddhist texts with other attendants. In the small-group setting of the Buddhist reading group, more
knowledgeable and experienced members can help novices with their problems regarding the moral practice of Chinese Buddhism and answer their questions about Chinese Buddhist moral concepts. Wuthnow (1994) distinguishes several characteristics of small groups:

The operating norm of small groups is each member should contribute something from his or her unique perspective … To present an opinion, members typically tell stories about something that happened to them … Stories may be ordinary, but they are powerful. They shape individuals: as people tell their stories, they become these stories. As the group encourages certain stories to be told, it shapes the identities of its members. Stories also provide the main vehicles by which the sacred is communicated and transformed. When group study these texts … they compare their own stories with these sacred narratives … As a place where stories are told, support groups provide an occasion for rounding off the rough edges of our individuality, transforming us into communal beings … They also permit individuals to arrive at their own understandings of truth rather than requiring agreement about a list of absolute principles. Spirituality, then, becomes a matter of subjective interpretation, even though it is fostered by the collective presence of the group. Mundane experiences are elevated by connections with sacred stories … When stories strike a chord that resonates closely with another member’s experience, they become the basis for special insight, empathy, and the formation of a confidant relationship (Wuthnow 1994:292-304).

Wuthnow’s account shows that storytelling is a feature of small group activity in religious organisations and serves to deepen members’ spirituality through the sharing of personal anecdotes. Members learn from the feedback of other members and by comparing themselves with the rest of the group.

In the Buddhist reading groups at Dharma Drum Mountain, leaders play an important role in deciding the direction and characteristics of the groups. Their main concern will be creating a social space with a “confidentiality quotient”, an atmosphere of trust and security where members are willing to share their stories with others in the group (Wuthnow 1994: 181). In other words, leaders have to convince group members that their sharing will not go beyond the confines of the room or disclosed in other places.
There are two key features of sharing in this way, features which are rarely found in everyday life: opportunity and acceptance (Wuthnow 1994). The opportunity to share refers to “bracketing out intrusions so that one is able to make a full disclosure of something important” (Wuthnow 1994: 181). Acceptance is “a norm that legitimates making certain kinds of personal disclosures” (Ibid).

P70 is a successful leader of the reading groups. She claims that the success of her leadership is based upon the provision of an opportunity to let group members speak and the creation of an atmosphere of acceptance amongst her group members:

Why do reading groups make great contributions to volunteers’ Buddhist practice? According to my observation from leading a reading group at Dharma Drum Mountain, the power of reading groups will be activated if we operate it as a small group which provides warmth and care to every member. For example, when someone makes mistakes in their daily life, they often have a strong sense of insecurity. It is very painful if they have to face it alone. Reading groups provide them an opportunity to share their sufferings in a safe place with a few trusted people. After their sharing, other members will give them feedback and give emotional support to them with empathy. Caring from other members makes them realise that they are not alone and gives them the courage to face their problems. In addition, reading groups create an atmosphere of acceptance where members can learn to listen and accept others’ stories without criticism and judgement. Members are willing to disclose their intimate thoughts and feelings and learn how to accept themselves in the process of sharing. In my view, acceptance is the core of Buddhist practice to open one’s heart and start to care for others (P70).

P70’s account shows some characteristics of the Buddhist reading groups at Dharma Drum Mountain. Firstly, care and empathy are two important Buddhist moral practices which both leaders and group members use to form emotional bonds and to communicate with other members. Secondly, members develop two aspects of their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus. On the one hand, their ability to self-evaluate and reflect on their conduct is enhanced by listening to the stories of others and receiving
care from other members in the reading groups. The learning of self-evaluation in the reading groups contributes to their overall goal, as specified in Sheng Yen’s teachings, of progressing from self-knowing to self-dissolution. On the other hand, members’ Chinese Buddhist moral habitus can be seen as “the negotiated outcome of intersubjective coordination” (Bottero 2010), because it is developed through the joint practice of sharing life stories, negotiating feedback from other members, reframing life stories in response to feedback and by comparison with other members’ life stories.

According to the analysis in the previous paragraph, the thesis finds that the main contribution of the reading groups to members’ development of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus is that they provide a mechanism for group discussion and bringing people together to share their life stories. The thesis views group discussion as an integral part of the Buddhist reading groups and the source of members’ Chinese Buddhist moral habitus. In group discussion, members can share stories with other members about how they employ Buddhist concepts to transform their habitual behaviours when they encounter problems in everyday life. The role played by other members of the reading groups in the development of volunteers’ Buddhist habitus is important in two respects. Firstly, other members affirm and legitimate story tellers’ accounts by interpreting their stories and linking the stories to their own experiences (Wuthnow 1994). By listening to the reinterpretation of their stories by other members, a storyteller’s Chinese Buddhist moral habitus is developed through the process of “negotiated intersubjective agreement”, which allows the storyteller to integrate the feedback of other members into a new and improved version of their original account and is the result of joint practice (Bottero 2010: 17). As we will see particularly in the case of P23 below the reading group can help establish a powerful normative standard.
for a developed Buddhist moral habitus. Secondly, it is in the presence of other members that storytellers “discover they share a common destiny in life. The commonness gives them courage to face life, to make it through the day; it is not a matter of religious belief, but of practical faith, or conviction that life is good, and of security, so that one can accept oneself” (Wuthnow 1994: 272).

P70 told me that after sharing their life stories with each other for several weeks, members will often invite their reading group friends to attend other Buddhist congregations with them. The Buddhist reading groups at Dharma Drum Mountain have thus become an important channel for volunteers to expand their personal relationships. P23 is a senior member of the End-of-Life Chanting Group and has been attending Buddhist reading groups for over ten years. She shared with me what she gained from Buddhist reading groups and how she interacted with other attendants in the same Buddhist reading groups:

I have found that members of my reading groups will attend other Buddhist activities together. They are used to encouraging each other in their daily routines. (P70).

I gained a lot from attending Buddhist reading groups. In the reading groups, everyone shares their own stories about how they deal with their problems in their daily life with Buddhist concepts or methods. In retrospect, looking back at my volunteering period over ten years, I think what I have gained from reading groups is much more than in any other Buddhist activities I have attended at Dharma Drum Mountain. Because volunteering is so busy, I have no time to think about whether what I do is to cultivate merits or to create bad karma. Attending reading groups gave me a chance to reflect on my volunteer behaviour. I felt ashamed when I heard other members worked hard to increase their Buddhist knowledge but I did not. Their stories encouraged me to spend time accumulating my Buddhist knowledge and improving my Buddhist practice. The attendants of our reading groups are all volunteer staff in different volunteer groups. We have learned together in reading groups over ten years. We often share our gains from volunteering with each other in reading groups. We often attend other Buddhist courses together as well. (P23)

P23’s feeling of shame motivated her to take action to reform herself and work harder.
to increase her knowledge of Buddhism. This example powerfully reinforces Bottero’s conceptual account of practice in which as she puts it “calls to account are a constituent (emphasis in the original) feature anchoring joint practice; a means of establishing practices as, in fact, shared and the same” (Bottero 2010: 17). Bottero goes on to note that significantly for our analysis, “reflections on practice are also practices in themselves, for as forms of accounting for action they are also the basis for the accountability of actions” (ibid). P23’s shame was a sign that she needed to rectify her weakness and transform her character. In Elias’s (1978) account, shame is a social taboo and a threat to the social bond, but P23 adopts a different attitude towards her feeling of shame and views it as a positive force, in Bottero terms “a call to account” and as something which allowed her to increase the strength of her social bonds with other members and crucially as a basis for an orientation towards joint practices.

Dharma Class

The Dharma class at DDM is delivered at Sheng Yen College, which was established in 2006. The purpose of Sheng Yen College is to offer a practical and lively Dharma class which teaches members how to apply Buddhist knowledge to their everyday routines. Because the College has only recently been established, not every branch of Dharma Drum Mountain has a Dharma class and only 31 percent of volunteer respondents had attended one. Among the three volunteer groups, 47 percent of Young Buddhist Society volunteers had attended Buddhist courses, compared with only 26 percent of World Centre for Buddhist Education and 6 percent of End-of-Life Chanting Group volunteers. Because there are a variety of Dharma classes at DDM and each
class has is uniquely themed, the focus here will be limited to how members learn Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in class and apply them in their daily lives.

The majority of respondents saw Dharma class as the most important medium for developing Chinese Buddhist moral habitus and engaging in Chinese Buddhist practices. Their accounts revealed two aspects of Dharma class in this respect. Firstly, the discussion group in Dharma class provide attendants a chance to interact with other attendants. Teachers of Dharma class will divide members into several discussion groups. Each discussion group is assigned a senior volunteer as the group leader to lead the group to engage in group discussion. The main functions of group discussion are to give care to group members and cultivate trust, as one administrative staff of Dharma class puts it, “group discussion is our main teaching method in Dharma class. The goal of group discussion is to build trust and let class members have a chance to share their feelings with other class members. We hope that the leaders of discussion group play a bridge between class teachers and class members to care for and accompany with group members”. P85 is a member of a Dharma class. She argued that it is the sense of belonging and feeling of being cared for that make Dharma class important for her Chinese Buddhist moral practice. She also claims that she learned an important Chinese Buddhist moral concept – *tolerance* - by evaluating how her class members and the group leader treated her in the discussion group and how she treated herself (Sayer 2011):

I felt that attending Dharma class was like going to school, because there was a group of people who we met every week and continued to see intensively for three or four months. We felt that we belonged to this place. In addition, the leader of the discussion group contacted us every week by phone and made us felt cared for. When we were engaged in the discussion group, we realised that it is very natural to encounter difficulties in Buddhist practices in daily life. But in the discussion group, we did not feel alone because we knew that our group members were accompanying us. We felt that
we were being tolerated and learned the ability of tolerance in the process of group discussion, because we can see others and see ourselves (P85).

