

Spring 2021

Fictive Daughters and Sons, Celibate Priests and Nuns: How Religious *Tongzhi* and Clergy in Taiwan Navigate Familial Obligations

Gavin Fisher

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd>



Part of the [Anthropology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Fisher, G.(2021). *Fictive Daughters and Sons, Celibate Priests and Nuns: How Religious Tongzhi and Clergy in Taiwan Navigate Familial Obligations*. (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/6247>

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you by Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact digres@mailbox.sc.edu.

FICTIVE DAUGHTERS AND SONS, CELIBATE PRIESTS AND NUNS: HOW
RELIGIOUS *TONGZHI* AND CLERGY IN TAIWAN NAVIGATE FAMILIAL
OBLIGATIONS

by

Gavin Fisher

Bachelor of Arts
University of British Columbia, 2011

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts in

Anthropology

College of Arts and Sciences

University of South Carolina

2021

Accepted by:

Marc Moskowitz, Director of Thesis

Jennifer Reynolds, Reader

Drucilla Barker, Reader

Tracey L. Weldon, Interim Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

© Copyright by Gavin Fisher, 2021
All Rights Reserved.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my granny Christel Haug (1937-2021), a life-long learner and educator with a mischievous sense of humor.

Acknowledgements

I want to first express gratitude to my committee: Jennifer Reynolds, Drucilla Barker, and my thesis chair Marc Moskowitz. Jennifer, thank you so much for finding the time in your very busy schedule to read my work so closely and to provide such thoughtful feedback. Drue, thank you for all of your suggestions over the course of my project, starting with the final paper I wrote for your class. Marco, I cannot thank you enough for all of your mentorship and guidance throughout my graduate school journey. Thank you for being excited about my project and believing in me—especially at times when I didn't always believe in myself. I also want to thank Elaine Chun for her expertise when I was developing a final paper focusing on Buddhist nun Shih Chao Hwei's speech (which then grew into a chapter in this thesis), as well as Jessica Main at the University of British Columbia for all her mentorship. Thank you to Sunny Tsai for helping me to reach out to Shih Chao Hwei, and for translation help before, during, and after the interview.

I also want to thank everyone who agreed to speak with me—without you this project would not have been possible. I hope to meet you all in person in Taiwan one day soon; or, at the very least, in the next life.

Heartfelt thanks as well to my cohort: Johnny, Nina, and Fallon. Y'all have always been enthusiastic and supportive of my project—sharing in my joys, achievements, and frustrations over the past two years—and I greatly appreciate it. Thank

you for all of the memories and the much-needed hang outs and laughs. I look forward to our reunion on the Trobriand Islands in the future!

Finally, I want to thank my family, who, because of the pandemic, I've been separated from far longer than we all would have liked. When I needed it, you always reminded me of the value of getting more education. Thank you for always supporting me and being there for me.

Abstract

Great progress for the rights of *tongzhi* (sexually and gender-nonconforming people) has occurred in Taiwan in the past two decades, culminating in the legalization of same-sex marriage in 2019. However, it is still not uncommon for parents to take their *tongzhi* son or daughter to see a spirit medium or psychiatrist in an attempt to ‘cure’ them of their same-sex attraction. In Confucian ideology, which is central to the culture of Taiwan, a filial son or daughter is one who marries heterosexually and produces progeny to continue the family line. *Tongzhi* who do not do so are therefore violating this traditional view of filial piety. In the face of these challenges, *tongzhi* members of the Daoist Brilliant Light Temple have created fictive kin relations that provide them with emotional and social support. They have become adopted sons and daughters of the Rabbit God (who is the deification of a man who desired another man), and through their devotion and obedience they are being filial to their spiritual father. The members also use the religious concepts of reincarnation and karmic destiny to explain the familial connections they feel with each other. This thesis also examines how Master Lu of Brilliant Light Temple and Buddhist nun Shih Chao Hwei have supported *tongzhi* individuals and *tongzhi* rights. In addition to exploring the intersection of East Asian religions and *tongzhi* experiences—a topic rarely addressed in the literature—this thesis also makes a new connection between *tongzhi* and Buddhist and Daoist clergy. Because they do not marry and bear progeny, celibate religious figures have historically fallen outside of Confucian norms in China’s history, and contentious attitudes towards clergy

continue to the present in Taiwan. *Tongzhi*'s creation of fictive kin networks for support, and their reinterpretation of filial piety, mirrors longer traditions among celibate monks, nuns, and priests who have reconfigured familial obligations in the course of following their religious calling.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract.....	vi
List of Symbols.....	ix
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2 A Historical Overview of <i>Tongzhi</i> Identity: A Survey Through Terminology	32
Chapter 3 Adopted by the Rabbit God: Filial Piety, Fictive Kinship, and Religious Practices Among Daoist Believers	69
Chapter 4 The ‘God of War’ and her Fierce Words: Buddhist Nun Shih Chao Hwei’s Support of <i>Tongzhi</i> Rights.....	95
Chapter 5 Conclusion	125
References	132
Appendix A Glossary	141
Appendix B Excerpts from Shih Chao Hwei’s Speech (In Traditional Chinese Characters)	148

List of Symbols

((comment))	transcriber's description of speech quality
bold	emphasis signaled by increased pitch or amplitude
(number)	seconds of silence, for a pause
CAPITALS	increased volume
<u>underline</u>	parts of excerpts quoted in other media

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 My Project

It was a case of heartbreak that first brought Evan, a 30-year-old butcher in Taipei, to a small Daoist temple in a neighboring city. However, this temple would provide a system of support during times of conflict with his family. In my interview with Evan he told me that when he was 19 years old and in his second year of university, his parents, grandparents, and other members of his extended family took him to see a psychiatrist in Taipei to try and ‘cure’ him of his desire for other men.¹ The psychiatrist tried to explain to Evan’s family that he was not sick, and that being attracted to people of the same gender is not an illness. Evan’s family had already taken him to various temples to see mediums who tried to rid him of his desires. They put so much pressure on the psychiatrist that the doctor eventually prescribed Evan a concentration improving medication just to appease his parents so that they would let Evan leave the hospital. Evan continued to experience conflict with his family because they wouldn’t accept his sexuality—and it reached a point where he became suicidal.

Evan’s experience is not unique. Family is a major source of conflict for those who do not conform to heteronormative sexual and gender identities in Taiwan. It is the conception of the family in traditional Chinese thought—and the fundamental concept of filial piety—that leads to this conflict and struggle for parents and other relatives to

¹ Initial interview on October 11, 2020; follow-up interview on October 31, 2020.

accept a family member who has same-sex desires. The family, and not the individual, is the irreducible unit; family is the base of society in East Asian countries like Taiwan that have a culture shaped by Confucian ideology (Chou 2000; Park and Chesla 2007). Within the family, filial piety is a central value. Being filial means obeying and looking after one's parents and grandparents, and it also includes the imperative to marry and continue the family line. As I will describe in Chapter 3, this was an expectation Evan's parents had: they wanted him to marry (a woman) and have children. In the traditional sense, Evan is not filial. However, as I will argue in this thesis, he and others have reinterpreted the fundamental concept of filial piety.

One must be careful not to assume all queer communities around the world share the same history, struggles, and conceptions of identity. This is why throughout my thesis I will use the term that is most popular contemporary word used in Taiwan by same-sex attracted people, those who are transgender (*kuaxingbie*), and others who are sexually and gender nonconforming. That word is *tongzhi*, which means 'comrade' (I will discuss the history and politics of this term in more detail in Chapter 2). However, much of my thesis will focus on male *tongzhi*. This is a result of 1) reviewing the scholarship on the history of same-sex love in the Chinese-speaking world, much of which focuses on male same-sex love because of the records that exist; and 2) the people I interviewed.

In my thesis I will focus on what makes Taiwan's *tongzhi* identity and history unique and different from the Euro-North American LGBTQ community. I do this by examining how same-sex love was described and discussed throughout China's history, how previously fluid conceptions of sexuality gave way to more fixed identities at the turn of the 20th century, and finally I examine the terminology used in Chinese-speaking

societies today. I will also explore the ways in which the weight of family values and obligations has created a culturally distinct set of challenges for *tongzhi* in Taiwan. In the course of navigating familial responsibilities, *tongzhi* (and non-*tongzhi*) have formed fictive kin relations that provide them with support. In doing so they are also reinterpreting notions of filial piety. In their creation of fictive kinship and their reinterpretation of filial piety, they are not unlike celibate religious clergy in Taiwan who have also forsaken their familial obligations. My research also addresses a gap in the literature, as little scholarship has been done on the intersection of *tongzhi* and East Asian religions such as Buddhism and Daoism.²

1.2 Arrangement of the Thesis

Chapter 2 examines the history of same-sex love in China and Taiwan, from ancient times up to the present day in Taiwan. The earliest records attest to the fluidity of sexuality in Chinese society, and this fluidity can be seen again in contemporary times with the use of the term *tongzhi*. I begin by reviewing historical scholarship on same-sex love in China, demonstrating that in many periods of Chinese history same-sex love was widely practiced and accepted (Hinsch 1990; Vitiello 1992; Wu 2004). I draw on this scholarship to argue that in same-sex acts, it was the difference in social standing and power that was more important than each participant's gender. The idea that the man who took the active, insertive role and the subordinate insertee shared the same social category (what could be described as homosexual today) did not exist in traditional Chinese

² The one example I found was Huinan Yang's (2005) study of the 'Child-Brahman Abode' (*tong fanjing she*), which he describes as the first *tongzhi* Buddhist group in Taiwan. Yang deployed an online survey, and found that one of the main issues that this group was concerned with was whether or not same-sex love violates Buddhist precepts, and if all beings have an equal standing of attaining enlightenment.

thought (Chou 2000). In the dynastic period in China, men manifested sexuality differently, depending on their stage in life, with adolescents taking the passive sexual role and adult men taking the active role (Hinsch 1990). I draw on Foucault's second volume of *The History of Sexuality* when discussing this fluidity, as well as when I examine how in China love for the same sex and for the other sex were not seen as two exclusive choices or radically different types of behavior. In large part, because of the Confucian emphasis on family responsibility, men were still expected to marry women and sex within marriage served the procreative purpose of producing heirs. While what we would call 'bisexuality' today prevailed over exclusive same-sex love in much of China's history, I argue that using words such as 'homosexual' or 'bisexual' is problematic, as the concept of sexual orientation did not exist and the men who engaged in same-sex love did not identify with a particular sexual identity or essence.

Throughout Chapter 2 I also examine the terminology used to describe and label same-sex love throughout China's history, as well as in contemporary Chinese-speaking societies such as Taiwan. I move from the time of Imperial China (during which there was no medical or scientific term equivalent to 'homosexuality') to the turn of the 20th century, at which time Chinese intellectuals and elites turned away from Confucian and neo-Confucian cosmological understandings of gender and sexuality, and turned instead to the natural sciences, importing, translating, and reinterpreting Western sexology to explain all matters of sexuality, including same-sex love. I demonstrate how the ideas around same-sex desire linked sexuality to procreation, and 'heterosexualized' the Confucian marital-reproductive institution while pathologizing same-sex love as a byproduct (Chou 2000; Dikötter 1995)

I then turn to the contemporary era, briefly examining the trajectory that *tongzhi* rights have taken in Taiwan from the 1990s to the present day. I also examine the terminology used by same-sex attracted communities in Chinese-speaking societies (China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong) today. I conclude Chapter 2 by arguing that the term *tongzhi* is more appropriate for these communities than the Western terms gay, lesbian, queer, and ‘LGBTQ’. I explain that this is because of the different history of same-sex love in the Chinese-speaking world, and because *tongzhi* is more fluid in that it can refer to any form of sexuality that has been marginalized by hegemonic heterosexuality.

Chapter 3 analyzes how religious practitioners and worshippers navigate the pressures of family responsibility and use religious frameworks to reinterpret kinship and the traditional Confucian concept of filial piety. This chapter describes how the family is the most basic and significant social institution in Chinese societies, and that within familial relationships the concept of filial piety is of central value. Filial piety means to respect and be obedient to one’s parents, elders, and ancestors; this includes having children and continuing the family line. Drawing on scholarship as well as my own ethnographic work, I argue that this expectation of marrying heterosexually and having progeny makes it challenging for parents in Taiwan to fully accept and support *tongzhi*. The largest challenge for most *tongzhi* is not discrimination from the state, job discrimination, or religious oppression—but the family, especially the parents (Chou 2000).

Scholars whose research has focused on *tongzhi* have demonstrated that the family-kin relation can be used to integrate a *tongzhi* family member’s partner into the family, and alternately that the same Chinese kinship system can also be used to create a

sense of an imagined community for *tongzhi* (Anderson 1983; Chou 2000; Wong and Zhang 2001). In relation to these discussions, I argue that both *tongzhi* and non-*tongzhi* members of a Daoist temple (‘Brilliant Light Temple’) in Taiwan have used religious beliefs and ritual to create fictive kin relations that provide them with emotional and social support. I draw on ethnographic fieldwork to demonstrate how some members have become adopted children of a deity (the Rabbit God) who cares about their well-being and specifically intervenes in their romantic lives. I will also demonstrate how members use other religious beliefs—namely reincarnation—to explain the familial connection they feel with each other at the temple.

Scholars in the field of China and Taiwan studies have argued that filial piety can be reinterpreted. I draw on this scholarship to argue that these members are attempting to be filial through their devout dedication to the god that has adopted them as children. In doing so they are also mirroring the practices of celibate religious figures who, since they too do not have progeny, have long been outside of Confucian norms in the history of China and Taiwan. I will explain how celibate clergy have reinterpreted the notion of filial piety through their religious activities.