Wuthnow (1994: 154) points out that the main factor generating trust in small groups is “whether or not members feel they have a chance to share their problems with one another in the group”. In other words, Wuthnow views sharing as key to cultivating the “trust of the group as a whole”; sharing encourages members to feel “a sense of ownership” (Wuthnow 1994: 155). In addition, Gouldner (1960) points out that trust implies a norm of reciprocity. The thesis finds that the success of Dharma classes at DDM is based upon the use of the group discussion to create a norm of reciprocity whereby “people come to expect to support each other, and members trust others in the group to honor their expectations” (Wuthnow 1994: 156). The combination of building trust as the norm of reciprocity and giving care to members in group discussion creates the circumstances necessary for tolerance or “respect for others’ autonomy and rights” (Sayer 2005: 152). Sheng Yen (2001b) points out that tolerance is the apotheosis of Buddhist care, because our capacity for tolerance reveals that we can respect different voices and cultivate our Chinese Buddhist moral self. P85’s account of her experiences in Dharma class shows that tolerance can be seen as one of the characteristics of Dharma Drum Mountain.

The second aspect of Dharma class talked about by respondents was homework, which they claimed was the main factor contributing to the development of their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus. By practicing the Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in Sheng Yen’s notion of character education in their homework, they were able to develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in every aspect of their lives, for example, by making use of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to interact with the people around them. The tasks set for course homework are all-embracing and practical. Examples include:
“give a gift to your mother at Mother’s Day”; “find pictures from your childhood to the present and tell us how you have changed with time”; and “observe your sensations and thoughts and then analyse the causes and conditions behind them”. P72 told me about one of her homework assignments and how she practiced repentance to develop her Chinese Buddhist moral habitus through self-evaluation. Her task was to record and reflect on her discussion about “Jealousy” with other members of the discussion group at Dharma class using Chinese Buddhist moral concepts:

The talk about jealousy by one of my group members in the discussion group this week impressed me a lot. She told us that recently she had a feeling of jealousy in her interaction with her two sisters. Initially she had good relationships with her two sisters, but recently she found that her two sisters often went out together without inviting her. She felt very jealous about her sisters’ behaviours. She started to evaluate why she was jealous. She told us that her Buddhist practice contributed to her awareness of her jealous feeling to her sisters and transformed her character. After listening to her story, I started to evaluate the causes of my jealousy. After my self-evaluation, I aroused a deep sense of repentance to the people with my jealous words and actions. Because these events took place a long time ago, I had no chance to apologise to them face-to-face. I practiced repentance prostrations to remorse and dedicated prayers to those people whom I hurt. (P72).

P72’s narrative shows that the homework set in Dharma class was the medium through which she came to notice her habitually jealous behaviour, after listening to other member’s stories. Because P72 had no chance to express her apology to the people she had hurt with her jealous words and actions, she transformed her character by self-evaluating her habitual behaviour. Repentance prostration was P72’s way of showing that she wanted to take responsibility for her shortcomings, amend herself and never make the same mistakes again under any circumstances (Sheng Yen 1999b). P72’s homework gave her the chance to learn how to practice repentance and use a Chinese Buddhist moral concept to transform her jealous habits. She will also now be able to make further use of repentance as a method of Buddhist moral practice in the relational dimension of her everyday life in the future.
Other respondents also mentioned that they had successfully made use of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in their relational dimensions of their daily lives after attending Dharma class or doing Dharma class homework. P18 is a senior volunteer at the World Centre for Buddhist Education. He told me that he learned the concept of respect for life from his attendance of Dharma class, a concept which had changed his habits and contributed to his voluntary guided service at the World Centre for Buddhist Education. P60 is a current volunteer member of staff at the Young Buddhist Society. He told me that he wrote a letter of gratitude to his mother in response to his Dharma class homework, which was to “give a gift to your mother at Mother’s Day”:

I learned the concept of respect for life from a Dharma class at Dharma Drum Mountain. This concept changed my mind and made me start to pay attention to the variety of life in nature, such as animals and flowers. In my view, respect for life is not limited to respecting human life but is also respecting the life of flowers and animals. I used this concept in my guided tour for visitors and told them that Dharma Drum Mountain had integrated the idea of respect for life into every aspect of Dharma Drum Mountain, for instance, in the green design of the World Centre for Buddhist Education to reduce carbon dioxide emission. The purpose of green building is to show our respect for the life in nature and attain a harmonious relationship with all life at the World Centre for Buddhist Education. I introduced the concept of respect for life to many visitors and they all agreed with our idea and were deeply impressed with Dharma Drum Mountain. (P18).

I will share the content of my gratitude letter to my mother with you: “Dear mother: today is Mother’s Day, I would like to tell you something I did not dare to talk to you before. I want to express my deepest gratitude to you for supporting me growing up. I remember that you often told me that you could not go to bed until you saw me arrive home safely. I did not understand how hard it is to bring up a child until I grew up. I feel shame for ignoring your advice and suggestions. I believe that I have grown up and transformed my character since my participation in Dharma Drum Mountain. I know that you were always concerned about my involvement in the Young Buddhist Society and thought Buddhism would be bad for me. However, if I had not joined Dharma Drum Mountain, it would not have found out how important our family is to me or been able to write a gratitude letter to you. I would like to invite you to attend activities at Dharma Drum Mountain with me to see what is going on at Dharma Drum Mountain. (P60).
P60’s account shows that his homework for Dharma class gave him a chance to practice two kinds of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in the relational dimension of his daily life: gratitude and shame. In P60’s account, his expression of gratitude to his mother stemmed from a feeling of indebtedness, the debt he felt he owed to his mother. He made use of the gratitude letter to repay his indebtedness to his mother (Sheng Yen 1999b; 1999e). In addition, his invitation to his mother to take part in activities at Dharma Drum Mountain with him can be seen as prosocial behaviour designed to foster their relationship. As he had learned a lot from his religious involvement in Dharma Drum Mountain, he hoped that his mother could also gain something from volunteering and change her original attitude towards Buddhism (Bartlett and DeSteno 2006). Shame was clearly one of P60’s motivations for writing the gratitude letter to his mother. He felt sorry for how he had treated his mother and as he puts it for “ignoring your advice and suggestions when I was a child”. P60’s feeling of shame motivated him to take responsibility for rectifying his interaction with his mother (Sheng Yen 2009a). This of course confirms the earlier analysis of the significance of group based “calls to account” for the transformative coordination of social practices.

**VOLUNTEERING**

**OTHER VOLUNTEERS**

The majority of volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain first learn Chinese Buddhist moral concepts through their interactions with other volunteers in volunteer work. Sheng Yen’s (2000, 2006) notion of character education, introduced in Chapter 1, is that the moral practice of Chinese Buddhism starts when we cultivate our capacity for
self-awareness and self-evaluation, in order to become aware of our individual strengths and weaknesses as well as the needs of others in different interaction situations, and to learn how to communicate with different kinds of people harmoniously. In addition to the work cited above on the significance of coordinated practices, sociologists have also point out that the moral self is constructed in part via the process of individuals pursuing the verification of their identities through cultivated forms of self-evaluation and self-awareness (Stryker 2002; Turner and Stets 2006). Significant versions of these modes of action can be found in Chinese Buddhism. Sheng Yen highlights the importance of relationality in personal Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation and suggests that individuals can make use of moral emotions and moral dispositions to attune themselves to coordinate with others through intersubjectively negotiation, including empathy, gratitude, shame, repentance, care and respect.

Doing volunteer works together gives volunteers insight into their strengths and weaknesses when interacting with others, particularly in conflict situations. Volunteers learn how to make use of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to attune themselves to others and build harmonious relationships, to transform their characters and flourish in volunteering in keeping with Sheng Yen’s notion of character education. They can even transpose their learning from volunteering to their daily lives to foster their relationships with family and friends. P40 is an administrative member of staff at the Chan Meditation Centre. She shared with me how she interpreted Sheng Yen’s conception of volunteering and Chinese Buddhist moral practice. P70 is a senior volunteer at the Chan Meditation Centre. She told me how she evaluated her volunteer condition and practiced Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to transform her character. P60 is a current volunteer member of staff at the Young Buddhist Society. P60 told me
how he made use of repentance to solve his difficulties in volunteer work:

The goal of doing volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain is to learn the relationship between the self and the others. The more you know yourself, the more you can empathise with others. Volunteers come from different backgrounds and bring their own habits into volunteering, for instance, someone wants to arrange chairs this way but other people insist arranging chairs that way. When volunteers encounter conflicts in volunteering, they will generate vexation. This is the time to teach volunteers how to make use of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to solve their vexation and resolve conflicts. It is the time to learn how to make use of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to change their thoughts and attune themselves with others. The process of changing thoughts and attunement is what Sheng Yen called the Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation from self-knowing, self-affirmation and self-growth to self-dissolution. After they learn Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in volunteering, they will realise that DDM sees family life as more important than volunteering and suggests that volunteers should take care of their family before they volunteer. The process of their learning and practicing DDM’s ideas is what Sheng Yen called “uplifting the character of humanity and building a pure land on earth” (P40).

The goal of learning Buddhism is to rectify our habits and to perfect our characters. If we engage in Buddhist self-cultivation alone, it will be hard to see our weaknesses. We can only find it in our interactions with others, because self-centeredness is our natural inclination and we often feel that our way is the best when we cooperate with others. Doing volunteering is the best time to examine ourselves because we will interact with many people from different backgrounds and have to seek agreement to complete tasks. We should learn to attune ourselves to accept other’s opinions and follow other’s ways to complete tasks. We can learn to know ourselves and rectify ourselves in the process of attunement, and then we can further learn to engage in Buddhist self-cultivation. For instance, when I have negative feelings towards other volunteers, I often feel shame and repent for my actions. I will make a commitment to rectify my habits. Then I will feel grateful for having a chance to rectify my behaviour. I will dedicate my feeling of gratitude to all sentient beings. I found that I can gradually engage in self-dissolution through the five stages of Buddhist self-cultivation: shame, repentance, commitment, gratitude and dedication. (P70)

When I volunteered, sometimes other volunteers would criticise my work and make me feel sad and frustrated. When I encountered this situation, I often made use of repentance prostrations for half an hour or an hour to adjust my mental and physical condition at home, even if I could only do it in the middle of the night. I often continued the repentance prostrations until I felt comfortable. The effect of repentance prostrations would show immediately and make my sorrow disappear and I would get back my strength (P60).
Each of these respondents believed that Chinese Buddhist moral concepts contribute to their emotion management and ability to solve difficulties in volunteering, and P70 and P40 both emphasise that self-awareness and self-evaluation are the basis of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation in their interactions with other people. The capacity for self-awareness helps volunteers to be aware of their negative emotions in their interactions with other volunteers. The capacity for self-evaluation helps volunteers to evaluate what kinds of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts they can use to transform negative emotions and rectify their behaviours. P70 made use of a set of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to rectify her behaviour and to transform her character, including shame, repentance, commitments and gratitude. P60 mainly made use of repentance to adjust his mental and physical conditions after volunteering. These respondents mainly developed their Chinese Buddhist habitus through self-evaluation of their interactions with other volunteers.