Chapter 4 is a pragmatic-poetic analysis of statements made by Taiwanese Buddhist scholar-nun Shih Chao Hwei at a public hearing in support of same-sex marriage.³ I translate and analyze four excerpts from Shih’s speech, choosing parts of her speech that were quoted by media outlets and discussed online by people in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Since Shih is responding to arguments made by quasi-Christian

³ For Chinese names and terms I use the *pinyin* system of romanization for Mandarin Chinese. However, I have kept some people and places’ names in the romanization system they use (for example Shih Chao Hwei and Chou Wah-Shan, whose names are in the Wade-Gilles system, and Tong-Kwang Lighthouse Presbyterian Church in Taipei).

organizations and NGOs that publicly rallied against same-sex marriage, I examine the recent scholarship examining these groups. I demonstrate that many of these organizations drew on the traditional Chinese cultural notions of family and filial piety to try and sway public opinion in Taiwan against the legalization of same-sex marriage. I demonstrate that Shih critiques her opponents' ideas of what constitutes a family, and she does so by questioning the procreative purpose of marriage. I also demonstrate how Shih challenges and dismisses her opponents' logic, through the use of argumentative strategies such as rhetorical questions as well as repetition and rapid pacing. I continue some of the points I made in Chapter 3, arguing that Shih's support for *tongzhi* and her fight against those who oppose same-sex marriage draws from her own personal experience as a woman who is not having children and is therefore unfilial according to traditional Chinese beliefs.

1.3 Reflexivity

In many ways I am an outsider to the community that I have engaged with and researched in this thesis. I am not from Taiwan, and—unlike some of the people I spoke with—I am heterosexual. Therefore, my life experiences have differed from many of the people I interviewed. I also have to acknowledge that I have a lot of privilege—being a white, cis-gender man who is a Canadian citizen, university educated, and currently studying at an American university. However, despite the many differences, there are some points of shared experience. Like those I spoke to for my research, I grew up in a religious household and practiced religion well into my early adult years. Furthermore, I also grappled with my religious beliefs and sexuality as a young adult. It was these

experiences—as well as my experience as an immigrant—that have shaped my interests and led me to this project.

I was born in South Africa, and ever since I can remember, every Sunday my family and I would go to church. My and my siblings' lives were infused with Christian values passed down from church, our parents, and school. When I was 13 years old, my family left South Africa and moved to Hamilton, Canada. This had a huge impact on my life. I experienced culture shock—I recognized that my family and I came from a different cultural background, and I saw these differences between us and my new Canadian classmates, teachers, and others. My family continued going to church, finding a Baptist church that was less formal than the Methodist one we had grown up attending, and one which I would describe as being fairly moderate in its outlook. After moving from Ontario to the Vancouver region in 2004, my family found another church (belonging to the Alliance denomination). Youth group was a welcome avenue for making friends, since, having moved halfway through Grade 10, I struggled to forge deep connections in my new high school. When I started university I began to seriously question my faith. Frustrated with church politics—and recognizing through my literature studies that the Bible can't be separated from its sociohistorical setting—I decided in the summer before my third year of university that I was no longer Christian. However, I still had a lot of questions about religion in general. I set out to study the religions of the world and read their scriptures, and ending up double majoring, adding Religious Studies to my English Literature degree.

It was around this time that I began my first real relationship and—after years of being told by the church to 'wait until marriage'—I had to figure out my own sexuality

and how I was comfortable acting in a relationship. I found all of this quite overwhelming—I was no longer Christian, but felt the weight of all the doctrine I had grown up learning, and still felt the pull of the Church. Christianity had provided me with many of the values I had, and I had to decide which I still wanted to keep, and which I wanted to reinterpret. I still had a lot of Christian friends from youth group and young adult groups in the church, and occasionally went to church when I came home from campus to visit my parents. Though I was no longer Christian, I still felt guilt and shame about being sexually active, knowing that my Christian friends, the church, and my parents to some extent would not fully approve of the actions I was taking with my girlfriend at the time. I realized that religion and sexuality were powerful forces in my life, and this was reflected in my studies: many of my papers—whether in my literature classes or religious studies—focused on religion, or sexuality, or their intersection. I will never fully understand what many of the people I spoke to in Taiwan have experienced, being LGBTQ (or *tongzhi*). But navigating my own sexuality—even if it was just heterosexuality—was still a challenge for me, because of my religious beliefs.

In 2014, when I was studying journalism and applying for a fellowship to produce my own radio series, I drew on these previous experiences to come up with a project. After speaking with one of my younger sister's friends, who is lesbian and comes from a conservative Hindu family, I decided to focus on telling the stories of LGBTQ people who are people of color (and/or immigrants) in Metro Vancouver (see G. Fisher, *Pride and Prejudice*, 2014). I found producing this series to be very intellectually stimulating and fascinating. Some years later, when I decided I wanted to go into graduate studies, I knew I wanted to focus on religion in Taiwan, and so I began thinking of issues related to

religion that would be stimulating and productive to explore. I followed with interest when, in May 2017, the Constitutional Court first said that same-sex marriage is a constitutional right, giving Taiwan's government two years to change the marriage law. It was further interesting to see Christian groups speak out against this change—since this is not a major religion in the country. I questioned what leaders and followers of Buddhism, Daoism, and folk religion—which are practiced by far more people in Taiwan—had to say on the issue. This is what led to my thesis project.

From a young age I have been thinking about identity and belonging, because of my experiences emigrating from South Africa to Canada. I wrestled with issues of religion and sexuality in my personal life as a young adult, and though I will never fully understand what it means to be LGBTQ or *tongzhi*, I have tried to use my experiences and struggles to try and relate to the people I contacted and interviewed for this project. Over the time that I've been in graduate school I've learned that one of my own sisters identifies as queer, which has given me an even more personal motivation to relate to the experiences of others who are not cis-gender and heterosexual like me.

1.4 Methodology, or, Virtual Ethnography in the Time of Covid

While stating one's positionality is important for anthropologists, so is recognizing that the ethnographer is not a neutral observer. The whole process of ethnographic work—formulating and asking interview questions, interpreting and writing up data—is affected by one's position and background. In my previous career as a journalist, I tried to be aware of asymmetrical power dynamics, and how my background could potentially bias the way I approached stories and sources. Like anthropologists, journalists are also very concerned about the subconscious biases they are bringing into

their work—however, instead of stating our positionality in our work we tend to strive for ‘balance’ and ‘objectivity’. While studying journalism my colleagues, instructors and I discussed this approach at length, and we recognized that it is inherently flawed and largely impossible to achieve (can we ever be truly objective?). Yet, perhaps for a lack of another method, it is my understanding that most reporters take this approach. We try to be aware of any biases we have, be fair and measured in our approach to all the sources we speak to, ‘see the story from all sides’, and be careful about inserting our voice into our story (unless one is a columnist, and typically columnists are no longer allowed to write straight news for that reason). As a university educated Caucasian, cis-gender heterosexual man, I have a certain amount of privilege, and my experiences and perspectives differed from many of the people I interviewed. I tried to be aware of this in my journalism work.

My training in anthropology through the graduate program at the University of South Carolina has taught me to continue and strive for further reflexivity in my work as an anthropologist. Before embarking on my research, I also completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), which covers important aspects of working with human subjects—such as informed consent and how to properly safeguard and protect data gathered during fieldwork. The American Anthropological Association also provides a useful ethical guideline for ethnographers to follow. As stated in the Association’s Principles of Professional Responsibility, anthropology is a wholly social enterprise, one that always involves others—such as research participants, colleagues, students, funders and so forth. Therefore, “anthropologists must be sensitive to the power differentials, constraints, interests and expectations characteristic of all relationships” (AAA 2012). As

per these principles, I need to be transparent regarding the purpose, methods, and outcomes of my work. The principles point out that, like informed consent, transparency is an ongoing process that involves the making of principled decisions prior to beginning the research as well as encouraging participation, engagement, and open debate throughout its course (AAA 2012). These guidelines also state that I have an ethical obligation to consider the potential impact of my research and its dissemination.

I followed these guidelines while doing research over the summer, fall, and winter months of 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic meant that it was not possible to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in Taiwan in the summer between my first and second year of the Masters program. The University of South Carolina and the U.S. government recommended that people avoid non-essential travel outside (and even within) the country, and on March 18, 2020, the government of Taiwan decided to close its borders to all foreign visitors (Everington 2020). Therefore, I had to conduct all of my interviews virtually, using video-calling technology. This was not without its challenges. I reached out to people I wanted to interview by emailing them or sending messages through various social media channels. I began by contacting the core individuals and groups discussed in my prospectus. However, even though I had already established contact with some, I struggled to reconnect and arrange interviews over the summer. I began searching more broadly for people, religious groups, and *tongzhi* organizations that could fit my research focus. However, I continued to be met with silence—or, after a promising reply, contact would fall away. I sent follow-up messages, and even stayed up to the later hours to phone one of the organizations I really wanted to speak to. I am not entirely sure why my attempts were unsuccessful, though I have several conjectures based on my own

knowledge of Taiwan as well as speaking to experts in Taiwan studies. First, though same-sex marriage was legalized in Taiwan in 2019, my research topic looking into issues of sexuality is still a sensitive one. And, as described above, I am an outsider. Also, I was not able to be present in Taiwan to make face-to-face connections. This relates to the concept of *guanxi* in Chinese-speaking societies: *Guanxi* (shared reciprocity) is the term used to refer to building a network of mutually beneficial relationships which can be used for personal or business means. Perhaps some of those I reached out to did not see the potential for *guanxi* to develop since I was not actually in Taiwan, and after talking virtually it would be uncertain if and when we'd ever meet in person. Finally, if one factors in the pandemic, speaking to a graduate student on the other side of the world during such a strange time may not have been a big priority for some, understandably.

By the end of the summer I finally started to have some success in setting up interviews. I asked participants what form of video calling was most convenient for them to use, and it so happened that I used Skype for all of my interviews. These interviews were semi-structured; I had prepared some questions to ask (in Mandarin), but also let the conversation flow and asked follow-up questions accordingly. At the beginning of each interview I explained my project, and followed the process of informed consent as well as other guidelines established by the University of South Carolina's Institutional Review Board. I asked each participant what name they would be most comfortable with me using in this thesis. It is common for some in Taiwan to have an English name, and some of my participants asked that I use their English name and not their Chinese one in my research. I also asked if I could record the interview, since I am not completely fluent in

Mandarin, and recording it would allow me to listen again and also translate and transcribe thoroughly. Each interview lasted around 2 hours. I recognize that I have a limited number of interviews. Rather than being truly quantifiable, they support the existing scholarship that describes the challenges of family for *tongzhi*. However, it does also provide insight into how *tongzhi* in religious communities have dealt with the weight of familial obligations.

Lloyd, a member of the Daoist Brilliant Light Temple (see Chapter 3), helped me a lot in setting up interviews with other members of the temple following my first interview with the temple's head priest. After that initial interview, Lloyd added me to WhatsApp and we used that to discuss other potential interviewees. While for my interview with Christian *tongzhi* woman Xiao'en (see Chapters 2 and 4) I asked all of the questions in Mandarin and she answered in Mandarin, my interviews with members of Brilliant Light Temple were a bit different. Lloyd was present for all of them, and helped facilitate and translate. He told me he took up this role because of his English abilities (which he said was superior to that of other members of the temple; he has also had considerable experience traveling and studying abroad). I still asked the majority of my questions in Mandarin, but if something wasn't clear Lloyd would ask me in English for more information, and then ask the question to the interviewee in Mandarin. The interviewee would respond in Mandarin, and then Lloyd would give me a summary of what was said. Given my Mandarin ability, this was very helpful—as it allowed me to know in real-time what was being said, and ask follow-up questions accordingly. However, in translating and transcribing from my recordings I also noticed that Lloyd would sometimes expand on some of the answers given by the interviewees. Evan, one of

the *tongzhi* members of the temple, who was quite soft-spoken, often looked at Lloyd while answering my questions—and the two of them would sometimes discuss things (and have a few laughs) before Lloyd would summarize things to me. At times Evan felt more comfortable answering directly to Lloyd. I later learned that Lloyd had sat down and asked him questions about his life before our interview together, which is how Lloyd was able to expand on some of the answers Evan gave. In the interview I had with Olivia, a straight woman who is also a member of the temple, she also sometimes turned to Lloyd when formulating her answers. They also teased each other at numerous times during the interview. Lloyd told me later that they are quite close: they both do a lot of work for the temple, and have the shared interest in investing.

For my interview with Buddhist nun Shih Chao Hwei, I asked a Taiwanese graduate student (Sunny Tsai) to help interpret, since Shih asked that the interview be conducted in Mandarin, and because the interview only occurred late in my project (February 12, 2021). I formulated the questions in Mandarin, which Sunny looked over and checked for errors, and then during the interview with Shih I asked the questions in Chinese and Sunny translated the nun's responses into English.

Finding a suitable time for interviews was sometimes a challenge because of the time difference between South Carolina and Taiwan (Taiwan was 12 hours ahead in the fall, and 13 hours ahead during winter). I sometimes also had sound and technology challenges. During some of my interviews with members of the Daoist Brilliant Light Temple (see Chapter 3), participants were set up in a room where other members and priests were passing through. This made it quite noisy at times, and, over Skype, it could be challenging to hear everything. There were sometimes other technological issues that

also affected my hearing of what was being said. In these cases I had to ask for information to be repeated, and to wait for issues to be resolved. I was, however, prepared for the fact that multiple people would possibly be involved in the interview. Literature on metacommunicative norms in Taiwan that I had consulted had shown this to be the case. For example, in their study comparing American and Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about childrearing and self-esteem, Miller et al. (2002) found that the most successful interviewing approach with Taiwanese mothers was framing the interview as more of a conversation. They began with some initial topics to put the participants at ease, accommodating multiple speakers and the domestic work they were all doing (cooking; harvesting green onions in the courtyard), and also allowing participants to control the topics of conversation (227).