Moreover, some volunteers developed their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus through intersubjective negotiations with other volunteers. P5 is a senior volunteer at the Young Buddhist Society. She told me how she experienced a three-stage development of her Chinese Buddhist moral habitus during organizational meetings, whilst planning for annual big events at Dharma Drum Mountain with several senior volunteers from other DDM volunteer groups. She made use of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to coordinate with other volunteers’ actions and opinions through intersubjective negotiation. P47 is a new member at the World Centre for Buddhist Education. She shared with me how she evaluated her relations with one volunteer and adjusted herself with the practice of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to coordinate her actions with the volunteer who joined the Buddhist morning service with her:
I found that my involvement in the organizational meetings for annual big events at Dharma Drum Mountain can be divided into three stages. In the first stage, I was the youngest and the most junior member in the meeting, and when I had a different opinion to the other volunteers I would normally show respect to other volunteers and compromise. In the second stage, I became more familiar with the members of the meeting group, and I communicated with other volunteers and hoped that they would accept my opinions, I often got hurt. Why? Because I found that some of the older and more senior volunteers often tried to dominate with their opinions and insisted that their opinions were the best. If I insisted on my opinion, some senior volunteers pretended to be ignorant of my opinion in order to gloss it over; some senior volunteers even directly refused my opinion. In the third stage, when I encountered similar situations, I empathised with senior volunteers. I learned to put myself into their shoes and thought about the same issue from different perspectives. I learned to not only respect others’ opinions but also to express my opinions. I learnt how to coordinate with others’ opinions and to complete our tasks together. (P5)

I encountered a volunteer when I attended the Buddhist morning service. She always sat next to me but I did not have a good first impression of her, because her tone was weird and deeply affected my singing condition. One day she suddenly asked me whether we could go back to our apartment together. I said “sure!”, but actually I was deeply reluctant to go with her and hoped that I could walk alone next time! However, perhaps because she was older than me, I felt she was like my mother. I naturally took care of her as we walked and found out that she was actually very easygoing. She expressed her gratitude to me many times in our walk and made me feel ashamed and condemn myself how I could treat her so badly previously? I changed my mind and hoped that we would walk together next time! One time on our walks, she even gave care to me initiatively which made me very surprised! (P47).

Both P5 and P47’s narratives show that self-evaluation and intersubjective negotiation are important to the development of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus, and the capacity for self-awareness is seen as the starting point of Chinese Buddhist moral practice. P5 and P47 were both aware of their negative emotions when they interacted with other volunteers. They started to evaluate how they could decrease their negative emotions and intersubjectively coordinated their actions and opinions with other volunteers. P5 learned to make use of empathy to understand other volunteers’ opinions and attuned to the perspectives of volunteers in a way that other volunteers could accept but in which she could also have her ideas heard. Empathy contributed to P5’s intersubjective
negotiations with other volunteers and helped her obtain other volunteers’ support for her plans. In P47’s account, moral emotions played an important role in motivating P47 to engage in self-evaluation about the differences between her treatment of a fellow volunteer and how this volunteer treated her. However, it is care as a Chinese Buddhist moral disposition that transformed P47’s relationship with the other volunteer. Although P47 did not mention whether this volunteer became aware of P47’s aversion to her, P47’s expression of care to this volunteer obviously improved their relationship and caused the volunteer to express gratitude to P47. This volunteer’s gratitude to P47’s care subverted P47’s feeling of aversion to the volunteer and generated a sense of shame. P47’s shame motivated her to reflect on her feeling of aversion and change her attitude to the volunteer. P47 and the volunteer both provided care to support each other and intersubjectively coordinate their actions and foster their relationship.

Finally, some volunteers developed their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus by receiving care from other volunteers and learned how to practice Chinese Buddhist moral concepts from other volunteers’ moral teachings. P62 is a senior volunteer at the World Centre for Buddhist Education. She shared with me how other volunteers’ caregiving affected her when she encountered difficulties in her volunteer work and how she accepted other volunteers’ suggestions to use gratitude to change her thoughts and coordinate her actions with other volunteers. P20 was a new member at the End-of-Life Chanting Group. She shared with me how one senior volunteer at the End-of-Life Chanting Group cared for her and motivated her to care for other volunteers and the family of the deceased, to express her gratitude for the care given to her by this senior volunteer:

When I encountered difficulties in my volunteer work with other volunteers, I found that many volunteers would give care to me and encourage me to change my thoughts from complaints to
gratitude. They suggested that I should feel grateful for my difficulties because this is my opportunity to accumulate merit. I adopted their suggestions and tried to express gratitude for my difficulties, and I found that it really makes a difference and enabled me to cooperate with other volunteers very well! (P62)

When families of the deceased expressed their gratitude to us for our help with funeral matters at the hospital or the funeral rites, I would always tell myself that several years ago I was the one who was being cared for by a senior volunteer at the End-of-Life Chanting Group. She helped me to recover from the sorrow of my husband’s death and encouraged me to take part in volunteer work together with her at the End-of-Life Chanting Group. I think my involvement in volunteer work at Dharma Drum Mountain is because I want to repay my gratitude for this senior volunteer’s care and learn the spirit of this senior volunteer to help more people in need. (P20).

BUDDHIST MONASTICS

In terms of volunteers’ interactions with Buddhist monastics, the majority of volunteers viewed the monastics as experts in Buddhist practices and tried to learn from their conversations and joint practices with monastics. Buddhist monastics have an important role to play, exemplifying Buddhist moral practices in their actions to encourage and teach volunteers how to practice Buddhist moral concepts, particularly when volunteers encounter crises in their volunteer work. In addition, the monastics are in a position to spot the flaws in volunteers’ habitual behaviours at the appropriate moment and remind volunteers to pay attention to their habits. The suggestions of Buddhist monastics allow volunteers to acquire Buddhist knowledge quickly and enable them to apply Buddhist knowledge to adjust their habitual behaviours immediately. Volunteers will also remember the suggestions made by Buddhist monastics, as they are transmitted during crises, which heightens their emotional impact, and can be directly applied to resolve the crises. Through the gentle promptings of the monastics, volunteers learn to engage in self-awareness and
gradually develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in light of the monastics’ suggestions. Care is the main moral disposition used by Buddhist monastics to interact with volunteers. When Buddhist monastics care for volunteers, empathy and tolerance are the two key moral emotions employed to form emotional bonds with volunteers. The successful monastic caregiving will have a profound effect on volunteers and persuade them to make a commitment to volunteer at Dharma Drum Mountain whenever possible.

Respondents of the thesis pointed out several different ways in which they had learned from Buddhist monastics. P5 is a senior volunteer at the Young Buddhist Society. She shared with me how a monk at the Young Buddhist Society cares for young volunteers. She argued that the secret to successful monastic care for volunteers is not only giving care to volunteers themselves but also to their family members. P59 is a senior volunteer at the End-of-Life Chanting Group. She shared with me how a monk in her volunteer group helped her solved crises in her volunteer work. Through the monk’s practical instruction, P59 learned how to care for her client with empathy and get her client to accept and follow her Buddhist suggestions. P4 is a current member of staff at the Young Buddhist Society. He told me that he learned a lot from monastics’ tolerance of volunteers’ mistakes; tolerance provides young volunteers with a safe space to grow through volunteering. P82 is a current member of staff at the Young Buddhist Society. She shared with me how a nun at the Young Buddhist Society cared for her and pointed out her weaknesses. P82 noted that she gradually changed her habits in line with the nun’s suggestions:

I think the monk is amazing, because it is very difficult to care for young volunteers, but he can do it. He is very kind but he also shows the dignified monastic manner to us. He can help us deal with any problem we encounter in our volunteer work and he makes us feel very safe and grateful. He makes
me feel learning Buddhism is very cool and has showed me how to relax. I think this monk is exceptional because he not only cares for me but also care for my family. For instance, one time my grandmother was in a surgery, he came to the hospital to care for her and all my family members were deeply moved. In addition to caring for my grandmother, the monk also cared for my parents and changed my parents’ attitudes towards Buddhism from resistance to acceptance. (P5).

When I was a newcomer at the End-of-Life Chanting Group, I often encountered many difficulties and had no idea how to solve these in my interactions with clients. The monk who was the consultant in my volunteer group often cared for me and showed me how to deal problems I faced. For instance, one time he and I went to care for the family of the deceased who had been grieving over the death of their parents for a long time. I still remember the words he said to the family members. We tried to help them recover from their sorrow. He showed me how to care for family members of the deceased with empathy in my face: “You must be fully alive, because if your parents see you are in good condition after their death, they will stop worrying about you and go. If they see you are in pain and even feel depressed about their death, they will worry about you and cannot go with peace. For the sake of your parents, you should be alive and well!” (P59)

I feel that I learned a lot from how the monastics treated us. I think they gave us a lot of room to develop our potential and improve our abilities. They often tolerated our mistakes and respected our opinions on organizing activities. I feel that monastics are willing to let us learn something from our activity organisation, even if we did not do it well and did not follow their suggestions. (P4)

The nun in our volunteer group often gave care to me. I feel that she is a very smart monastics and she often points out the weakness of my habits very quickly and directly. Perhaps I did not understand her words at that moment, but I reflected on my behaviours with her suggestions and often found that her suggestions were right. I will adopt her suggestions to change my habits and transform my character. (P82).