1.5 The Political Economy of Taiwan

In this section I will explore the political economy of Taiwan, explaining how family is a crucial social institution within this economy, and how it is often the family that is more antagonistic towards those who are *tongzhi* than the state. This is not to say that the state has never been antagonistic; the *tongzhi* community in Taiwan faced repeated harassment from police in the 1990s, which I will address at the end of this section. First, however, I will give a brief historical overview of Taiwan and explain the history that has led there to being the Republic of China (ROC; commonly called Taiwan) and the People's Republic of China (PRC; commonly called China). In doing so I will explain what has led to Taiwan being a vibrant democracy today; a democracy that in May of 2019 made Taiwan the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage.

Taiwan is a relatively young democracy: the first free elections following 38-years of martial law were held in 1996 (Morris 2004). However, given its shared history with the mainland, Taiwan is also home to many traditional Chinese beliefs and practices. In terms of Chinese religious traditions (Buddhism, Daoism, and folk/popular religion), Taiwan is in many way a place of religious innovation and the source of information on these religions, given that they were allowed more free reign in Taiwan than they were on the mainland. The different trajectories of Taiwan and China have also resulted in very different experiences for *tongzhi* on either side of the Strait, which I will touch upon as well.

1.5.1 Taiwan and China: The Imperial Period in China and Immigration to Taiwan

China, or officially the People's Republic of China, has been a one-party state since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949 (Wright 2001). However, dynasties ruled China for most of its history, from the Shang dynasty beginning in 1600 BCE (the first dynasty for which there is archaeological evidence) to the last Qing Dynasty, which ended in 1912 (Pletcher 2010, 15). Confucianism—a system of philosophical and ethical teachings—originated in the social and political upheaval that took place during the Zhou dynasty (1046-256 BCE), which followed the Shang (15). Confucianism developed from the teachings of Confucius and his followers (of which Mencius was the most prominent), and became China's official state ideology in the second century BCE (Wright 2001, 21). I will discuss Confucianism further below. In these early periods of Chinese history, records attest to a long historical tradition of same-sex love dating back to the Zhou dynasty. In many periods of China's history, same-sex love was widely

accepted and influenced political institutions and social conventions (Hinsch 1990; Van Gulik 1961; Vitiello 2011). I will explore this history in Chapter 2.

During these early dynasties, the neighboring island of Taiwan barely figured in the Chinese imagination. Taiwan, which is 13,837 square miles in size (about a quarter of the size of Florida), is separated from the southeastern coast of China by the rough and shallow Taiwan Straits, which are about 81 to 137 miles wide (Morris 2004, 7). Fang Hao (1994) writes that Chinese Nationalists have long used vague references to the Land of the Eastern Barbarians or the Ryukyu Islands in the *History of the Later Han Dynasty* (25-220 CE) or the *History of the Three Kingdoms* (mid-200s CE) in an effort to prove Taiwan has always been part of the Chinese “motherland” (quoted in Morris 2004). However, even in 1600, Taiwan was still on the outer edge of Chinese consciousness (Wills 1999 85). In the 1600s there was no permanent Chinese settlement on Taiwan, but there were a number of Chinese and Japanese traders, pirates and fishermen that traveled to the island (85). At that time, the island was only vaguely referred to in the records of the officials who administered and patrolled the South China coast (85). When the Dutch colonized Taiwan in 1622-24 they estimated that there were 1,000 to 1,500 Chinese on the coast of Taiwan (87). Most of Taiwan’s inhabitants at that time were indigenous peoples, descended from Austronesian peoples whose first settlements on the island date back at least 15,000 years (Morris 2004, 7; Stainton 1999, 28-9). Their descendants make up the approximately 560,000 indigenous people (2.37 percent of the total population) on Taiwan today, with 16 distinct Indigenous Peoples that are officially recognized by the government (Adawai 2020, 324).

In the next century, the Chinese population on Taiwan grew and the island would come under more attention from the mainland. Ming loyalist and pirate Zheng Chenggong (also known as Koxinga) sailed with his fleet to Taiwan in 1661, ousting the Dutch to make the island the base of his movement to overthrow the Qing dynasty (Morris 2004, 8-9). Zheng therefore established the first Chinese administration of Taiwan, “ironically, a regime formed in rebellion against China’s ruling Qing,” historian Andrew Morris notes (9). Zheng’s son and grandson ruled for 21 years, during which time there were waves of steady immigration to Taiwan, primarily from the southern Fujian and Guangdong provinces in China (Morris 2004, 9; Jones 2003, 12). In 1683, as Taiwan was in the throes of a famine, an imperial force from the mainland defeated the Zhengs (who were Ming loyalists opposed to the Qing) and integrated the island into the Qing empire as a prefecture of Fujian province (Morris 2004, 10). Taiwan was upgraded to a full province in 1885 (12).

1.5.2 Japanese Influence on Taiwan

The Qing dynasty’s rule of Taiwan came to close when, by the end of 1895, Japan’s military annexed the island—the first colony in Japan’s imperialistic expansion (12-13). This would have a lasting effect, differentiating Taiwan from China, which would undergo revolution and the start of a communist government at the beginning of the 20th century. The official doctrines of Japanese colonialism were assimilation and equal treatment under one imperial view, however officials also resorted to force to put down various rebellions against the occupying power (14). The Japanese colonial administration portrayed itself as a strong, stern, but benevolent force working for the betterment of the people in Taiwan, and they continued a number of modernization

projects that had begun under the Qing dynasty (Morris 2004, 14). These included building railroads and modern roads, expanding postal and telegraph networks, founding modern hospitals, establishing police institutions, introducing modern banking and currency measures, standardizing weights and measures, and also entering Taiwan in the Greenwich time system (14). While the Japanese government initially took a laissez-faire approach towards the religions being practiced in Taiwan, they later began to more vigorously regulate religious institutions and practices, and finally do away with native religions altogether (Jones 2004, 19). This was part of the larger 'Japanization movement' in which colonial officials pushed for more widespread use of the Japanese language, as well as the enforcement of Japanese-style dress (Morris 2004, 17). The Japanese ruled Taiwan up until their defeat at the end of the Second World War, at which time the Allied forces handed the island to the Republic of China (ROC) government that was ruling mainland China at the time.

Today, there is still a surprising amount of nostalgia for the Japanese colonial era. During my first trip to Taiwan in 2011 to teach English for the summer, I had a couple of conversations with middle-aged Taiwanese in which they spoke about the Japanese occupation, and they pointed out that the Japanese had built much of their roads and other infrastructure such as dams. One of these conversations, with a parent of one of my students, took place while standing on a dam built by the Japanese in the rural outskirts of Tainan. Some of this nostalgia for the Japanese era is because the colonial government was perceived to be less antagonistic to the local Taiwanese population than the mainland Chinese government was during the first period after their arrival (more on this below) (Moskowitz 2011, 3). The influence of Japanese popular culture on Taiwan today can

also be seen in behaviors and in various media. The sound of Japanese *enka* largely influenced the melancholy nature of Mandopop (Mandarin-language pop music), and the sorrowful tone of Japanese literature has also had a significant impact on Taiwan's literary scene (4). These themes have also spread to Taiwan's movie and television industry (4). There is also a prevailing love of all things 'cute' (*ke'ai*) in Taiwan, which may be a direct import of Japanese concept of *kawaii* (4). The influence of Japan—from the time that they occupied Taiwan to the influence of popular culture today—has had a profound role in shaping Taiwan's current identity.

In addition to the ongoing influence of Japanese popular culture, a Taiwanese person today is also just as likely to engage with culture from neighboring South Korea (K-Pop and K-dramas), mainland China (Mandopop, movies, and TV), as well as Western music and U.S. television and movies. During my first trip to Taiwan in 2011, my elementary-age students had no problem recognizing and singing along to the hit song 'Baby' by (my fellow Canadian) Justin Bieber. In that trip and in later trips (2016 and 2019), I connected with Taiwanese young adults when talking about American TV shows and music we mutually enjoy (as well as some Japanese anime that I am also familiar with).

1.5.3 From Martial Law to Democracy

When the Second World War ended, China was consumed again by civil war—as it had been in the years following the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1912 and the establishment of the Republic of China (ROC), led by the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang or KMT). Chiang Kai-shek, the general who has been leading the ROC since 1925, waged a violent war against the Chinese Communist Party (CPP). When those in Taiwan

heard that the Second World War was over and the Japanese were leaving, they were elated (Phillips 1999, 281). However, the ROC government decided to govern the new Taiwan Province under joint party-government-military administration. Governor-General Chen Yi was given the ability to use a broad mixture of civilian and military powers that was starkly reminiscent of the early Japanese governors (282). The Nationalists stripped Taiwan of materials to use to win the civil war on the mainland against the Chinese Communist Party, and unemployment and inflation set in on the island (Morris 2004, 20). The Taiwanese began to criticize the KMT, comparing them unfavorably to the Japanese colonial regime, but had to do so quietly because if not they were regarded as “disloyal subversives” who were planning Communist rebellion against the ROC (21). However, the Chinese Communist Party eventually defeated the Nationalists on the mainland. In 1949 Mao Zedong proclaimed the founding of the new People’s Republic of China (PRC), and the remnants of Chiang’s government and discouraged military set sail in defeat for Taiwan; their former province was now home to the entire ROC regime. The KMT violently suppressed dissidents (often elites who were regarded as a threat to the regime) in Taiwan, and enacted a period of martial law that lasted 38 years. For the next two decades after their arrival in Taiwan, Generalissimo Chiang and the KMT were dedicated to the goal of retaking the Chinese mainland (Morris 2004, 24). During this time the United States continued to regard Chiang’s ROC regime as the rightful government of China, with Americans referring to the ROC on Taiwan as “Free China” (23). U.S. \$4 billion from American taxpayers was poured into Chiang’s regime from 1951-1965 (24).

KMT rule in Taiwan after 1950 marked the beginning of a long transformation at this time into a “soft authoritarian regime” (24). Chiang and the KMT were determined that the economic collapse that spelled their doom in China would not be repeated in Taiwan (24). Fair and effective land reforms were instituted, rural lower middle classes set up small-scale factories, and heavy export production was encouraged and subsidized by the U.S. government (24-5). These strategies, combined with high household savings rates and a highly successful education system, produced an economic boom so dramatic that it became described worldwide as the “Taiwan miracle” (25). By the time Chiang Kai-shek died in 1975, most of the rest of the world no longer viewed the ROC as the rightful government of China. In the 1970s Mao and the People’s Republic of China had begun to successfully convince an increasing number of nations to recognize the PRC as the true government of China. Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger strategically shifted towards serious dialogue with Communist China in an effort to isolate the Soviet Union (Morris 2004, 26). In 1972, a year after the United Nations General Assembly voted to award China’s UN seat to the PRC, Nixon ended the special relationship that the U.S. had with the ROC in hopes of garnering PRC support to end the war in Vietnam (26). In early 1979 the United States officially began recognizing Mao’s China (Wright 2001, 162).

Following Chiang’s death, his son Chiang Ching-kuo, who had lived in Taiwan longer than he had in China, took control of the ROC and set out to make a number of changes. He ended martial law and chose as his successor Lee Teng-hui, a Japanese- and American-educated agricultural economist (Morris 2004, 27). Lee’s 12-year reign saw Taiwan transformed into a free democracy (27). The first direct presidential elections—billed as the first in 5,000 years of Chinese history—were held in 1996 and won by Lee

(28). I will discuss more of these democratic changes below. In 2000 the DPP won for the first time (under Chen Shui-bian, who led for two terms), and then in the elections in 2008 and 2012 the KMT under Ma Ying-jeou took the presidency. Taiwan elected its first female president in 2016 (Tsai Ing-wen), marking a return to the DPP, with Tsai winning a second term in January 2020.

In the PRC, in the 1990s the Chinese Communist Party stepped up its rhetoric of the goal of reunifying the Chinese nation by extending its control to Taiwan (Morris 2004, 29). The PRC's main strategy has been to isolate Taiwan diplomatically on the world stage, blocking any attempts by Taiwan to re-enter the UN, and using its massive economic clout to prevent any international recognition of Taiwan as a sovereign state (29). It is for this reason that Taiwan's diplomatic representatives and Olympic teams are recognized only as representatives of "Chinese Taipei", and that visa-granting offices overseas are referred to not as embassies or consulates but as Taipei Economic and Cultural Offices (TECO). Only 17 countries (such as the Holy See and several small African and Caribbean countries) officially recognize Taiwan's government. Under the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), first passed by U.S. Congress in 1979, the U.S. considers Taiwan's status undetermined, but any attempt by China to coerce Taiwan into unification is seen as a grave threat to American security (Horton 2019).

1.5.4 Commonalities and Differences Between Taiwan and China

In this section I will continue to examine some of the differences between Taiwan and China, but also describe how they have many shared cultural norms, given the history of emigration of Chinese to Taiwan starting from the 1600s as described above. While it

would be impossible to list all of these similarities, I will describe those that have the most salience for my study: Confucian norms and life for *tongzhi* today.