**EVERYDAY LIFE**

**CIRCLE OF FRIENDS**

Some volunteers noted that Buddhist friends outside of Dharma Drum Mountain had helped them increase their Buddhist knowledge and develop Chinese Buddhist moral
habitus. Volunteers’ Buddhist friends were not laity of DDM but were well acquainted with several Buddhist monastics and volunteers at DDM. Initially the relationship between the respondents and their friends was that of professional-client. P85’s friend is a psychologist who taught P85 in a workshop at the Young Buddhist Society, and P5’s friend is a doctor. These friendships developed during the course of many meetings and discussions about the respondents’ crises. P85 and P5 noted that their Buddhist friends helped them to see themselves more clearly and to practice facing their fears and anxiety with self-awareness.

For the two respondents, their friends are like mentors, and both were very grateful for their friends’ straightforward criticism of their weaknesses. The two respondents both attest to the significance of their friends, who by increasing their Buddhist knowledge and assisting with their development of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus also contributed to the solution of their respective crises, helping to transform them from a situation from one of helplessness to one of hope with Buddhist concepts. These respondents’ friends made them realise that the practice of Buddhism can be embodied in everyday life. P85’s friend offered a psychological perspective on Buddhism and helped P85 build up her confidence in Buddhism through encouraging her to accept, respect and love her true feelings and thoughts. P85’s friend’s psychological interpretation of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts made P85 understood more about how to practice Buddhism in her family relationship. P5’s friend taught P5 how she made use of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in her daily life, including care, gratitude and repentance. P5’s friend also showed P5 how he viewed medical homecare as Buddhist moral practice and did a free clinic for the poor:

The first time I met my friend was at her workshop for the Young Buddhist Society. After attending her workshop, I became very excited about attending other workshops at her psychological
foundation. She was a clinical psychologist, so she could figure out my personality easily and knew how to give me appropriate suggestions about my life. Her way of speaking was very straightforward and she often figured out my weakness immediately. For instance, sometimes I told her that I was very anxious and frustrated by my religious practice in my everyday life, because I felt guilty of my disability of changing myself and my family relationship after practicing Buddhism. She would remind me to accept it, respect it and love my true feelings and thoughts. She suggested me practice to give unconditional love to my parents and to appreciate those things I cannot accept and then I can transform my life. (P85)

After I had been a volunteer at the Young Buddhist Society for several months, I became ill. My illness was very serious and I could not find any doctors that could cure me. One monk recommended me to my friend because he is a doctor. He cured my illness unexpectedly. I viewed him as my life saver because he gave me a healthy body. In addition, I viewed him as my Bodhisattva because he led me to practice Buddhism. I adopted his suggestions to re-establish myself in terms of Buddhist moral concepts. Through his Buddhist teaching, I reflected my life and become aware of the weakness of my behaviours such as arrogance and ignorance. I realised that I was not alone and I should filial to my parents. I realise that the meaning of my life was to benefit all sentient beings. In order to achieve this goal, I should make a commitment to practice giving, to express my gratitude to people who have helped me and to practice repentance to face my weakness and change it. Finally, I learned a lot from his medical homecare for the poor and providing them with a free clinic. He set a good example to me through his own actions. (P5).

P85 and P5’s Chinese Buddhist moral habitus not only developed from their learning of their friends’ Buddhist teachings but also from their joint practice with their friends. Respondents’ Chinese Buddhist moral habitus is the collective accomplishment of their interactions with their friends, because respondents would discuss with their friends what they had learned from their friends’ regarding Chinese Buddhist moral practices and their friends would comment on the respondents’ interpretations of their suggestions. Through coordinating understanding, the respondents would then adjust their habitual behaviours or change their interpretations of Buddhist moral concepts to develop their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus. Mutual understanding between respondents and their friends often took multiple intersubjective communicative activities to arrive at. Respondents and their friends deepened their intersubjective
understanding as their friendship grew. P5, for instance, pointed out that initially she and her friend had a professional-client relationship, but the death of her friend’s wife transformed their relationship and in the end P5 viewed her friend as family. P5’s Chinese Buddhist moral habitus was developed through intersubjective negotiation with her friend and the growth of their friendship. When P5 adjusted her attitude and coordinated her actions with her friend, she also developed her Chinese Buddhist moral habitus at the same time:

Initially I was very scared of seeing him because he was very stringent in his ways of disciplining me. He always had me in tears when I left his office and reflecting on myself, was I a bad person? During this process, I made use of Buddhist moral concepts to dissolve my self-centredness and arrogance. His straightforward criticism of my weakness made me realise the significance of repentance. Although I feared him, I still felt very grateful for his treatment because he let me see myself. My relationship with him changed when his wife died. I remembered I took part in the funeral rite for his wife. When I saw my friend, he looked vulnerable, but I kept my distance from him because I was afraid. He saw my reaction and condemned me: “Don’t you think your behaviour is disrespectful to a person you highly respected?” Suddenly I realised something because of his words! After the funeral rite, when I met him, I started to chat with him and helped him deal with stuff initatively. I found that his attitude towards me started to change as well. He treated me like his daughter. I learned a lot as our friendship grew. (P5)

Moreover, although their friends’ observations about their habitual behaviours are important to them, this does not mean that respondents will automatically agree with their friends’ suggestions. These friends are not laity of Dharma Drum Mountain which means they do not share the common norms and conventions of DDM internalised by volunteers. Their friends’ interpretations of Buddhism are also different from that of Dharma Drum Mountain. Therefore, respondents developed their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus through selective interpretations and justifications of their friends’ suggestions and intersubjectively coordinated negotiation with their friends, as P85 shared with me how she interacted with her friend and how she developed her Chinese
Buddhist moral habitus through intersubjectively coordinated negotiation with her friend in the private meeting and in the workshop. P85 then combined her Chinese Buddhist moral concepts with her learning from her friend and workshop to develop her Chinese Buddhist moral habitus by rebuilding her family relationships:

Each time I met my friend, I would make some decisions which were essential to my life, but not really follow her suggestions. She suggested I attend a course at her workshop. I learned a lot from this workshop because its idea is to teach attendants how to respect and love people who have a conflict with you and find a balance with them. If you can do it, you can transform your relationship with them. I felt the workshop became a bridge between my parents and me, because through attending the course of the foundation workshop, I accepted the situation that my parents did not want to believe in Buddhism but they still love me. It significantly reduced the gap between my inner and external conflict. After several practices on the course with my friends and other attendants, one time I felt my body was very uncomfortable and I went home to cry to my parents. I think my crying to my parents about my crisis was meaningful because it let my parent know I needed them, and my parents accepted me. I felt my crying improved my relationship with my parents, and my habit change is as a result of my attending the course at my friend’s foundation workshop. (P85)

Finally, when respondents volunteer at Dharma Drum Mountain, they will bring the Chinese Buddhist moral habitus generated by shared practice with their friends into volunteering and attune themselves to coordinate actions or opinions with other volunteers for task completions and harmonious relationships. Respondents’ volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain provides them with a space to naturally combine their friends’ suggestions and their own Buddhist knowledge from Dharma Drum Mountain together and to practice Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in their volunteer work, as P5 points out:

I feel that the reason I now understand more about Buddhist practice is because of my friend’s suggestions. When I return to volunteer work at Dharma Drum Mountain, I feel that I can apply Chinese Buddhist moral concepts into volunteering more easily. (P5)
FAMILY

Introduction

Family relationships push volunteers’ development of their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus to the limit, because volunteers’ emotional attachments to their families is normally stronger than their other personal relationships, which makes it hard for volunteers to evaluate how to treat other family members properly in terms of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts. The research found that respondents often developed their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus as they encountered conflicts with their family members or their family members encountered crises, such as illness or death. Some respondents further initiatively fostered their relationships with family members to pursue mutual well-being in family routines in terms of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts. To sum up, respondents made use of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to be aware of their emotion conditions, evaluated their emotions and habitual behaviour, and then intersubjectively negotiated with their family members to coordinate actions and opinions for the attunement. The goal of respondents’ Chinese Buddhist moral practice is to attune themselves to their family members to build a harmonious relationship.

Evaluation and intersubjective coordination of family routines

Many respondents pointed out that volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain contributes to their cultivation of a capacity for self-awareness of their emotional
conditions and evaluation of their relationships with family. When they understand more about themselves with the practice of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation, they realise that their well-being in family life is based upon whether they can intersubjectively negotiate with other family members to coordinate their opinions and actions. Respondents often make use of empathy to understand other family members’ perspectives, putting themselves into shoes of their loved ones and creating “empathic narratives” with them (Crossley 2011). Crossley points out that the goal of empathic narratives is to form an emotional bond between respondents and their family members by creating a common story. Through emotional entrainment in their intersubjective negotiation, respondents can foster their relationships with their family and attain mutual well-being.

Two respondents shared with me how they made use of empathy to foster family relationships. P44 is a current staff member at the End-of-Life Chanting Group. His volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain taught him to be aware of his emotions and evaluate how to use empathy to put himself in his children’s shoes and attain the attunement with his children. P5 is a senior volunteer at the Young Buddhist Society. P5 pointed out that learning Chinese Buddhist moral concepts made her re-evaluate how to treat her parents well. P5’s re-evaluation made her feel ashamed of how she treated her parents, because her parents had helped her overcome many difficulties, but she had treated her parents badly. P5’s re-evaluation of her child-parent relationship encouraged her to change her attitudes towards her parents and develop an “empathic narrative” with them (Crossley 2011). She started to empathise with her parents and intersubjectively negotiated with them to coordinate opinions. In addition, P5’s empathy for her parents’ perspective also caused her to start caring for her parents so that she took more initiative so that she felt that her relationship with her parents had
become closer and more intimate than before. P70 is a senior volunteer at the Chan meditation centre. She told me how she developed Chinese Buddhist moral habitus by reflecting on why her husband was against her introducing Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to him. She practiced shame and repentance, and came to realise that the success of Buddhist care is based upon whether we treat with people well and make them feel comfortable:

I found Buddhist practice helped me engage in personal transformations through self-awareness. Dharma Drum Mountain taught me how to be aware of my thoughts and behaviours, and I found that I gradually changed myself through my practice of self-awareness. My capacity for awareness also helped me improve my parent-child relationship, because I started to evaluate how I treated with my children and changed my attitude towards them. Before my involvement in volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain, when I interacted with my children, I often took their obedience of my rules for granted because I thought I am your father and you should listen to me. After I volunteered at Dharma Drum Mountain and started to practice Buddhism, I learned to put myself into the shoes of my children to understand their perspectives. My children told me that I changed a lot during their growth! (P44)

After I volunteered at Dharma Drum Mountain, I started to reflect on my relationship with my parents. I felt that my previous treatment to my parents was not right because I took their caring for granted. I often could not accept their suggestions to me because I thought I knew more than them. I felt shame about my arrogant attitudes towards my parents previously and I neglected the importance of filial piety. I started to put myself into their shoes to understand their opinions. For instance, my parents were concerned that I spent too much time volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain and that it would be harmful to my studies. Initially I ignored their concerns, which made them angry and have a negative image of Dharma Drum Mountain. I empathised with their feelings and negotiated with them to adjust my frequency of volunteering. In addition, I started to care for my parents initiative and found that our relationships become more intimate and I could share everything with them. My improvement of child-parent relationship also encouraged my mother to start donating to Dharma Drum Mountain and their friends to learn Buddhism. I found that my father also changed his attitudes towards my mother and me, because he spent more time interacting with us than before (P5).

I learned how to practice Buddhism in my interaction with my family. I felt Sheng Yen’s notion of shame and repentance is very good to practice in daily life, but it is hard to share these Buddhist concepts with other people in the right way. For instance, I have told my husband that the Buddhist
concept of shame and repentance is very good and you should often feel shame and repent for your wrong actions. Every time my words made my husband very angry, and he shouted at me “who do you think you are? Do you mean that my karma is blocked? You have no right to ask people to practice shame and repentance. Only Sheng Yen can ask you to do it!” When I heard his anger, I felt shame and repented for my actions. Gradually I adjusted my attitudes towards him and never did it again. My experience of sharing Buddhist concepts made me understand that the first step to caring for others with Buddhist concepts is to make them feel comfortable. Every time I failed I made use of shame and repentance to reflect upon and adjust my action. (P70).

Self-awareness and self-evaluation from caring for family illnesses

Two respondents shared with me how they developed their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus by caring for family members who had fallen ill. I have explored how these two respondents cared for their sick family members in Chapter 5, but here the two respondents’ accounts are considered from a different perspective. I explore how these two respondents developed their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus as a result of their caring. P84 pointed out that her experience of being with a patient family showed her how to empathise with her clients’ emotional conditions and provide a proper and comforting service when she volunteered at the End-of-Life Chanting Group. She also practiced expressing gratitude for her father’s trust and dedication in his life for bringing her up. P11 shared with me how he transformed his attitude towards his mother’s illness from hatred to gratitude whilst caring for her dementia. P11’s volunteer experience at Dharma Drum Mountain contributed to his self-awareness of his own emotional condition during the period he was caring for his mother. Also, his accumulation of social capital in volunteer work meant that he could count on the support of Buddhist friends. They taught him the Buddhist moral concepts he needed to cope and how to practice repentance to transform his character. His repentance practice helped him transform his attitude towards his mother’s illness from hatred to
My experience of caring for my father’s illness in a hospital taught me a lot about how to practice Buddhism. I learnt more about how to put myself into shoes of my clients to understand their emotional conditions and make them feel that my care is good for them. For instance, the patient family needs our care, but sometimes we provide them with too much care which makes them feel uncomfortable. As part of a patient family, my father’s illness made me feel vulnerable in front of my Buddhist friends at the End-of-Life Chanting Group. In addition, I felt grateful for my father’s trust for arranging his funeral matters in advance. My father told me what his requirements for the funeral were and I told him how I can satisfy his needs in terms of Buddhist funeral concepts. I gathered all my family members around him to express our gratitude to his dedication to bringing us up. It was unbelievable that his illness was being controlled and he recovered from his illness in the end. (P84)

I learned a lot from my care for my mother’s illness with the practice of Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation. My mother had dementia and her illness totally messed up our family life. Initially I could not tolerate her behaviour. I felt very angry and even felt that I hated her! It was very painful because her illness made her behave very badly towards me every day - she was suspicious, would hit me, blame me and even humiliate me. My friends at Dharma Drum Mountain suggested I practice repentance to dissolve my feelings of hatred towards my mother. Through repentance practice, I learned to be aware of my hate emotion and dissolved it through repenting for my attitude towards my mother. Repentance practice made me see myself and generated a deep feeling of gratitude towards my mother. Repentance practice made me engage in a personal transformation and I learned to accept my mother’s condition and care for her with gratitude. (P11).

Caring for ill family members contributed to the respondents’ development of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus, because they it provided them with an opportunity to make use of their capacity for self-awareness, cultivated during their volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain, to engage in emotional management and re-evaluate how to treat their family members well. Respondents often made use of moral emotions to foster their relationships with sick family members, including gratitude, empathy and repentance. Unlike the respondents who developed their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus through intersubjective negotiation with family members in more routine activities, these respondents could not intersubjectively negotiate with their sick family members,
because their family members’ illness were too serious, especially P11’s mother’s dementia. However, some respondents mentioned that their sick family members’ responses to their care helped them understand how to treat their sick family members well. For example, P84’s father trusted P84 to arrange his funeral in advance if his illness got out of control and he passed away before the arrangements were finalised. P84’s discussion of the funeral arrangements with her father made them mutually accountable to each other for their opinions. In order to come to an agreement, P84 and her father intersubjectively coordinated and adjusted their opinions for the attunement. The recovery of P84’s father can partly be seen as the outcome of P84 and her father’s joint practice through intersubjective negotiation.

CONCLUSION

The chapter makes use of Sayer’s (2005, 2011) theory of ethical dispositions, Bottero’s (2010) idea of practice as the negotiated outcome of intersubjective coordination, and Scheff’s (2006) arguments about awareness and the attunement of moral emotions to explore how volunteers at DDM develop their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus and transform their characters in their interactions with other people in volunteering, as well as with family and friends. The chapter found that volunteers made use of Sheng Yen’s notion of Chinese Buddhist morality to develop their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus, including care and four kinds of moral emotions: empathy, shame, repentance and gratitude. In addition, the chapter found that volunteers made use of three methods to develop their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus, including self-awareness, self-evaluation and joint practice with other people through intersubjective negotiation. Moreover, it was found that learning is an important factor in developing Chinese
Buddhist moral habitus. Volunteers mainly spend time learning how to develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus through interacting with other people and attending reading groups and Dharma class. The chapter shows that volunteers learned how to practice Chinese Buddhist moral concepts in a variety of ways, from Buddhist reading groups, Dharma class, other volunteers, Buddhist monastics, friends and family as well as self-learning through the practice of self-awareness and self-evaluation. Each volunteer has their own unique way of learning Chinese Buddhist moral concepts, and Chinese Buddhist moral habitus needs time to develop.

The chapter found that volunteering is the most important means for learning how to practice Chinese Buddhist moral concepts, because volunteers will interact with many experts in Chinese Buddhist moral practices, including Buddhist monastics and some senior volunteers. Volunteer works help volunteers to engage in Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation in their interactions with other people through self-awareness and self-evaluation. Building capacity for self-awareness helps volunteers to be aware of their negative emotions in their interactions with other volunteers. The capacity for self-evaluation helps volunteers to evaluate what kinds of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts they can use to transform negative emotions and rectify their behaviours. Through self-awareness and self-evaluation, the chapter found, volunteers developed their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus by practicing three kinds of moral emotions, including gratitude, shame and repentance. In addition, volunteers also learn to practice Chinese Buddhist moral concepts through intersubjective negotiation to coordinate their actions or opinions with other people. Care is the most important Chinese Buddhist moral practice in which Buddhist monastics and senior volunteers used to encourage other volunteers to develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus. The chapter found that care receiving motivated volunteers to develop grateful dispositions
to overcome difficulties or to form emotional bonds with other people. Some volunteers made use of care and empathy to develop their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus through intersubjectively negotiating with other people to coordinating their actions or opinions.

The chapter also explored how volunteers develop their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in relational dimensions of their daily life, with circles of friends and family. Some volunteers developed their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in their interactions with their Buddhist friends. Although these Buddhist friends did not volunteer at Dharma Drum Mountain, volunteers viewed their Buddhist friends as significant others in their Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation, because their Buddhist friends helped them to be aware of their weakness and gave them practical suggestions on how to practice Buddhism. Volunteers intersubjectively negotiated with their friends about how to make use of several Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to transform their character and solve their everyday problems, including care, respect, gratitude and repentance. The chapter found that volunteers generally took a long time to coordinate and adjust their actions and opinions with their friends for the attunement. Volunteers pointed out that although the process of intersubjective coordination was painful, their friendships with their other Buddhists became more intimate and like family.

Finally, some volunteers developed their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in their family life. Family relationships push volunteers’ development of their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus to the limit, because volunteers often have a stronger emotional attachment to their family than they do to other personal relationships, which makes it hard for volunteers to evaluate how to treat other family members properly in terms of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts. The chapter found that
volunteers often developed their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus through conflicts with their family members or when their family members encountered crises, such as illness. Volunteers practiced being aware of their emotional conditions and reevaluated how to treat their family members and attain mutual well-being. When volunteers engaged in self-awareness, they made use of three kinds of moral emotions to adjust their emotions, including shame, repentance and gratitude. When volunteers interacted with their family members, they made use of care and empathy to intersubjectively negotiate with their family members how to coordinate and adjust their opinions for attunement. The chapter found that volunteers’ expression of empathy towards their family members is the most important and effective means of achieving intersubjective coordination in family life. If volunteers successfully achieve attunement with their family members through their Chinese Buddhist moral practices, their family members are likely to volunteer with them together at Dharma Drum Mountain.
Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

Religious moral habitus is the core theme of this thesis and three aspects of religious moral habitus amongst a sample of volunteers at a Chinese Buddhist organisation in Taiwan called Dharma Drum Mountain have been explored in the analysis: firstly, the characteristics of Buddhist volunteering at DDM and volunteers’ friendships; secondly, how Buddhist volunteers make use of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to solve conflicts and achieve harmonious relationships with their family members through intersubjective negotiation; thirdly, how Buddhist volunteers make use of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in volunteering and the relational dimensions of their daily lives; and fourthly, how Buddhist volunteers develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in their interactions with other people, building upon what they learn at Dharma class and in Buddhist reading groups as well as from their volunteer work.