1.5.4.1 Similarities and Differences in Cultural Ideas

Confucian philosophy is central to the cultures of Taiwan and other East Asian nations, particularly when it comes to understandings of family and society. Embedded within Confucian values are five principal relationships through which each person defines a sense of duty, responsibility, and identity (Chou 2000; Park and Chesla 2007). They are ruler and subject (or government and citizen), parent and child, husband and wife, older sibling and younger sibling, and friend and friend (Park and Chesla 2007, 303). In familial relations, respect of parents and grandparents has supreme value, with near total obedience given to parents by the rest of the family (304). The value of duty and responsibility can also vary within these hierarchies. In the husband-wife relationship, if children are involved, the role of mother should take precedence over the role of wife, with the parent-child relationship being more important (304, 307). With regard to siblings, the oldest sibling usually acts as the surrogate of parents in their absence (304). Family is the base of society: among the five basic human relationships, three are family relationships (305). Within family relationships, filial piety is a central value (Chou 2000, 253). Being filial to one's family members, particularly to one's parents, includes the imperative to marry and continue the family line, as well as taking care of the elderly in the family (253).

For this reason, the social services safety net that exists in North America and much of Europe is largely absent in Taiwan. Instead, the government has long relied on families to provide a basic safety net, looking after their family members including those

who are elderly, disabled, and poor. This has even been written into law: Care for children, frail older people, and disabled people is defined as a family responsibility in Taiwan's Civic Code, which places legal responsibility for care on lineal family members (Yeandle et al. 2013, 29). Under Taiwan's Welfare of Older People Act 2009, adult children can be penalized for neglect, abuse, or leaving an elderly resident in a nursing home without paying the fees for their care (Wang et al. 2013, 90). The assumption that family care is available permeates all welfare practices in Taiwan (91). For this reason, Taiwan has been described in the literature as a familialist (or familistic) welfare state (Estévez-Abe and Kim 2013; Chou Y. et al. 2013). Familialist welfare states (which include most East Asian countries) are known for their high rates of multi-generational households, where household heads cohabit with their parents and children (Estévez-Abe and Kim 2013, 2). The three characteristics of these states are: 1) Underdevelopment of social services such as childcare and elderly care; 2) low levels of cash benefits to working-age citizens such as public insurance and unemployment benefits; and 3) comparatively low levels of social spending (1). Though social services such as home and day care, respite or residential care are available in Taiwan, relatively few families use them—not least because family members are expected to cover, or contribute to their cost (Yeandle et al. 2013, 29). Those needing care mostly live with their families. For example, a national survey in 2006 found that 93% of disabled people of all ages lived with their families, while only 7% used residential services (Chou Y. et al. 2013, 144). Almost all disabled children under 15 years of age lived with their families (98%), with their primary carers being their parents (80%) or other relatives (14%) (144). Confucian thinking—especially Confucian ideas of familial obligations—permeates Taiwan to this

day, and this can also be seen in how the government views welfare: as a family responsibility rather than a public matter.

1.5.4.2 Similarities and Differences in Experiences for Tongzhi

In terms of sexuality and same-sex love specifically, the Maoist era (1949-77) in China enforced a heterosexual, marital model in which sex was only legitimate for reproductive purposes (Zheng 2015, 41). Family was emphasized as the basic unit of society, and marriage was stressed as the fulfillment of a social responsibility to produce children for the Communist state (41). Sex for reasons other than reproduction—including same-sex acts—were regarded as deviant and were policed by the state (41). During the Cultural Revolution, same-sex attracted people were classified as “bad elements” under the “five black categories”, along with landlords, rich peasants, rightists, and counterrevolutionaries (42). The CCP replaced the Qing criminal code with a new system of criminal laws during the economic reform period (1978-present), and forced sodomy and sodomy with a minor continued to be treated as a crime (41) (also see section 2.3). Since there were no laws against consensual same-sex acts in China, these acts were often disciplined under the charge of “hooliganism”, a general term that encompassed a wide range of offenses (41-2). The Maoist era’s model of sex for reproduction was replaced by a new model in the post-socialist era in which sex for pleasure within marriage was regarded as important because it maintains marital harmony and thwarts extramarital affairs (42). These new ideas around sexuality and the state’s loosening control led to a growth in the number of self-identified gay men who gathered at parks, street corners, bathhouses, bars, and toilets (42). However, succumbing to the strong pressure to marry and have children, more than 90 percent of same-sex attracted people

in China are estimated to choose to marry opposite-sex partners and form heterosexual families with children (43). State censorship of movie contents has also impeded the dissemination of knowledge about same-sex attracted people (43). Today in China, *tongzhi* face harassment from authorities, social stigma, pressure from their families and society to ‘cure’ their same-sex attraction and marry heterosexually, and are vulnerable to contracting AIDS and other STIs because of negative misconceptions about condom use (Zheng 2015). In her ethnography of *tongzhi* men in contemporary Dalian, China, Zheng Tiantian describes how almost all of the men she encountered in her research had either a girlfriend or a wife, and that some used websites to match with lesbians who were willing to form fake marriages (Zheng 2015, 152). “To many *tongzhi*, establishing a heterosexual family and fathering a child represent not only a performance of masculinity but also a fulfillment of social and family responsibilities,” Zheng writes (2015, 153). China does not currently recognize same-sex marriage nor civil unions.

In Taiwan in the 1990s and 2000s the *tongzhi* community made strides in the recognition of their rights, and politicians began expressing their support for the community as well. Yet, *tongzhi* still faced harassment from authorities: in Taipei there were repeated police raids on the longstanding gay cruising ground in Taipei known as Changde Street, as well as a raid of the gay sauna AG in December 1998 (J.C. Ho 2010, 552; Simon 2004, 81). In the early 2000s politicians started to publicly express support for the *tongzhi* community. Taipei’s then-mayor Ma Ying-jiou allocated funding for *tongzhi* groups to organize a civil rights forum in 2000, and both he and newly elected president Chen Shui-bian met with *tongzhi* activists during the event (J.C. Ho 2010, 539; Simon 2004, 71). The Taipei municipal government also published a “Getting to Know

Tongzhi Handbook,” with Major Ying-jiou (who would later become the president of Taiwan) writing the introduction, which apologized for past human rights violations against *tongzhi*, including the Changde Street and AG Incidents (which had occurred when Chen was still mayor) (Simon 2004, 84). Petrus Liu (2007) argues that the recent liberalism in Taiwan, which afforded the *tongzhi* community some rights and recognition in the early 2000s, was shaped by forces involving both the United States and the People’s Republic of China. He also argues it was born out of the creation of the multi-party system in Taiwan, which first began after martial law was lifted in 1987. The Kuomintang (KMT), which had ruled during the time of martial law, came to be associated with a ‘One China’ policy, while the newly formed opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) represented increased independence from China. Liu argues that the DPP (whose first president was Chen Shui-bian) saw itself as the liberator of the ‘native’ Taiwanese Han Chinese population (as opposed to the more recently arrived Mainland Han Chinese population, which fled to Taiwan with Chiang Kai-Shek and the KMT government in 1949 (Liu 2007, 519). Liu argues that recognizing *tongzhi* rights is an important way for the DPP to distinguish Taiwan from China, and align it with the U.S., which provides the country with military support:

DPP’s rhetoric of democracy and human rights (*renquan liguo*), which now under international pressure must include gay rights, permits Taiwan to create a desperately needed cultural distinction from the People’s Republic of China (where human rights continue to be a ‘sensitive’ issue) and its similarities to the United States (which sees itself as the guardian of democratic values), since DPP politicians recognize (correctly) that Taiwan will cease to exist without the popular support of the United States (519).

It would be under the next DPP president—Tsai Ing-wen, who first became president in 2016—that same-sex marriage in Taiwan became legal. Tsai, who has never married, is

currently serving her second term. In 2017 the Constitutional Court—the highest court in the country—ruled that same-sex marriage was a constitutional right, giving the Taiwanese government a two-year deadline to come up with a framework for legalization. In May 2019, same-sex marriage was made into law, making Taiwan the first country in Asia to legalize marriage between people of the same gender.

1.5.5 Political Economy: Closing Thoughts

Despite their shared history and culture, Taiwan today is much more *tongzhi*-friendly than China. In Taiwan *tongzhi* can serve in the military, there are *tongzhi* bars, *tongzhi* publications, the largest Pride parades in Asia (held in Taipei), and, as of 2019, same-sex marriage. Over the course of the latter half of the 20th Century, Taiwan went from an authoritarian regime to a thriving democracy. *Tongzhi* rights are very much a part of a larger call for equal rights for all in Taiwan. However, despite these gains, *tongzhi* experience is still impacted and mired by cultural traditions, especially those relating to family and filial piety. It is for this reason that, like in China, some *tongzhi* in Taiwan still marry heterosexually. In *Queer Kinship and Family Change in Taiwan* (2019), Amy Brainer describes various forms that these kinds of marriages may take, with combinations including *tongzhi* hiding their sexual identities, their heterosexual partner being aware of it, or couplings of men and women *tongzhi*. Scholars in this field have argued that the nature of the Chinese family is one of the major obstacles for *tongzhi*, rather than state oppression (Brainer 2019; Chou 2000; Simon 2004). In his chapter exploring the history of the *tongzhi* community in Taiwan, anthropologist Scott Simon concludes that even *tongzhi*-friendly laws “will have little impact on real lives of individual people if Taiwanese gays and lesbians do not successfully deal with the

problem of family pressure” (2004, 86). To return to the case of Evan, who I introduced at the beginning of this chapter: he told me that even though same-sex marriage has been legalized in Taiwan, his parents still do not fully accept him and are pressuring him to get married to a woman. I will explore this issue in depth in Chapter 3. First, however, I will turn to the history of same-sex love in the Chinese-speaking world.

Chapter 2

A Historical Overview of *Tongzhi* Identity: A Survey Through Terminology

I will examine the history of same-sex love and identity in China and Taiwan in this chapter. I will use the term “same-sex love” because, as I will explain in more detail below, the terms for homosexuality in Chinese (*tongxinglian*, or *tongxing'ai*) are a direct translation of the Western term that was typically used to pathologize those who were attracted to individuals of the same gender (Hinsch 1990, 169). These terms are rarely used today by same-sex attracted people in China and Taiwan because of the pathological and medical notions of homosexuality they convey (Zheng 2015, 4). Furthermore, when discussing the history of same-sex love in Chinese history, one cannot really speak of heterosexuals, bisexuals, or homosexuals, because “the concept of sexual orientation, i.e., dividing people by their erotic object choice, did not exist” (Chou 2000, 13).

In this chapter I will examine the history of same-sex love and identity in China and Taiwan through an overview of the terminology used to describe and label same-sex eroticism. I will begin by looking at the earliest historical records available describing same-sex love in China. For many centuries same-sex eroticism was widely accepted and enjoyed by many. Same-sex love was referred to by poetic metaphors, usually based on famous stories. I will then move to other periods of China’s imperial history, examining how new terminology as well as new laws may have indicated a shift in attitudes towards

same-sex love. When I turn to the early 20th century—a time of great change in which many intellectuals pushed for modernizing the nation—I devote time to exploring how Western sexology was imported and reinterpreted by writers in China. Finally, I look at the range of terminology used in present-day China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

2.1 Acceptance and tolerance: The poetic metaphors of cut-sleeves and half-eaten peaches

There was a long historical tradition of male same-sex love in China, dating back to the Zhou Dynasty (1122 to 256 BCE) and even as far back as the Bronze Age (Hinsch 1990, Van Gulik 1961). In many periods of China's history same-sex love was widely accepted and even respected, influencing Chinese political institutions, social conventions, and artistic creation (Hinsch 1990, 4). Historian Bret Hinsch, who wrote the pioneering *Passions of the Cut Sleeve*, explains that it is arguably more accurate to speak of this history as a “male homosexual tradition” because, unlike modern society, the Chinese viewed male homosexuality and lesbianism as completely different forms of sexuality (6-7). He also explains that very little documentation survives on lesbian life in China because Chinese literature was almost always written by men for men (7). He includes an appendix focusing on these scanty sources (173-8). Another reason why references to lesbianism in traditional sources are rare was because of the relative absence of personal freedom women were bestowed (173). If relationships did form, they would usually escape notice by men uninterested in the affairs of women, Hinsch writes (174). The scholars who have examined this history of same-sex love in China have drawn their arguments from records dating from the Zhou Dynasty (1122 to 256 BCE) through to the early Qing Dynasty (1644 to 1912 CE) (Hinsch 1990; Van Gulik 1961;

Vitiello 2011). These records include official histories and literature; the official histories from the ancient period deal with the sexual practices of the uppermost elite, and the literature from later periods provides insight into the lives of the literati as well as the lives of young male prostitutes and their patrons (Hinsch 1990, 5-6; Vitiello 2011, 1).

The social and sexual practices specific to China can be understood in terms of two basic sets of complementary roles: dominant/submissive and active/passive (Hinsch 1990, 8-9). The dominant and submissive roles were derived from the social standing of each partner, determined mostly by gender, age, and status—factors that were important for assigning dominant and submissive roles in many social and sexual encounters (9). Women were generally regarded as socially inferior, which also affected the condition of men who became identified with the female gender (9). In terms of age, a younger male was inferior to an older male (9). As for status, family background, education, employment, wealth, talent, and multiple other factors contributed to a man's overall social standing (9). In many cases, the set of dominant/submissive was related to the separate dichotomy of active/passive: the dominant male was often the active partner engaging in the penile penetration of the submissive partner (Chou 2000, 26, Hinsch 1990, 10). The difference in social standing and power between the two was more important than the participants' sex: "The idea that the (male) inserter and the subordinate insertee may share the same social-sexual category—*homosexual* or *gay*—simply did not exist in the traditional Chinese mind," Chou Hua-shan writes (2000, 27, emphasis in original). Hinsch notes that men often manifested sexuality differently, depending on their stage in life (1990, 10). He writes that Chinese literature shows a tendency for boys and adolescents to take the passive sexual role and for adult men to

take the active role (10). Therefore, a man's sexual role may change as he grew older (10). "This acceptance of changing sexual roles gave a certain fluidity to the sexual development of an individual male while still allowing a sense of hierarchy within each relationship when hierarchy was desired," Hinsch writes (10). In addition, Chinese records also describe many men who experienced both heterosexuality and same-sex love during their lives (11). Hinsch argues that some men had sexual intercourse with women not because they desired it, but because they were expected to do so (11). Society's expectations often determined the ways in which Chinese men manifested their sexual desires (11).