In this chapter, I summarise the main findings of the thesis. I then propose some suggestions for future research.

THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE THESIS
I began the thesis in Chapter 1 by reviewing the sociological research on religious practices, drawing attention to the emphasis upon individuals’ capacity to combine multiple religious sources into their daily religious practices in terms of their interests (Orsi 1997; Ammerman 2007; McGuire 2008). Sociologists view the characteristic of everyday religion is the prosperity of the non-experts religion that individuals have the capacity to construct a sense of religious belonging and commitment which does not always rely on the doctrines and rituals of institutional religious traditions (Cadge 2005; McGuire 2008; Pagis 2009, 2010). However, these sociological researches on everyday religion all highlight religious practitioners’ self-transformation or spiritual growth is the result of a personal accomplishment from self-growth and self-improvement only. The original contribution of the thesis is to take a new approach to study everyday religion and criticise that sociologists rarely pay attention to the importance of relationality in religious practitioners’ personal religious practice.

That is to say, what is not clear is how other people in a religious practitioner’s daily relational context affect that person’s self-transformation or spiritual growth, or how a religious practitioner’s religious practices affects the relational context. Therefore, this thesis has attempted to address these research questions by putting emphasis upon the importance of relationality in personal religious practice and I have applied three key theoretical ideas in order to develop the thesis: Sayer’s concepts of lay normativity (2011) and ethical dispositions (2005), Bottero’s (2010) notion of practice as negotiated outcome of intersubjective coordination and Scheff’s (2006) arguments about awareness and the attunement of moral emotions.

Sayer’s theories are the foundation of the thesis. Sayer (2005, 2011) proposes his concept of lay normativity to explore lay people’s relations with others in the ethical
dimension of everyday life. Sayer’s lay normativity highlights what people care about or what matters to them in their daily life “depends hugely on the quality of the social relations in which they live, and on how people treat on another” (Sayer 2011: 7). He argues that we often make use of emotions and evaluations to interact with others because we are vulnerable and interdependent. He distinguishes several elements of lay morality, including moral emotions, fellow-feeling, dispositions, discourses and individual reflexivity. His conception of lay morality can be seen as part of a broader theory of ethical dispositions, which Sayer (2005) proposes in order to criticise Bourdieu, who did not pay enough attention to the importance of emotions and evaluations (conscious deliberation) when formulating the concept of habitus. Sayer therefore integrates morality into the concept of habitus. Emotions and evaluations are two core notions in his ethical dispositions. Although Sayer does not link his concept of lay normativity to the religious context, I think it is viable to extend his theory to the Buddhist context and explore how Chinese Buddhist volunteers make use of moral emotions and evaluations in the relational dimensions of their everyday lives.

Bottero (2010) argues that practice is by nature intersubjective: practice is the negotiated outcome of intersubjective coordination; intersubjectivity is thus integral to joint practice. Bottero points out that habitus is the result of joint practice, and conscious coordination and intersubjective negotiation is an important part of joint practice. Scheff’s (2006) concepts of awareness and attunement are developments of Cooley and Goffman’s theories of intersubjective understanding in interaction situations. Scheff (2006) sees awareness and attunement as two important indicators of how moral emotions affect human interactions. Moral emotions serve as a mechanism for improving intersubjective understanding and reveal the different effects of social bonds, such as solidarity or alienation.
Building upon these theories, the thesis proposes that the mechanisms through which Dharma Drum Mountain’s Chinese Buddhist moral practice is realised are expressing emotions and making use of evaluative behaviours in people’s interaction situations in daily relational contexts. When volunteers engage in Chinese Buddhist moral practice in their encounters and conversations with others in terms of Sheng Yen’s concept of character education, they will first of all make use of their capacity for awareness to find out the needs of others and their own emotional conditions. They will then engage in self-evaluation to evaluate how to treat others and themselves and what is best to do. Ultimately, they will make use of moral emotions and moral dispositions - i.e. empathy, gratitude, shame, repentance, care and respect - to attune and coordinate themselves with others through intersubjective negotiation. This can be linked back to the two goals of DDM founder Sheng Yen’s Chinese Buddhist moral practice. The first one is to attain mutual attunement, which means building harmonious interpersonal relationships, transforming individual character and attaining mutual well-being in keeping with Sheng Yen’s notion of character education. The second one is to develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus. However, the research suggests that it is hard to generate mutual attunement and develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus in a single interaction. Individuals have to intersubjectively negotiate with others many times before they are able to coordinate their actions.

The findings of the thesis suggest that Dharma Drum Mountain has institutionalised the accumulation of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts into its organisational norms, thereby enabling its volunteers learn Chinese Buddhist moral concepts (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7) and develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus (Chapter 7). Dharma Drum Mountain has institutionalised Chinese Buddhist moral concepts into its organisational
norms using two methods. Firstly, as described in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, DDM has created a mechanism for group discussion, bringing people together to learn Chinese Buddhist moral concepts through the sharing of stories in a trusted and safe conversational space. Group discussions perform the function of a “small group”, which are to give care to group members and cultivate trust (Wuthnow 1995). Group discussions give members a chance to learn how other members transformed their habitual behaviours when they encountered problems in their everyday life.

In Chapter 6, I pointed out that Dharma Drum Mountain institutionalised the sharing of religious conversations into the routines of volunteer work like a group discussion after volunteer works contributes to build volunteers’ friendship with other volunteers. Volunteers view other volunteers as spiritual friends, in terms of Buddhist norms. Their spiritual friends provide emotional support with Buddhist concepts after their sharing, which deepens their friendships and encourages them to (re-)evaluate their volunteering conditions and intersubjectively coordinate their opinions with other volunteers. In Chapter 7, I found that through sharing in group discussion, members of the Buddhist reading groups and Dharma class can develop Chinese Buddhist moral habitus through the joint practice of sharing life stories, negotiating feedback from other members, reframing life stories in response to feedback and by comparison with other members’ life stories.

The second way in which Dharma Drum Mountain has institutionalised the accumulation of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus into its organisation norms is described and analysed in Chapter 4. Several moral concepts have been incorporated into volunteer work at DDM, including care, respect, empathy and gratitude. Volunteers are encouraged and eventually learn to make use of these moral
dispositions (care and respect) and moral emotions (empathy and gratitude) to interact with their clients. My research suggests that care is the most important Chinese Buddhist moral concept in volunteer work at Dharma Drum Mountain, because volunteers often give care to their clients at every stage of volunteer activities.

Chapter 4 shows that tensions between secular values and Buddhist beliefs in Taiwan were clearly tangible in DDM’s volunteers’ intergenerational and marital relationships. It is an important finding of the thesis. Firstly, in volunteers’ intergenerational relationships, tensions between secular values and Buddhist beliefs in Taiwan often lead to intergenerational ambivalence. The chapter found that the sources of intergenerational ambivalence in Buddhist family and non-Buddhist family are different. In Buddhist family, children’s studies are the main cause of intergenerational ambivalence, because adult respondents’ parents often insisted that their children should take care of their studies before they engaged in Buddhist volunteering, particularly adult respondents’ fathers. In non-Buddhist families, on the contrary, religious volunteering itself often becomes the source of intergenerational ambivalence, and there are three kinds of tensions between parent-children relationships, including the institution of Buddhist ordination, vegetarian diet, and approach towards material well-being. Secondly, in volunteers’ marital relationships, tensions between secular values and Buddhist beliefs in Taiwan often lead to marital conflicts, particularly female volunteers’ marital relationships. The majority of female volunteers mentioned that they had got into conflicts with their husbands over how to balance their volunteer interests at Dharma Drum Mountain with their childrearing obligations in daily family routines.

The chapter found that in order to solve tensions between secular values and Buddhist
beliefs in Taiwan in volunteers’ family relationships, Sheng Yen’s concept of character education was successfully used to solve intergenerational ambivalence and marital conflicts. Sheng Yen argues that the goal of character education is to achieve harmony between the self and others through learning how to be a person; by practicing Chinese Buddhist moral practices like care and respect, volunteers can learn how to pursue their own interests and care for others at the same time if they want their relationships to be harmonious. The chapter found that volunteers often make use of intersubjective negotiation and moral dispositions like care and respect to coordinate their actions or opinions with their family members and reconstruct family relationships in harmony.

The original contribution of the thesis to the sociology of religion is that it shows how important relationality is to personal religious practice in everyday life. The findings of the thesis suggest that the success of religious practices, in this case Chinese Buddhist moral practices, depends upon joint practice - the interactions of practitioners with other people in their circles of life, including other volunteers, Buddhist monastics, family members and friends. Their individual religious development is therefore also a collective accomplishment. At Dharma Drum Mountain, volunteers’ religious moral practice is based upon Sheng Yen’s notion of character education, the goal of which is to achieve harmony between the self and others through Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation and the practice of “The Six Ethics of the Mind Campaign”. There are two levels of character education according to Sheng Yen. At the individual level, Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation is at the core of Sheng Yen’s moral framework and there are four sequential stages of Buddhist self-cultivation: self-knowing, self-affirmation, self-growth and self-dissolution. At the interpersonal level, Shen Yen points out that individuals can transform their characters in their interactions with others through the practice of six kinds of Chinese Buddhist morality i.e. care, respect,
gratitude, shame, repentance and empathy.