This fluidity of male sexuality, and focus on the social and sexual standing of the active and passive participants in the same-sex act, can be further understood in relation to Michel Foucault's *The Use of Pleasure* (1985). As Foucault writes in his second volume on *The History of Sexuality*, the Greeks did not see love for the other sex and for the same sex as two exclusive choices or radically different types of behavior (187). Men were expected to be married to "a single lawful wife", with sexual relations being devoted to bearing children (144). While one's husband was expected to be a woman's exclusive partner, the husband could have multiple sexual relations outside of marriage: with boys, prostitutes, men or women slaves (144, 146). Instead of a division between heterosexuality and same-sex love, the "dividing lines" in sexual relations were that of activity versus passivity, as well as a lack of moderation versus self-control (*enkrateia*), Foucault argues (65, 85, 187-8). Adult free men were those who were the "active actors", while as "passive actors" were women, boys, and slaves (47). Being a passive actor was looked upon negatively, as was not being in control of oneself (85-6). Similarly, there

was a negative perception of passivity within same-sex relations in imperial China (Hinsch 1990, 10, 107). In later imperial history, passive sexuality came to be associated with certain types of cosmetics and feminizing clothing, and wearing them could weaken a man's social status (10). Also, there were obscenities that would insult a person by referring to him as the dominated partner in a same-sex sexual act (Chou 2000, 27). Passivity was also viewed as feminizing in Greece; preferring other men did not make a man effeminate, Foucault notes, as long as the man was active in the sexual act and practiced self-control (Foucault 1985, 85). In contrast, being immoderate and overindulging in sexual relations with members of either the male or female sex would make one "feminine" (85). It was this concern over passivity and a lack of restraint that made the relationship between men and boys an anxious concern for some Greek thinkers and writers, Foucault argues (187). This was a "privileged" relationship, one that implied an age difference and a certain difference of status, as compared to relations between two older adult males or schoolboys that were given less attention (193). Foucault writes that the young boy had to behave in a way that would not bring him dishonor—something that would affect his eventual status and place in the city when he grew up—and that the older partner was expected to also act in a way that didn't bring the younger dishonor (206). Much attention was given to how the younger partner (who was being actively pursued and courted by the older suitor) had to be careful not to yield too easily or offer himself too easily out of weakness, lust, or self-interest (196, 211). Once he had yielded to his older suitor, then—beyond the customary gifts fitting his status—he could only accept "honorable" benefits such as training for manhood, social connections for the future, or a lasting friendship (224). Since the boy himself would one day be a man—

exercising the powers and responsibilities of a male citizen—many philosophers were concerned with how one who was previously the object of pleasure could later become the active participant in the sexual relation (216, 220-1). As in imperial China, there was a fluidity of male sexuality in ancient Greece—relations other than heterosexuality were regarded as natural, and within same-sex love a man could perform both the feminizing passive role and the active role in his lifetime (Foucault 1985; Hinsch 1990).

Heterosexual marriage, however, was still expected for men in both societies.

Foucault writes that for the Greeks, the purpose of sexual intercourse in marriage was regarded as being for reproduction, while the “domain of pleasures” was located outside the marital relationship (with boys, prostitutes, male and female slaves) (Foucault 1985, 146-7). Likewise, Hinsch notes a sexual dichotomy between “duty and pleasure” in much of Chinese history (Hinsch 1990, 19). “Even in the ancient period, we see men who maintained a heterosexual marriage and a homosexual romance without apparently seeing any contradiction between the two,” Hinsch writes (19). This was because traditionally marriage in China is regarded as a transaction between two households instead of a romantic union joining two individuals (Chou 2000, 23; Hinsch 1990, 19). Confucianism rejects passionate love between a husband and wife, because it would distract them from family obligations; however, producing heirs, especially boys, is an imperative (Chou 2000, 23). Having children was important for all in Chinese society (Hinsch 1990, 27). For the peasantry, children were needed to help in agricultural life, and for the elite, children had particular value in uniting families through marriage ties (26). Although a large emphasis was placed on the procreative purpose of marriage, sex with prostitutes, sex within the same gender, or a man having several wives and

concubines were usually tolerated because the male-dominate family system was not challenged (Chou 2000, 24).

The monographs and studies that have explored same-sex love in Chinese history have all problematized the notion of heterosexuality and homosexuality. Apart from the issue of reproduction, little separation was made between heterosexual and homosexual love in emotional and psychological terms (Wu 2004, 4). The vast majority of elite men who engaged in same-sex love performed the penetrant role, were married, and had family responsibilities (6). They were ‘bisexual’ in their sexual appetites, and this ‘bisexuality’ prevailed over exclusive same-sex love in much of China’s history (Hinsch 1990; Wu 2004, 6). However, trying to use words such as ‘heterosexual’, ‘bisexual’, and ‘homosexual’ is problematic, as the concept of sexual orientation (dividing people by the gender of their erotic object choice) did not exist, and there is no evidence that men who engaged in same-sex love identified with a particular sexual identity (Chou 2000, 13; Wu 2004, 6). For much of Chinese history, normative sexualities were set along a different set of criteria that had more to do with life stages than fixed identities. Men had the freedom to explore different sexual desires, however, they still had to fulfill the Confucian imperative to marry and continue the family line by having progeny. I will return to this obligation—of filial piety—in more depth in Chapters 3 and 4.

Classical Chinese also did not have a medical or scientific term that could be compared to “homosexuality” or “homosexual” (7). Instead, male same-sex love was discussed using poetic metaphors referring to earlier men or incidents famed for their association with homosexuality (7). Same-sex love was also often described in terms of social roles: men who had sexual relationships with the emperors are described as

“favorites” in early records (7). “Chinese terminology therefore did not emphasize an innate sexual essence, but concentrated rather on actions, tendencies, and preferences,” Hinsch argues (7).

One of these poetic terms is *yu tao* or *fen tao*, meaning “half-eaten peach” or “part of a peach that is not eaten” (Hinsch 1990, 20; Vitiello 1992, 347; Zheng 2015, 4). This term appeared during the Zhou Dynasty in a story about the fickle love Duke Ling of Wei (534-493 BCE) had for his courtier Mizi Xia (Hinsch 1990, 20). This tale, recorded in the ancient philosophic work *Han Fei Zi*, tells of how Mizi Xia was one day strolling with the ruler in an orchard (20). After biting into a peach and finding it too sweet, he gave the remaining half to the ruler to enjoy. The ruler was impressed that Mizi Xia neglected his own appetite and gave him the delicious peach to eat, and thanked him for the sincerity of his love (20). Hinsch writes that the Mizi Xia and the duke are described according to social relationship in the story, with Mizi Xia being said to have won favor (*chong*) with the duke (21). *Chong* denotes a hierarchical relationship of regular patronage or favor bestowed by a superior—and is therefore not remotely equivalent to “homosexuality”; also gender is not factored into this term either (Hinsch 1990, 21; Vitiello 1992, 347). The story is significant not only for being the origin of the term *yu tao*, but also because Mizi Xia would become the most famous representative of same-sex love from this period in Chinese history (Hinsch 1990, 20). The name Mizi Xia also became a catchword for same-sex love in general (20).

Another term is *duan xiu*, or “passion of the cut sleeve”, which originated during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 200 CE) (Hinsch 1990, 53; Vitiello 1992, 343). This term came from a famous story describing Emperor Ai and the tenderness he felt for his

favorite Dong Xian. It is recorded in *The Cut Sleeve (Duanxiu Pian)*, a specialized erotic anthology consisting of 51 short stories and anecdotes dealing with homoeroticism, chronologically arranged from the 5th century BCE up to the 19th century CE (Vitiello 1992, 343-4). The collection is named after the following story:

Dong Xian used to sleep with the emperor. Once, he was taking a nap and was lying on a sleeve of the sovereign's robe. The sovereign wanted to get up, but Xian was not yet awake. Thus, not wanting to shake him, the emperor cut off his own sleeve, and then got up: so great was his love! (quoted in Vitiello 1992, 344).

The story continues to describe how all of Ai's courtiers "imitated the cut sleeve, also calling it the chopped sleeve," in tribute to the love shared between their emperor and Dong (Hinsch 1990, 53). Hinsch also writes that during the Han Dynasty, historical records openly discuss how Han emperors had sexual relations with both men and women—retaining large harems of wives and concubines while also enjoying regular trysts with their male favorites (35). Poetry, tales, folk songs, and art recounted stories of same-sex love in the imperial court and among scholars and officials in the Han and later dynasties. Both *The Book of Poetry* and the *Spring-Autumn Annals*—required readings by Confucius—had homoerotic themes (Zheng 2015, 35). The terms *yu tao*, *fen tao*, *duanxiu*, and *longyang* (referring to the male favorite of another famous Chinese ruler) were used throughout the centuries by the literati to refer to same-sex love (Vitiello 1992, 348).

2.2. *Beginning of a shift in attitude: The introduction of 'chicken lewdness'*

During the Tang Dynasty (618 to 907) a new term emerged to describe same-sex relations: *jijian* ("sodomy") (Hinsch 1990, 88). Hinsch writes that this term is the first recorded derogatory term for a same-sex act in Chinese (88). *Jijian* literally means "chicken lewdness", a reference to a belief that domesticated fowls commonly engage in

intercourse with fowls of the same sex (89). However, Hinsch points out that according to Qing scholar and philologist Yuan Mei, the original first character of the term (also pronounced *ji*) depicted a field above a woman and denoted “a man being like a woman” (89). This definition, Hinsch writes, clearly implies one man assuming a receptive sexual role (89). Hinsch argues that the substitution of the “chicken” character in this compound seems to be more than a careless error, making the unfavorable association between animal sexuality and same-sex relations (89). It was this incorrect form of *jijian* that appears to have gained currency in the Tang and Song periods (618 – 1279). Hinsch, who writes that sources such as the Hebrew Bible also compared adulterers and prostitutes to various animals, writes that in Chinese *jijian* provides a bestial connotation that is negative enough to justify translating it into English as “sodomy” (89). It is *jijian*, rather than the more poetic and favorable terms “half-eaten peach” or “cut sleeve”, that appears in later Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) laws restricting certain forms of same-sex activity, which I will discuss below (89). Hinsch points out that *jijian* (with the ‘chicken’ character *ji*) came into use at a time when male favorites played a less prominent role in the official histories of the period (89). He suggests that this decline in political visibility, along with the rise of a derogatory term for same-sex relations, may indicate a change in public sentiment towards same-sex love. However, he writes that this is only speculation, because there is not enough data to be conclusive (89).

Moving into the Song Dynasty (960-1279), male favorites appear to have experienced a continued decline in their influence on court and government in the Song period, and the practice of patronage (in which a benevolent emperor showered his beloved with titles and official payments) was seen as inappropriate for the rising classes

of merchants and officials (90-1). With the rise in urbanization, the Song elite no longer had to maintain staffs of retainers to provide cultural and sensual amenities (91-2). Less wealthy individuals, who were unable to afford looking after a full-time favorite, would hire prostitutes instead. Evidence shows that male prostitution was widespread throughout the Song Dynasty (960-1279) and continued throughout the rest of China's imperial history (92). However, in the early 12th century authorities created a law to prohibit male prostitution (93). Hinsch argues that, given the long history of tolerance for same-sex relations in China, there must have been "a change in the character of Chinese thought in general" to account for the Song law against male prostitution (95). He writes that the law may have represented a backlash against the rise in prostitution in this era (95). Furthermore, written records point to an increasing disapproval of the effeminacy associated with the passive role in prostitution (though significantly, Hinsch points out, this intolerance was not directed toward the active patrons of these prostitutes, but only toward the passive men) (94-5). Another possibility is that some of these changes were perhaps due to larger transformations taking place in Song intellectual life, including the revival and reinterpretation of Confucianism in the Neo-Confucian movement, which was concerned with strict sexual propriety and familial duty (95). Hinsch writes that since certain Buddhist ideas had a large influence on Neo-Confucian thought, the official intolerance towards same-sex love may have had its roots in popular Buddhist tracts that took the concept of sexual sin far more seriously than some clerical Buddhist traditions (96). However, Hinsch argues that the laws prohibiting prostitution did not seem to be regularly enforced (94, 97). Authorities were typically reticent to interfere in sexual

matters, and the diversity among the intellectual and political establishment may have meant there was no consensus on sensitive issues such as same-sex love (97).

2.3 Restrictions on same-sex love: The Qing laws and prosecution of 'illicit sexual intercourse'

The Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) was a time of social and cultural openness, including in sexual matters, and the literati of this period explored individuality as well as carnal and worldly satisfaction in their writings (Wu 2004, 3). After Manchu bannermen defeated the Ming Dynasty, there was a marked reaction against the perceived libertinism of the Ming, partly as a result of imported Manchu concepts of sexuality and Neo-Confucian rhetoric regarding the family order (Hinsch 1990, 162; Wu 2004, 3). Erotic literature was censored, and officials of the empire and literati were banned from the entertainment quarters (Wu 2004, 3). A number of laws targeting sodomy (*jijian*)—though mostly focusing on rape—were also put into place during the Qing Dynasty (1644 to 1912) (Hinsch 1990, 140-5; Sommer 2002, 68). These laws describe the various punishments for gangs or individuals who rape boys of certain ages, attempt rape, injure or murder their rape victims, and those who falsely claim they had been sodomized (Hinsch 1990, 143-4). Same-sex violence may indeed have been a concern to Qing officials, as well as the widespread prostitution and forced procurement of male children that was happening during that time (Dikötter 1995, 138; Hinsch 1990, 140). The Qing laws banned consensual anal intercourse as well—with a punishment of one month in the cangue and 100 heavy blows (Hinsch 1990, 144). However, China scholars argue that these laws, which were incorporated into the larger body of laws prohibiting heterosexual offenses (under the rubric of 'illicit sexual intercourse' or *jian*), were part of a general

effort by Qing officials to combat all forms of extramarital sexuality (Dikötter 1995, 139; Chou 2000, 25; Hinsch 1990, 144; Sommer 2002, 68). Hinsch argues that this explains why the punishment for consensual sodomy—though harsh from a modern viewpoint—was among the lightest possible at the time under the Qing legal system (144). Hinsch also suggests that, given the openness of homosexuality through the Qing Dynasty, it is doubtful that this particular idealistic article of the law was ever systematically enforced (144).

The prohibitions against rape also did not take gender into account, but focused instead on the age of the victim and the extent of violence inflicted (Dikötter 1995, 139; Sommer 2002). Historian Matthew Sommer, who examines legal cases from this era, argues that the principal target of these regulations was the marginal man who was seen as existing outside the mainstream configuration of settled households (2002, 68-70). These men, who in judicial discourse were described as Buddhist and Daoist clergy, local toughs, migrants, and single men without prospects, pursued both men and women in their role as an aggressive penetrator and threat to social order (69, 71-2). This pursuit of men and women—what would be described in English today as bisexuality—did not warrant special concern for jurists of the time, Sommer argues: “This bisexual targeting of lust in and of itself does not appear problematic; jurists employed no special explanation or commentary. Rather, it was the dangerous male’s utter lack of respect for *all* boundaries and rules that threatened social order” (72, emphasis in original). While same-sex love in China was widely accepted as an option for a man to satisfy his sexual desire, the practice had to stay within certain boundaries (Vitiello 1992, 361). It could not

be adopted as a total alternative to heterosexuality, as this would have clashed with the moral duty of reproduction, which is the first expression of filial piety (362).

However, same-sex love was still widespread during the Qing, remaining a strong cultural and social force (Wu 2004, 3). By the end of the reign of the Qianlong emperor (1735-96), Beijing was home to several districts catering to male same-sex love, and boy-actors were idealized as objects of exalted beauty (3). In terms of prevalence and social influence, the most important form of male same-sex love that can be identified during the Qing Dynasty was that between upper-class men (literati, officials, and merchants) and boy-actors (*dan*) (8). *Dan* also came to refer to these boy-actors' offstage persona as catamites, a role which paralleled that of the female courtesan in earlier periods of Chinese history (8). In the 18th and 19th Centuries, upper-class men not only patronized *dan* as male prostitutes, but also developed long-term romantic relationships with them (8). Though the acting profession was associated negatively with passive sexuality and prostitution, actors' active patrons included some of the most respected intellectual and political figures of the Qing Dynasty (Hinsch 1990, 153). Another form of male same-sex love that is widely recorded in records and stories from the Qing period is that between affluent men and their boy servants (Wu 2004, 8). This kind of relationship was very common throughout the whole of Chinese history (8). Finally, while relationships between men of equal status certainly existed within all levels of late imperial Chinese society, references to such relationships are far fewer (8).

2.4 Modernization during the Republican period (1912-1949): 'Homosexuality' as pathological and deviant

At the beginning of the 20th century various intellectuals and elites began taking steps to modernize China. These modernizing elites, who felt a deep sense of cultural and political humiliation following the Sino-Japanese War (1894), looked towards Western science to rescue China from what they perceived as the inferiority and backwardness of Chinese culture (Chou 2000, 43-4; Dikötter 1995). These elites shifted away from Confucian (and neo-Confucian) cosmological understandings of gender and sexuality, and turned instead to the authority of the natural sciences (Dikötter 1995, 8). Gender distinctions were no longer thought to be linked to the cosmological foundations of the universe, and were instead viewed as biologically determined (14). Some reformers urgently promoted eugenics, and wrote about the dangers that frequent sex, prostitution, and venereal diseases such as syphilis posed to men and women who were expected to bear healthy children that would strengthen the nation (114, 130, 133).

2.4.1 Biological determinism and inversion

It was during this time that Western sexology was also imported and reinterpreted by Chinese writers and reformers. The direct translation of the term “homosexuality” (*tongxinglian* or *tongxing'ai*) emerged in the Chinese language in the 1930s (Zheng 2015, 39). In this section I will occasionally use the term “homosexuality”, because writers at the time were using the medical term *tongxinglian* or *tongxing'ai* (a direct translation of the English term “homosexuality”) in their writings, as they were focused on discussing same-sex love as a pathological behavior. Historian Frank Dikötter, who examines over 350 publications produced in the early Republican period covering sexual matters, argues

that *tongxinglian* was widely regarded as a “temporary aberration, a mental disease, or an ‘inversion’” (Dikötter 1995, 139). Dikötter argues that the concept of inversion—in which, for example, a same-sex attracted man was regarded as being a woman trapped in a male body—contributed to keep sexuality firmly linked to procreation, as this representation emphasized heterosexism as a natural need (141). “Insisting that all desire was by nature heterosexual, reducing masculinity and femininity to an expression of sexuality, most biologizing theories represented ‘the homosexual’ as the very opposite of ‘manliness’,” Dikötter writes (141). The image of ‘the homosexual’ as a female mind in a male body was central to Cheng Hao’s *The Sexual Life of Mankind* (1934), which also included a list of the biological reversals that were thought to characterize same-sex attracted men and women (see Table 2.1 on next page).

2.4.2 Same-sex love: An intermediate step for youth; abnormal for adults

In the eyes of some writers and scholars in China, sodomy among young males was seen as a stage of development towards the ‘normal’ expression of sexual desire, and was an acceptable behavior specific to certain situations (140). For example, Gui Zhiliang, a famous gynecologist in the 1930s and 1940s, wrote that homosexuality was an inevitable intermediate or preparatory stage on the path towards heterosexuality (Dikötter 1995, 140; Chou 2000, 49). As Gui wrote in his 1936 book *A Woman’s Life* (*Nüren zhi yisheng*), “the ‘normally’ developed person would ‘transit’ (*guodu*) through homosexuality, but some would ‘get blocked’ (*zu’ai*) or ‘bogged down’ (*tingzhi*) in what was described as a form of ‘abnormal homosexuality’ (*bu putong de tongxing lian’ai*)” (Dikötter 1995, 140). Only a small minority of youth was thought to have an innate tendency towards homosexual intercourse, and, as with people with genetic mental

Table 2.1 Cheng Hao's list of the presumed biological reversals in male and female homosexuals:

	Man	Woman
<i>Skeleton</i>	Resembles mostly that of a girl, particularly the pelvis	Similar in size and strength to that of a man; the pelvis is not very broad and has a small gradient, the spine is long and thin, the middle is not curve
<i>Skin</i>	Soft and warm	
<i>Limbs</i>	Relatively small	
<i>Pace</i>	The step is short and slow, like that of a girl	Similar to men
<i>Voice</i>	High-pitched	Gruff like men, structure of the larynx similar to men, weak laryngeal nodes
<i>Chest</i>	Developed to that of a girl, to the point of secreting milk in the mammary glands	Flat, barely developed
<i>Facial hair</i>	None	Can sometimes grow thickly like a man's
<i>Character</i>	Likes girl's games, activities and clothes	Generally like a man, the exact opposite of the male homosexual
<i>Emotions</i>	Used to saying sweet expressions of love, bashful in presence of other men	
<i>Sex drive</i>	Very feeble in relation to women, to the point of impotence: can develop abnormal impulses when in presence of the same sex	Cold towards men, sensitive to the same sex

(H. Cheng 1934, 133-4, adapted from Dikötter 1995, 142).

disorders, it was believed to be impossible to correct them, according to Gui (140). Wang Chengpin, another writer from this period argued that if homosexual tendencies were allowed to develop into an addiction, then it would not even be possible for the 'victim' to be 'rescued' through marriage (140). Instead, the homosexual was thought to have strayed from the right path, having turned his back on 'normal' (*zheng*) intercourse,

‘inverted’ or ‘turned upside down’ (*diandao*) the natural order, and developed ‘abnormal’ desires (*xingyu biantai*) (140). “By calling homosexuality a ‘diseased state’ (*bingtai*) or a ‘metamorphosis’ (*biantai*), it was implied that a ‘normal’ heterosexual instinct was originally present even in ‘abnormal’ bodies,” Dikötter writes (140). Much like masturbation, adolescent homosexuality was portrayed as a socially acquired vice that discipline had to overcome for the sake of the self, marriage, and the nation (140-1).

European scholars and reformers who were writing about both adolescent and adult same-sex love had an impact on Chinese scholars during the Republican period. The writings of British social reformers Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis helped inform prevalent attitudes toward sexuality in China. Ellis, in particular provided the groundwork that a good deal of Freudian psychology was based on (Carroll 2018, 107). Their key works—such as Carpenter’s “Affection in Education” (Carpenter 1899) and Ellis’s “The School-Friendships of Girls” (Ellis 1915)—shaped debates in China throughout the 1920s and in later years over single-sex schooling versus coeducation as well as the content and importance of sex education (Carroll 2018, 107). These essays were published initially in Chinese in 1923 and 1925 respectively (107). Ellis espoused a similar belief about same-sex love as Republican-era gynecologist Gui Zhiliang, describing school-aged same-sex relations as a “love-fiction” that prepared students to express affection in adult romantic and sexual relations with their spouses of the opposite sex (107). Ellis was tolerant of youthful same-sex relations, but saw its continuance into adulthood as a sign of developing mental disorders and asocial behavior (107). Ellis, and those he influenced, such as Republican-era sociologist Pan Guangdan, emphatically identified adult “inversion” as a psychological deficiency (107). Chou Wah-Shan writes

that Pan's translation of Ellis's *Psychology of Sex* (1947) as well as his own introduction, "Homosexual Examples in Chinese Literature," are important because he represents the first generation of Chinese scholars who studied *tongxinglian* from the perspective of Western sexology (2000, 51). Pan was also one of many scholars during this period who weighed in on a high-profile murder case in 1932, in which a 22-year-old woman murdered her girlfriend, also 22 (Carroll 2018, 99). The two women had lived for a period as dormitory roommates while both attending the National Hangzhou Art Academy—making the case a touchstone for discussions of the potential problems created by same-sex dorms in educational institutions as well as women's supposed propensity for jealous passions and even crime (100-1, 106-7, 116-9). While I noted at the beginning of this chapter that the records and writings about same-sex love throughout most of China's history focused mostly on men and not women, same-sex relations between women did begin to gain notice and notoriety during the Republican era. Public discussions of same-sex relations at this time focused more on those between women than between men, which reflected general social anxieties about the expansion of women's presence and increased autonomy in civil society (Carroll 2018, 100). Pan believed the case demonstrated how problematic intractable same-sex love could be, and called on schools and society as a whole to provide better supervision of students (such as knowing how many times a week students masturbated) in order to identify and stop deviance before it became so extreme that it ended in murder (115-6). Pan, who was also influenced by Austro-German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing (author of the twelve-edition *Psychopathia Sexualis*, a foundational study of sexual pathology), still judged same-sex love as abnormal (115).

It is significant to note that the early 20th century was the first time in Chinese history that someone could be spoken of as being ‘homosexual’ or doing something that was ‘homosexual’—with the term *tongxinglian* or *tongxing’ai* being used instead of metaphorical language (Hinsch 1990, 169). The discourse drew from what was happening in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, which Foucault describes as a “discursive explosion” (Foucault 1978, 37). In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault argues that this era was an “age of multiplication” in which multiple, heterogeneous, “peripheral”, “unnatural” sexualities came to be the focus of attention (37-39). Those outside of heterosexual monogamy were scrutinized; and of the six types that Foucault draws attention to, one is the “homosexual” (38). He writes that there was a shift from the act—the forbidden acts of sodomy, with the perpetrator being “nothing more than the juridical subject of them”—to a person, a “species” (43). “The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology” (43). While care must be taken not to map the model of what was occurring in 18th and 19th-century Europe onto China in the early twentieth century, the new discourse around sexuality in China resulted in homosexuality being regarded as an essence rather than an act or tendency (one that was previously generally tolerated, though in certain forms was punishable under the Qing law code; see above) (Chou 2000, 51; Hinsch 1990, 169).

2.4.3 The selective appropriation of Western science

Dikötter writes that the modernizing discourses taking place in China during the Republican period did not only come from the introduction of new Western ideas, but

were also attributed to cultural reorientations taking place in China itself as long before as the 17th and 18th centuries (Dikötter 1995, 180-1). “Modernizing discourses of sex were not ‘hybrids’ of ‘Chinese’ and ‘Western’ ideas, nor can they be interpreted as some sort of survival of ‘traditional’ cultural values underneath a veneer of ‘modern’ scientific ideas,” he writes, stating that he is critical of what he calls the “‘Western impact – Chinese response’ approach” (11-12). Instead, Dikötter borrows anthropologist David Parkin’s term “latticed knowledge” to describe what emerged: a body of knowledge in flux, characterized by interactions, overlaps, constant change and endless combinations (12). Dikötter argues that sexual desire and procreation remained closely linked together throughout history and into the 20th century in China. He writes that during the first half of the 19th century in Europe, there emerged a new theoretical construction called ‘sexuality,’ which, together with new categories like ‘homosexuality’ and ‘heterosexuality’, closely connected the individual to the object of desire (63). One of the consequences of this gradual appearance of a notion of sexuality was that sexuality became detached from reproduction (63). Discourses no longer established strict distinctions between procreative and nonprocreative sex, and sexuality also become interpreted as an individual matter with the individual being the bearer of rights to self-expression (64). However, he argues that no similar conception of ‘sexuality’ ever emerged in China—sexual desire in China was not dissociated from procreation, but remained firmly linked to it (64, 69). The Chinese discourse of desire demanded that social subjects subordinate their drives to the needs of a higher collectivity (111). He argues that for the reformers of this era, prostitution and sodomy represented the two extreme forms of non-procreative sex that needed to be eliminated for the sake of the

family and the nation (137). He writes that both forms of behavior were considered social evils that took place outside the legitimate domain of conjugal sexuality and domestic love (137). Dikötter argues that medical science was selectively appropriated by modernizing elites in Republican China to solidify the extensive distinction between procreative and nonprocreative sexual acts (139).