In Chapter 2, I considered Dharma Drum Mountain’s history and position in the Taiwanese Buddhist context. I noted that Sheng Yen’s notion of Chinese Buddhist morality can be seen as part of a broader tradition of Humanistic Buddhism, which has become the mainstream of modern Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan. Contemporary Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan, as Madsen (2007, 2008) points out, are a form of “rational-ethical religion” and the main Chinese Buddhist organisations in Taiwan have creatively adapted Confucian moral discourses to promote their Chinese Buddhist moral practices. In the thesis I trace back Sheng Yen’s emphasis upon relationality in personal self-cultivation to Taixu’s concept of Buddhist morality: “relying upon the Buddha, perfection lies in human character; humanness perfected is Buddhahood attained” (Hsing Yun 1994: 6; quoted in Chandler 2006: 187). Sheng Yen developed Taixu’s ideas by integrating Confucian self-cultivation into Chinese Buddhism. He argued that the first step in the process of Chinese Buddhist moral practice is learning how to become a person; through learning how to become a person, volunteers develop their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus. Sheng Yen’s view of Buddhist practice as learning to become a person is one of his great contributions to the modernisation of Chinese Buddhism. His emphasis on relationality as an integral part of personal Chinese Buddhist self-cultivation has helped to change the social image of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan, where Chinese Buddhists have traditionally been viewed as selfish because of their focus on self-realisation as opposed to social responsibility.

In the interviews, volunteers pointed out that, to integrate personal Buddhist self-cultivation into the relational context, they have to think about how their volunteer work can be “fitted in with the demands of family, friends and paid work” (Bowlby et
al. 2010: 116). They have to learn how to achieve harmony between their desires for Buddhist self-cultivation on the one hand, and fulfilling other people’s expectations and ensuring their well-being, on the other. One of the findings of the thesis is thus that sharing is the key that opens the door to a win-win situation and should be viewed as an integral part of Chinese Buddhist moral practice. Sharing Buddhism to others is the most important factor contributing to fostering harmonious relationships with others and achieving mutual well-being.

Because sharing involves emotional entrainment and practicing evaluative behaviour with others in interaction situations, volunteers depend on others’ responses to their behaviours to develop their Chinese Buddhist moral habitus. As Buddhist scholar Alan Wallace (2007: 109) points out, intersubjectivity is the central core of Buddhism, and “our existence is invariably intersubjective, for we exist in a causal nexus in which we are constantly influenced by and exert influence upon the world around us, including other people”. Buddhist sharing is intersubjective, because the goals of Buddhist sharing are to attain mutual understanding and even makes a difference to the lives of those in necessitous circumstances. Individuals have to coordinate their opinions and actions with others to understand the needs of others through intersubjective negotiation. Relationality therefore guides the religious moral practices of Buddhist volunteers because they believe ‘the quality of relations to others is essential to well-being’ (Sayer 2011: 121).

Sheng Yen’s notion of character education is important for exploring how volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain make use of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus to pursue well-being in their daily lives. In Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, I showed how volunteers make use of two kinds of Chinese Buddhist concepts, care and respect, to interact with
their family members and friends. Many volunteers mentioned respect and care as two moral dispositions they often used to practice Buddhism in the relational dimensions of their lives. In Chapter 7, it was found that many of the volunteers involved in this research maintained that their experience of religious volunteering helped them pay attention to the relational dimensions of human life they often overlooked in their previous life. They started to realise that they were dependent on others for their sense of self and that their own well-being was highly correlated with how they treated others and how others treated them. Volunteers also realised that by dedicating themselves to religious volunteering they were not only helping others but also themselves. In other words, their greatest achievement has been to find out that self-interest and altruism can be unified or are congruent. They can act “for self-and-other together” (Held 2006; quoted in Sayer 2011:123). To sum up, Chinese Buddhist moral habitus helps volunteers re-evaluate the relational dimensions of their lives so that they can flourish beyond egoism and altruism (Sayer 2011)

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the findings of this thesis, I would like to suggest a few things for future researchers and policy makers to take into consideration. Firstly, the concept of Chinese Buddhist moral habitus should be examined through comparative analysis with other Chinese Buddhist organisations in Taiwan to confirm whether Chinese Buddhist volunteers and laity in general share the same Buddhist moral habitus. In addition, researchers might engage in comparative analysis with other Chinese Buddhist organisations in China, or adopt cross-sectional analysis to compare whether the different traditions of Buddhism such as Theravada Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism
or Japanese Buddhism share the same Buddhist moral habitus,

The second recommendation is that researchers consider the importance of Chinese Buddhist performances in Taiwan. Dharma Drum Mountain views art and music as effective ways to promote Chinese Buddhism, and it has three kinds of Buddhist performance teams: choirs, drum teams and drama troupes. The findings of this thesis suggest that it would be worth exploring how Dharma Drum Mountain promotes its moral ideas through drama troupes. The aim of these dramas is to “capture a small slice of contemporary life, usually something that rings true to the experiences of people in the audience” (Wuthnow 2005: 154) and DDM’s drama troupes encourage the audience to contemplate why morality is important in relationality and how Chinese Buddhist moral concepts are conducive to fostering interpersonal relationships. Currently there are two kinds of drama troupes at Dharma Drum Mountain. One drama troupe makes use of a variety of dramatic devices to convey what Buddhism is to the audience, and the other one performs the playback theatre.

Wuthnow (2005) argues that religious presence in the arts contributes to the cultivation of the religious imagination by connecting art with religious virtues. Wuthnow points out that artistic interest in the public have grown up recently through the spread of mass media and American religious institutions have patronised or institutionally arranged artistic activities to reinforce individuals’ interest in spirituality. Wuthnow’s research on the relationship between religion and the arts contributes to the exploration of how Chinese Buddhist organisations in Taiwan promote its religious virtues in the arts. The largest Chinese Buddhist organisations in Taiwan have each institutionalised the performance of arts and music into their institutional structures, for instance, by establishing choirs and drum teams to promote Buddhism through music. Buddha’s
Light Mountain and Tzu Chi have established dancing groups, and Tzu Chi and Dharma Drum Mountain are engaged in the spread of Buddhism through drama. Tzu Chi focuses on making TV drama in its TV station to promote Chinese Buddhist moral concepts. Dharma Drum mountain adopts another approach using drama troupes to promote Buddhist virtues on tours around Taiwan. It would be interesting to explore how these Buddhist religious performances operate and organise their performances and how Buddhist religious performances affect the public through the arts.

The third suggestion for future researchers is to explore how Chinese Buddhist moral practice reduces vulnerability and reinforces trust. The main theoretical support for the thesis is Sayer’s (2011) concept of lay morality, which in turn is based on the idea that morality is important to our everyday lives because we are vulnerable and dependent on others. Sayer argues that vulnerability and interdependence are at the core of human nature.\(^1\) The thesis focuses on exploring why the success of Chinese Buddhist moral practices is dependent on others but did not explore the relationship between Chinese Buddhist morality and vulnerability. MacIntyre’s (1999) views of vulnerability and our dependence on others as human animality are very inspiring and deserve to explore it further. Sociologists have explored vulnerability from different aspects. Furedi (2004, 2005, 2007) argues that therapeutic culture is a characteristic of risk society which reinforces a sense of vulnerability and causes individuals to generate fears and the feeling of uncertainty. Turner (2006) connects vulnerability with human rights and argues that human rights are important to protect human vulnerability. Misztal (2011a, 2011b) provides the most systematic sociological analysis of vulnerability and points out that there are three forms of vulnerability, including our dependence on others, the

\(^1\) Sayer does not use the term “interdependence”, but he emphasises that relationality is at the core of human nature because we are dependent on others.
unpredictability of human experience and action and the irreversibility of past action and experience. Misztal argues that trust is a remedy for vulnerability, but she also points out that trust “renders the actor vulnerable to risk” and trust “makes us more vulnerable” (Misztal 2011a: 363). Misztal proposes three strategies for reducing vulnerability and build trust relationships: taking responsibility, promising and forgiveness. Through practicing these, Misztal maintains that individuals can create bonds of solidarity, bonds of security and bonds of cooperation.

Misztal’s theory of vulnerability is a good starting point for the further exploration of how Chinese Buddhist moral practice can reduce vulnerability and build bonds of solidarity. Misztal argues that there are three kinds of acts of responsibility: caring, respect and human rights. Likewise, Sheng Yen (1995, 1999a, 2001c, 2009c) also highlights the importance of responsibility in Chinese moral practice. It would therefore be worth exploring how individuals engage in Chinese Buddhist moral practices with respect to human rights and how trust affects Chinese Buddhist moral practice. Similarly, Misztal’s concept of promising, which she defines promising as a future-oriented commitment, could also be used to explore Chinese Buddhist moral practice. It could be compared with Sheng Yen’s (1999b, 1999e, 2001b) views on making vows as an integral part of Chinese Buddhist moral practice and a Buddhist method for making a commitment to engage in Chinese Buddhist moral practice to reduce others’ sufferings and helping people in need. Finally, while Sheng Yen does not highlight forgiveness in his conceptualisation of Chinese Buddhist morality, it is worth noting that forgiveness is a recognised Buddhist practice in Theravada Buddhism (Kornfield 2011) and Tibetan Buddhism (Chodron 2002). Sheng Yen (2009b) instead highlights the importance of tolerance in Chinese Buddhist moral practice. It would be interesting to explore whether forgiveness is important in Chinese
Buddhist moral practice and how tolerance contributes to reducing vulnerability and fostering interpersonal relationships.