While intellectuals and modernizing elites in China during the Republican era were reading and translating works by European writers—such as Havelock Ellis and Richard von Krafft-Ebing—they had their own goals in mind and structured their arguments accordingly. After being humiliated by Britain during the two Opium Wars (1839-1842 and 1856-1860) and Japan during the Sino-Japanese War (1894), Chinese intellectuals felt the need for the first time to completely transform traditional Chinese civilization (Chou 2000, 43-4). Several popular movements critiquing traditional Chinese culture were spawned during this time, such as the May Fourth Movement, and they advocated for changes with the goal in mind of building a modern, strong nation (Zheng 2015, 39). Reformers such as Chen Duxiu (one of the founders of the Communist Party of China in 1921) criticized Confucianism for promoting superficial ceremonies, lax morality, feudalism, the caste system, and the oppression of women (Chou 2000, 44). He, and others, attacked Chinese men as being weak and sick; Chen specifically described Chinese men as lacking the strength to tie up a chicken and having bodies as delicate as women's (Zheng 2014, 39-40). Many reformers attributed national weakness and backwardness to inadequacies among the population, including weak bodies and an inadequate knowledge of human sexuality and reproduction (Chou 2000, 44; Dikötter 1995, 2). It was a time of strong anti-imperialist nationalism; many intellectuals did not

believe in complete Westernization, but put intense faith in tools such as Western science in order to achieve modernity and build a strong nation (Chou 2000, 44). Chou argues that the Chinese appropriation of Western ideas was very selective, as Christian ideas about sexuality as well as the duality of heterosexuality and homosexuality (which came into existence in Western sexology) had never been very popular (49). The Confucian marital system—which privileged reproduction and was not concerned if one practiced same-sex love as long as one married and had children—was fertile ground for Western sexology, Chou argues (47). Western sexology provided the discourses of biological determinism that “heterosexualize” the Confucian marital-reproductive institution and allowed for same-sex love to be pathologized “as a byproduct” (47, 49). “It was the sexologist's pathologization of homosexuality rather than the Christian homophobic attitude that was selectively and strategically adopted by Chinese intellectuals who had their own sociopolitical agenda in mind,” Chou writes (49).

The Republican period in China was a major turning point in attitudes regarding same-sex love. What for centuries had been tolerated and even embraced came to be viewed as a deviant aberration that threatened heterosexual marriage and was the cause of a weak nation. While some scholars place the blame solely on the importation of Western sexology and medical knowledge, the situation is more complex, as described above. Some shared concepts can clearly be found in texts by both Western writers and Chinese reformers—such as the idea of same-sex love being a practice youth may temporarily experience, but one that is ultimately aberrant and a pathological inversion if allowed to continue into adulthood. Historian Frank Dikötter (1995) argues that it was the strong link between sexual desire and reproduction in China that caused any idea of same-sex

desire to be dismissed and viewed as a threat to the social responsibility of populating a healthy nation. Furthermore, the modernizing elites who were importing and translating Western sexology had their own goals in mind. In the course of their selective adoption of foreign concepts, biological determinism and the pathologization of homosexuality combined with traditional Chinese attitudes to heterosexualize the Confucian family and marital system.

At least one of the people I interviewed was aware of the long history of how same-sex desire was tolerated and even celebrated in poetry and other literature for much of China's history. In Chapter 3 I will introduce Master Lu, who has a temple dedicated to helping *tongzhi* in Taiwan. Master Lu said that before the Qing Dynasty, marriage between one man and one woman was not emphasized. A man could marry one woman, or multiple women, and also have desire for other men, he said. Same-sex desire was very normal, he added. He blames the change on influences from the Euro-American world beginning in the Qing dynasty, and said that Western religion (i.e. Christianity) emphasized that marriage should be between a husband and a wife. When I asked him if many people in Taiwan are aware of this history, he answered no, unless they do some research. Master Lu's stories are indicative of how the long tradition of same-sex desire in Chinese history has been largely forgotten in the contemporary age. "The homosexual tradition is dead and virtually unknown, even among the educated," Bret Hinsch writes (Hinsch 1990, 163).

2.5 Tongzhi history from 1990s Taiwan until same-sex marriage

A politically engaged *tongzhi* community in Taiwan came into being in the 1990s (Chou 2000; Simon 2004). Anthropologist Scott Simon argues that the formation of the

tongzhi community in Taiwan took place in four progressive stages. First was the appropriation of public space. Parks (especially those near train stations) had been meeting spaces for *tongzhi* men, starting in the 1950s (75). Second was the establishment of gay and lesbian commercial venues, which coincided with Taiwan's capitalistic growth (76). Third, entry into the political sphere was the next important step in identity and community formation. He describes three historical incidents as mobilizing activists and encouraging public discourse on same-sex love (79). This included then-Taipei mayor Chen Shui-bian's decision in 1995 to convert New Park—a popular cruising ground for men—into a memorial for those who had died during a period of violent unrest in the martial law period (79-80). University students formed a group to educate the public about the *tongzhi* history of the park (Chou 2000, 164; Scott 2004, 80). Two other incidents also led to increased activism, which I briefly mentioned in Chapter 1 in my section on Taiwan's political economy. One was a police raid on Changde Street outside of New Park in 1997, in which 40-50 *tongzhi* men were rounded up by police who checked their identity cards (80-1). The other was a 1998 raid on AG Gym, one of the most popular gay establishments in Taipei, offering exercise equipment as well as a sauna and private rooms to allow for intimacy (81). In the AG raid, two men (a Taiwanese university student and a tourist from Macau who did not understand Mandarin) were coerced by police into removing their towels and posing for a photograph simulating anal sex (Simon 2004, 81). Over three hundred new and used condoms were used as evidence by the police that AG was a male *tongzhi* sex club. International human rights lawyers and gay activists fought against the charges and AG eventually won a court case against police harassment (Simon 2004; J. C. Ho 2010, 552).

Simon argues that these incidents contributed to a greater sense of *tongzhi* identity across the island (2004, 82). Fourth, Simon writes that there was a creation of a publicly recognized *tongzhi* community around the year 2000. He writes that major events involved in this creation were Taipei's commercial "Rainbow Community" (which began with the opening of Taiwan's first gay bookstore in 1999), Taipei City's sponsorship of a Gay and Lesbian Pride Festival in 2000, and the birth of the marriage rights movement (82).

By the year 2000, same-sex marriage had become an item of pressing concern to Taiwan's budding *tongzhi* community. On October 22, 2000, four Christian lesbian couples and one gay couple married publicly at Tong-Kwang Lighthouse Presbyterian Church (*Tongguang tongzhi zhanglao jiaohui*, Taiwan's first openly pro-*tongzhi* church) and demanded that the state recognize same-sex marriage rights (Simon 2004, 85). In 2006, Democratic Political Party lawmaker Hsiao Bi-khim led an effort to legalize marriage and child adoption for same-sex couples; that same year the Taiwan Pride parade also focused on the marriage issue by staging wedding ceremonies for female *tongzhi* couples (M. Ho 2019, 487). However, the proposal failed to make it on the legislative agenda (487). The first advocacy organization for marriage equality, the Taiwan Alliance to Promote Civil Partnership Rights (TAPCPR, *Taiwan banlu quanyi tuidong lianmeng*) was formed in 2009, and they focused their efforts on promoting same-sex marriage, civil partnerships, and multi-person families (487). In 2013, equal right to marriage for same-sex couples (one of TAPCPR's demands) gained sufficient endorsement from lawmakers and was ready for its first reading in the legislature (487). That same year, the countermovement opposing same-sex marriage began to grow. A

group of Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, and Yiguandao leaders joined together and organized a large-scale rally in November (491). I will go into more details of the countermovement in Chapter 4, when I examine a Buddhist nun's responses to those opposing same-sex marriage. In 2016, conservatives launched a new party, the Faith and Hope League (FHL, *xinxin xiwang lianmeng*), partly with the goal of defeating the attempt to legalize same-sex marriage (491). However, they failed to obtain a legislative seat.

A third attempt to legalize same-sex marriage was launched in 2016, which was quickly followed by a mass rally by conservative groups (many of which were led by Christian churches and quasi-Christian 'family values' groups) (M. Ho 2019, 491). In February 2017, the case of same-sex marriage was taken out of the legislative arena and into the juridical, as the Constitutional Court made the decision to review the issue (492). The Court, which had a number of liberal judges recently nominated by the DPP (M. Ho 2019, 496), ruled on May 24, 2017, that same-sex marriage was a constitutional right, giving the Taiwanese government a two-year deadline to come up with a framework for legalization. The quasi-Christian anti-same-sex marriage groups had enough influence to create demand for three referendums held on November 24, 2018 regarding the rights of *tongzhi* (M. Ho 2019, 499). All three ballot questions, which included the restriction of the legal definition of marriage to one husband and one wife in the Civil Code, the banning of same-sex education in junior high and elementary school, and a special law to protect the rights of same-sex couples, won the majority of support (499). Therefore in 2019 the government did not change the Civil Code but instead proposed a special law that allowed for same-sex marriage, following both the courts as well as the referendum

result (Chin 2019, 2). Though the bill that was finally passed was the most progressive, some scholars and activists have pointed out its limitations. The new legislation does not offer full adoption rights, and same-sex marriages between Taiwanese and foreigners are only recognized if the partner is from a country where same-sex marriage is legal (2).

2.6 Contemporary Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China: ‘Comrade’, *Is and Os*, *T-Po*, and *TB/G*

The situation for same-sex attracted people in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan in contemporary times differs because of each region’s different history in the 20th century. However, same-sex attracted people in Taiwan, China, and Hong Kong and other Chinese-speaking communities share some common terminology. The first term is *tongzhi*.

2.6.1 ‘Comrade’

Tongzhi, which means “comrade”, is the most popular contemporary Chinese word used by same-sex attracted people, those who are transgender (*kuaxingbie*), and others who are sexually and gender nonconforming. The first character *tong* means ‘same’, ‘alike’; and the second character *zhi* means ‘goal’, ‘spirit’, ‘occupation’ (Chou 2000, 1). Before it was appropriated by same-sex attracted people, the term was first used in the Republican period, and adopted by both the Nationalist and Communist parties to refer to those who were struggling for the nationalist or communist revolutions (1). One of the most popular associations of the term is its use in a famous statement by Dr. Sun-Yat Sen, leader of the 1911 Chinese Democratic Revolution to overthrow the last Chinese monarchy, in which he urges *tongzhi* to continue to fight (1). Linguistic anthropologists Andrew Wong and Qing Zhang (2001) translate the term in this usage as “followers”

(262). During the Communist Revolution (1920s to 1949) the term acquired its political and revolutionist connotations, Wong and Zhang argue (262). Initially it was an honorific address reserved only for Chinese Communist Party members, symbolizing recruitment into the Party (262-3). After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, *tongzhi* became the politically correct, polite, and neutral term to address everyone, replacing the terms that signaled differences in social status and class (262). The term has largely fallen out of favor since the opening up of the market economy of China in 1978, and previous address terms that were replaced by *tongzhi* (such as Miss *xiaojie* and Mr. *xiansheng*) have since been revived (Chou 2000, 2; Wong and Zhang 2001, 263).

The term *tongzhi* was initially used in the Chinese title of the 'First Hong Kong Gay and Lesbian Film Festival' in 1989 (*xianggang diyi jie tongzhi dianying jie*) (Chou 2000, 2; Wong and Zhang 2001, 264). The organizers decided to use *tongzhi* as the Chinese translation of "gay and lesbian" because they wanted to use an indigenous term for same-sex love instead of Western, English terms such as "gay," "lesbian," and "queer" (Chou 2000, 2). The Chinese term for 'homosexuality' (*tongxinglian*) was dropped because of its usage as a medical term denoting pathology (2).¹ Since then, the term *tongzhi* became widely adopted by same-sex attracted people and organizations in Hong Kong, and its usage later spread to Taiwan, China, and other Chinese-speaking parts of the world (Wong and Zhang 2001, 264). Hong Kong sociologist Chou Wah-shan, whose work on what he calls "*tongzhi* theory" has helped popularize the term in Hong Kong and Taiwan, praises the fluidity of the term in his writings (264). In *Tongzhi: Politics of Same-Sex Eroticism in Chinese Societies*, he writes:

¹ It should, however, be pointed out that the first character *tong* (同) is the same in both *tongzhi* (同志) and *tongxinglian* (同性戀).

Unlike “homo” or “hetero,” *tongzhi* is not defined by the gender of one's erotic object choice but connotes an entire range of alternative sexual practices and sensitivities in a way that “lesbian,” “gay,” or “bisexual” does not. It rejects essentialism and behaviourism, and it does not require counting the incidence of same-sex sexual acts to qualify an individual *tongzhi* identity [...] It achieves a political contribution similar to “queer politics,” but whereas queer politics confronts the mainstream by taking back a bigoted label, *tongzhi* harmonizes social relationships by taking the most sacred title from the mainstream culture. It is an indigenous strategy of proclaiming one's sexual identity by appropriating rather than denying one's familial-cultural identity (Chou 2000, 3).