Finally, I suggest that some findings of the thesis can become a part of Dharma Drum Mountain’s future policy on volunteering. According to the finding of the thesis, volunteers from different volunteer groups all encountered conflicts with their family members over whether they should be involved in Buddhist volunteering. This shows that tensions between Buddhist beliefs and secular values are prevalent in Taiwan. Although many volunteers’ success stories are presented in the thesis, I also found that many of my friends at Dharma Drum Mountain are still struggling to find a balance between their desires for Buddhist volunteering on the one hand, and fulfilling other people’s expectations, on the other. According to my participant observation, I found that Dharma Drum Mountain does not teach its volunteers how to make use of Chinese Buddhist moral concepts to deal with conflicts with other people in its volunteer training or Dharma class. The thesis found that two key factors contribute to solving conflicts and fostering harmonious relationships with others whilst volunteering. The first is sharing Buddhism to others, which is the key opening the door to a win-win situation, and the second one is to engage in intersubjective negotiation to coordinate actions or opinions with other people, which is learn how to act “for self-and-other together” (Held 2006; quoted in Sayer 2011: 123). I suggest that Dharma Drum Mountain can put these findings into the contents of its volunteer training or Dharma class and make use of Sheng Yen’s concept of character education to interpret it. I think doing this would help volunteers to better understand how to engage in Chinese Buddhist moral practice in the relational dimensions of their everyday lives.
# Appendix 1: A list of the interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age (in 2008)</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Role in volunteer works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Business employee</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taoyuan</td>
<td>New volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Kaohsiung</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Junior high school (unfinished)</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Tainan</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>College*</td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taoyuan</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Cleaner</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P12</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P13</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Salesman</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P14</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P15</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P16</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Kaohsiung</td>
<td>New volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P17</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>designer</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P19</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Junior high school</td>
<td>Business employee</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taoyuan</td>
<td>New volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P21</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Government employee</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Business employer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P24</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Primary school (unfinished)</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>New volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P25</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P26</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Senior high school</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>New volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P28</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P29</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P30</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P31</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P32</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P33</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Public relations practitioner</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>New volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P34</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Highest Degree</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Volunteer Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P35</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P36</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P37</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>School teacher</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P38</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P39</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P40</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>New volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P41</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Business employee</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P42</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Senior high school</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P43</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Flight attendant</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P44</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Business employee</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P46</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Business employee</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P47</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P48</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P49</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Senior high school</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P50</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P51</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Salesman</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P52</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>New volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P53</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Business manager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P54</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Business employee</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P55</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Junior high school</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Type of Volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P56</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P57</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Business employee</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>New volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P58</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P59</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P60</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Factory worker</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Kaohsiung</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P61</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>School teacher</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Kaohsiung</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P62</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P63</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P64</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Senior high school</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taoyuan</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P65</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Saleswoman</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taoyuan</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P66</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P67</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P68</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>New volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P69</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P70</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>School teacher</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Kaohsiung</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P71</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>School teacher</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Kaohsiung</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P72</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taichung</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P73</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P74</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Senior high school</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P75</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Kaohsiung</td>
<td>Senior volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Surname</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Current Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P76</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Kaohsiung</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P77</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P78</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P79</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Senior high school</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taichung</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P80</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P81</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P82</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Music teacher</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P83</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yilan</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P84</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P85</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Insurance agent</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Kaohsiung</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P86</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Full-time volunteer</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Current volunteer staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P87</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Buddhist monastics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Interview Questions

QUESTIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS

A. Volunteering

1. What are your motives for taking part in volunteer work at Dharma Drum Mountain?
2. Can you tell me the history and content of your volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain? Have you changed your roles since you joined Dharma Drum Mountain?
3. Have you experienced any life transformation since volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain?
4. How often do you take part in volunteering at Dharma Drum Mountain?
5. Can you tell me how important Dharma Drum Mountain is in your life?
6. Since you joined Dharma Drum Mountain, have you encountered any difficulty in your volunteer work? How did you resolve it?
7. What did you learn from volunteering? Have you brought your gains from volunteering into your daily life? How did you do it?
8. How did you influence other volunteers?
9. What is the most precious gift you have received since volunteering for Dharma Drum Mountain?

B. Religious practice

10. Have you engaged in any Buddhist practice in your daily life? How long did you practice it? How often did you practice it? Have you encountered any difficulties in Buddhist practice? How did you resolve these?
11. Have you practiced Buddhism in your volunteer work? How did you do it?
12. Have you experienced any life transformation with Buddhist practice?

C. Buddhist education

13. Have you attended any kinds of Buddhist education at Dharma Drum Mountain?
including Dharma class, mediation class, meditation retreat, or reading group? How long did you attend? How often did you attend?

14. What was the content of the Buddhist educational activities you attended at Dharma Drum Mountain?

15. What did you learn from Buddhist education at Dharma Drum Mountain?

16. What is the relationship between Buddhist education and volunteer work?

17. What is the relationship between Buddhist education and Buddhist practice?

18. Have you applied your gains from Buddhist education at Dharma Drum Mountain into your routine activities? Have you encountered any difficulties in the practice of Buddhist knowledge? How did you resolve these?

D. Social networks

19. Can you tell me how people in the relational dimensions of your life evaluate your religious involvement in Dharma Drum Mountain?

(1) Your parents?
(2) Your partner (if you are married)?
(3) Your children (if you have child)?
(4) Your friends?
(5) Your colleagues?

20. Have you invited people to volunteer at Dharma Drum Mountain?

(1) Your parents?
(2) Your partner (if you are married)?
(3) Your children (if you have child)?
(4) Your friends?
(5) Your colleagues?

21. Have you invited people to learn Buddhist practice at Dharma Drum Mountain?

(1) Your parents?
(2) Your partner (if you are married)?
(3) Your children (if you have child)?
(4) Your friends?
(5) Your colleagues?

22. How did your volunteering affect your personal relationships? Have you encountered any difficulties in balancing your volunteering and personal relationships? How did you negotiate with others to foster your personal relationships with Buddhist practice?

(1) Your parents?
(2) Your partner (if you are married)?
(3) Your children (if you have child)?
(4) Your friends?
(5) Your colleagues?

23. Have you applied your gains from Buddhist education at Dharma Drum Mountain into your personal relationships, for example, Chinese Buddhist morality and meditation? Have you encountered any difficulties in the practice of Buddhist knowledge in the relational dimensions of your life? How did you negotiate with them to foster your personal relationships with Buddhist practice?
   (1) Your parents?
   (2) Your partner (if you are married)?
   (3) Your children (if you have child)?
   (4) Your friends?
   (5) Your colleagues?

24. Can you tell me which three volunteers you are most familiar with at Dharma Drum Mountain? Can you tell me some details of your relationships?
   (1) How important is your relationship with them?
   (2) How long have you known these persons?
   (3) How did your relationships grow? Have you encountered any changes in your relationships?
   (4) How are you connected to these persons?
   (5) How often do you keep in touch?
   (6) What kinds of topics do you talk about when you meet?

E. Background information

25. Gender?
26. Age?
27. Residence?
28. Occupation?
29. Education levels?
30. Marital status?

QUESTIONS FOR BUDDHIST MONASTICS:

A. Organisational context of volunteer groups

1. What is the history of your volunteer group? What are the characteristics of your group? Has the group experienced any significant changes?
2. Is the group encountering any difficulties in its routine operations?
3. What is the plan for the group in future?
4. What is the organisational structure of your volunteer groups?
5. What is Dharma Drum Mountain’s attitude toward the standardization and institutionalization of routine operations?
6. What are the characteristics of volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain? According to your observation, what are the differences between volunteers at Dharma Drum Mountain and volunteers at other Chinese Buddhist organisations in Taiwan?
7. What are the contents of Dharma Drum Mountain’s education training for volunteers?
8. What are Dharma Drum Mountain’s expectations for its volunteers?
9. What are the difficulties of recruiting volunteers?
10. How do Buddhist monastics care for volunteers?
11. How do Buddhist monastics make use of their personal relationships with volunteers to enhance the progress of volunteer work?
12. How do volunteers of your group cooperate with volunteers of other groups at Dharma Drum Mountain to hold big religious congregations?
13. What is the relationship between volunteering and Dharma Drum Mountain’s core notion of protecting the spiritual environment?
14. What is the relationship between volunteering and religious practice?
15. How do Buddhist monastics instruct volunteers to engage in religious practice in volunteering?
16. How do Buddhist monastics teach volunteers Sheng Yen’s notion of Chinese Buddhist morality through volunteering?

B. Evaluation of volunteer

17. According to your observation, what are motives for volunteers to take part in volunteer work?
18. According to your observation, what is the impact of volunteering upon volunteers’ daily lives? How do volunteers find the balance between volunteering and their routine activities?
19. According to your observation, do many volunteers really make the effort to practice Buddhism in their everyday life?
20. What is your attitude towards volunteers who leave Dharma Drum Mountain? According to your observation, why do volunteers want to leave Dharma Drum Mountain?
C. Background information

21. Gender?
22. Age?
23. Residence?
24. Occupation?
25. Education levels?
26. Marital status?

QUESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

A. Evaluation of workplace at Dharma Drum Mountain

1. Can you tell me your motivation for working at Dharma Drum Mountain? How do you feel about the work at Dharma Drum Mountain?
2. What is the difference between working at a Buddhist organisation and working for secular organisations? Have you experienced any difficulty accommodating to the organisational culture of Dharma Drum Mountain? How did you adjust yourself?
3. Have you ever volunteered at other organisations or Dharma Drum Mountain before you became an administrator at Dharma Drum Mountain? What is the difference between the two roles?
4. What are the attitudes of your family and friends towards your work at a Buddhist organisation? If they are against your involvement, how did you resolve this conflict?
5. Can you tell me the content of your work?
6. How do you manage and cooperate with volunteers? Did you make any friends in the process of cooperation? How do your personal relationships with volunteers contribute to your work?
7. How do you evaluate your role as a bridge between masters and volunteers?
8. Have you engaged in religious practice after your work at Dharma Drum Mountain? How do you evaluate the effect of religious practice on your work at Dharma Drum Mountain?

B. Background information

9. Gender?
10. Age?
11. Residence?
12. Occupation?
13. Education levels?
14. Marital status?
Bibliography


Buddha's Light International Association (2011) The Introduction of Buddha's Light International Association, at http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E5%9C%8B%E9%9A%9B%E4%BD%9B%E5%85%89%E6%9C%83


Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing Corporation.


Soundings, Boston: Centre for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University, pp. 73-80.


Pittman, D. A. (2001) Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms,
Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press.


Sociology, 54(1): 77–97


Corporation.


The Six Ethics of the Mind Campaign, at http://www.dharmadrum.org/content/about/about.aspx?sn=113


Won Buddhism of Manhattan, at:

http://www.wonbuddhist.org/meditation/chanting-meditation