Chou also argues that the term helps to pluralize sexuality, as it refers to all forms of sexual practice that have been marginalized by hegemonic heterosexuality (3). He also writes that *tongzhi* represents a strong sentiment for integrating the sexual (legitimizing same-sex love), cultural (reappropriating Chinese identity), and the political (sharing the goals of combating heterosexism) (3). Wong and Zhang, who examine the use of the term in the bimonthly *tongzhi* magazine *G&L*, argue that the use of *tongzhi* constitutes a discourse of resistance (2001, 267). As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, same-sex love was often associated with the elite over the course of Chinese history, and was therefore viewed as decadent in the communist discourse (268). “Hence the use of *tóngzhì*, a term so deeply rooted in the history of the Chinese communist revolution, as the name for the alternative identity of gay and lesbian, is in itself, a daring and rebellious act,” they write (268, tonal diacritics in original text).

2.6.2 ‘1s and 0s’

While *tongzhi* serves as an umbrella term for sexually and gender nonconforming people in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and other Chinese-speaking communities, there are also other terms in use. Among same-sex attracted men, ‘1’ and ‘0’ are used (H.T. Huang 2011; Zheng 2015). 1, symbolizing the penis, is associated with the male role, while as 0, symbolizing the vagina, is associated with the female role (Zheng 2015, 75). Newcomers

to the community either choose their role or are assigned it during their first sexual experience with someone who has already identified as a 0 or a 1 (75). Once this gender role has been determined, *tongzhi* are disciplined—through gossip and critique—to fit into it (75). Anthropologist Zheng Tiantian found that according to the men in her research conducted in Dalian, China, the gender division of 1 and 0 emulates the hegemonic gender roles in heterosexual relationships (78). 1 takes on the role of the inserter, while as 0 assumes the role of the inserted receiver (78). Same-sex attracted men usually call each other “wife” (*laopo*) or “husband” (*laogong*) in alignment with their gender roles (78). Zheng also found that the 1s and 0s in her research invoked the theory of *yin* and *yang* to describe their differences (78). *Yin*, or 0, signifies being negative, dark, passive, wet, cold, and feminine; *Yang*, or 1, denotes being positive, bright, active, dry, hot, and masculine (78). The same-sex attracted men in Zheng’s research believed it was natural to have a union of 1 and 0 in a relationship, just as it is understood to be natural to have a union of *yin* and *yang* in the universe (78). Zheng also found that it is the *tongzhi* community that defines male and female behaviors and roles and uses these rules to structure the identities of 1s and 0s (79-80). 0s may also adopt idealistic feminine behaviors in the way they speak, dress, and act (80, 84). Zheng, who conducted fieldwork in Dalian over the course of several months between 2005 and 2013, reports only finding two men who identified as “0.5” and questioned the 1/0 system (7, 78). In her analysis of the 1/0 system, Zheng argues that scholars must be careful not to make certain assumptions about non-Western queer communities. She writes that Dennis Altman (1996) has theorized that a global trend is taking place in which gender-based identities are giving way to egalitarian Western sexual identities that are not focused on gender

identities (76). However, the 1/0 system problematizes that argument, Zheng argues. For rather than sharing a sexual identity based on a common sexual orientation, 1s and 0s differ from each other as two different gender categories (77). “Gender difference is pivotal” to the identities of *tongzhi*, she writes (191).

Evan, a Daoist follower from Taipei, told me in an interview that he used to be a 0 or a bottom, and then about five years ago changed to be a top or 1. Evan, 30, said he had been feeling some pain by being a bottom, so he tried being a top, and after having a few enjoyable experiences with it he then fully committed to this new role. However, he did say that he wants more of a sense of security in a relationship, hinting that this specific behavior is something that is not necessarily associated with being a top or a 1. As Zheng noted in her study of *tongzhi* in Dalian in the PRC, 1s may be less likely to commit to relationships and are expected to sleep around, whereas 0s are expected to be faithful, dedicated, and understanding of 1’s probable promiscuity (Zheng 2015, 80, 84). Zheng also discusses how many of the 0s she spoke to described the pain they felt in their sexual experiences, and how it took them a long time to finally become accustomed to the feeling of being a bottom and to eventually experience physical pleasure (79). Evan’s experience shows that these categories and the expectations attached to the roles of 1s and 0s are not always as fixed as Tiantian Zheng (2015) describes in the *tongzhi* community in the PRC.

Lloyd, a member of the same Daoist temple as Evan (and who facilitated my interview with Evan), said that the English words top, bottom, and vers (versatile) are also used in the male same-sex attracted community in Taiwan. Lloyd described a spectrum ranging from 100% bottom (always being a bottom), vers bottom (being a

bottom “70 percent” of the time, and at other times a top), vers (50% of the time a bottom, 50% being a top; *bufen* is also sometimes used), vers top, and 100% top. Lloyd added that these 100% tops sometimes have sex with women, and said that 0s/bottoms are the majority and tops are rare in the community. During this same interview, when I asked Evan if he uses *tongzhi* or another term to describe himself, he answered in English, with a chuckle: “I’m gay. I like boy[s]!” Wondering if he was translating the term, I asked—and got clarification—that he does in fact prefer to use the English word ‘gay’ to describe himself. Lloyd too said he prefers to use the word ‘gay’ to describe himself. This may reflect transnational flows of information, with the *tongzhi* community in Taiwan being aware of LGBTQ discourses in Europe and North America, and sometimes appropriating and reinterpreting LGBTQ terminology and ideas. Lloyd and Evan have had different levels of exposure to the English language and to foreign countries (Lloyd has traveled to the United States and Europe and is fluent in English; Evan has limited English ability), but I would argue that their use of the English word ‘gay’ is a display of cosmopolitanism. I explore cosmopolitanism in Taiwan further in Chapter 4, when I examine a Buddhist nun’s cosmopolitan display in a speech attacking those who are against same-sex marriage.

2.6.3 *T/Po, TB/G, and bufen or H*

A similar binary exists among same-sex attracted women in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and—in recent years—the PRC (Kam 2014). In Taiwan and the PRC, Female *tongzhi* inclined to masculine gender performances call themselves *T*, while those who represent themselves with normative femininity call themselves *Po* (Chou 2000; Y. Hu 2017; Kam 2014). More recently, there is also *bufen* or *H* for those who are neither *T* nor *Po*; they

have no visible gender identification, and they may desire both *T* and *Po* or any other subjects (Y. Hu 2017, 91; Kam 2014, 253). One can imagine *T* and *Po* as being the two ends of a spectrum with *bufen* in the middle, with other hybridized subcategories and subdivisions. One can also be *bufen pian* (“inclined towards”) *T* or *bufen pain Po* (Y. Hu 2017, 91). *T* masculinity can be subdivided further into “iron *T*” (*tie T*); “sissy *T*” (*niang T*); and “cute and submissive *T*” (*zhengtai T*; or sometimes the original Japanese term *shouta* is used) (Kam 2014, 253). For *Po* femininity, there is dominating *Po* (*han Po*), “big sister *Po*” (*yujie Po*; or the original Japanese term *onee*), and many other combinations (253). Among same-sex attracted women in Hong Kong, the masculine gender role is referred to as TB, short for tomboy (Chou 2000, 214). The feminine counterpart is called TBG, short for tomboy-girl (214). In these different Chinese societies, some also choose to use non-gendered words to denote themselves as same-sex attracted women, such as *nütongzhi* (literally “female” *tongzhi*), as well as *lazi* in Taiwan and *lala* in China (derived from the English word “lesbian”) (Y. Hu 2017; Kam 2014).

According to anthropologist Antonia Chao, who conducted ethnographic fieldwork on the Taiwanese lesbian community, the term *T* originated in Taiwan during the 1960s Vietnam War, when the first gay bars (along with American-style restaurants and bars) were opening in major cities (Chao 2000, 379). “During this time, lesbians either with Western connections or an educational background that enabled them to speak at least basic English, hung out with American GIs, while working-class lesbians came to gay bars,” Chao writes (379). It was from either or both of these social locations that the term *T* (short for the English word “tomboy”) came about (379). *Po*, its counterpart, is a Mandarin word that usually functions as a suffix in expressions like *waipo* (“outside

grandmother”, meaning grandmother on the mother’s side) or *laopo* (“old lady”, meaning wife) (379). However, *T-Po* identities only came more widely into formation when *T* bars began to open in Taiwan in the mid-1980s (380). The emergence and popularization of Westernized lesbian and feminist politics in Taiwan during the 1990s led to the *T-Po* binary being critiqued as replicating and reinforcing gender and sexual binaries (Y. Hu 2017, 93). It was also regarded as being local and backward within the budding women’s and *tongzhi* movements of the time (93). It was in this atmosphere that the categories of *lazi* and *nütongzhi* were created to designate generic female same-sex desire (93). Nevertheless, as Yu-Ying Hu writes in her study of how same-sex attracted women in Taiwan choose to name their gender and sexual practices, *T* and *Po* continue to persist (90, 105-6). Hu argues, however, that though *T* and *Po* remain powerful concepts and identity labels, the meaning and categorical definition of *T-Po* continues to mutate in the face of the challenge of new non-binary identity categories such as *bufen* and *nütongzhi* (90).

One of the women I interviewed (Xiao’en, a 40-year-old Christian woman), told me that the divisions of masculine *T*, feminine *Po*, or ambiguous *H* are not an appropriate fit for her, because she is still interested in men, but hasn’t had the opportunity to explore that dimension of her sexuality. She is not content with using the English term “bi” either, because she doesn’t feel like this term is quite enough to fully express who she is. She told me she uses the word *tongzhi* to describe herself, and said that it is better than the word ‘queer’ (*ku’er* in Chinese) because it is so broad (*kuan*) and can include everyone from transgender people to even allies of the *tongzhi* community. “I feel, in my opinion,

tongzhi is a great word. It is a very broad one. It shows that many different sexual identities are possible,” she said.

2.7 Conclusion

Today there are multiple terms in use by sexually and gender nonconforming people in Taiwan and China—starting with *tongzhi* as an umbrella term, and then with terminology differing and subdividing further within the male and female same-sex attracted communities. In this chapter I covered the history of *tongzhi* identity in the Chinese world, and in doing so provided a survey of the tolerance and intolerance expressed towards same-sex love over the course of Chinese history. I began by looking at some of the poetic metaphors used to describe same-sex eroticism in the early periods of China’s history, when same-sex love was tolerated and widely accepted. I discussed how attitudes may have begun to shift over time, with the introduction of the term *jijian* (lit. “chicken lewdness”) for sodomy in the Tang Dynasty, a term that would later be used in the Qing-era laws that punished nonconsensual sodomy as well as consensual sodomy. I then examined how the medical term for “homosexuality” (*tongxinglian* or *tongxing’ai*) came into being in the beginning of the 20th century in China, at a time when various elites and intellectuals in China had the goal of modernizing the nation. In this section I also examine the extent to which foreign sexology was to blame for same-sex love being viewed as deviant. I conclude that some ideas were undoubtedly imported; however they were also mapped onto existing concepts regarding sexuality and reproduction in China, as well as the reformers’ own specific goals in the project of modernization. Finally, I turned to the contemporary period and examine how same-sex love in China and Taiwan

is described both in terms of fluidity and nonessentialism (i.e. *tongzhi*) as well as gendered binaries (1s and 0s; *T-Po*).

It is evident that there is a long and rich history of same-sex love in China's history. Modern, 'Western' concepts of bisexuality and homosexuality cannot be applied to this past. For, as long as a man got married and had progeny, he was free to explore his desires with others of the same gender. However, the dynamic of these same-sex relations often involved social differences—it was usually elite, older men that took the active role in the sexual relation, and the passive, penetrated role was stigmatized. At the turn of the 20th century, as China was undergoing massive changes, Western sexology was imported. It merged with the traditional Chinese focus on heterosexual marriage and progeny, leading to a new stigmatization of same-sex love. Given this different history, it is also important not to use the term LGBTQ to describe the same-sex attracted community in Taiwan today, since the history of same-sex love in China and Taiwan through the ages and into contemporary times differs from that experienced in Europe and North America. That is why I consistently use the term *tongzhi* throughout my thesis.

Chapter 3

Adopted by the Rabbit God: Filial Piety, Fictive Kinship, and Religious Practices Among Daoist Believers

不孝有三，無後為大

“There are three ways to be unfilial; to not have posterity is the greatest of them all.”

Mencius (c. 372—289 B.C.E)

In this chapter I will outline how the conception of the family in traditional Chinese thought—and the fundamental concept of filial piety—can make it challenging for parents and other relatives to accept a family member that has same-sex desires. I will also examine how some have reinterpreted the concept of filial piety and kinship in order to find support and acceptance. I link this reinterpretation of filial piety to the practices of celibate clergy in Taiwan.

3.1 The family institution in Taiwan

In his thorough examination of a wide range of issues affecting *tongzhi*, sociologist Chou Wah-shan makes some important points about the institution of the family in Chinese culture. Family, Chou writes in *Tongzhi: Politics of Same-sex Eroticism in Chinese Societies*, “is perceived as the most basic and profound social institution” (Chou 2000, 253). He argues that this derives from traditional Confucian concepts of the self and identity, which tend to be holistic and relational: No one is a discrete, isolated being; rather an individual exists through and is defined by their

relationship to others (20, 252). Confucianism defines five fundamental relationships, which lay down the central defining roles for an individual: sovereign and subject, father and son, elder and younger, husband and wife, and friend and friend (252). Chou argues that all human relationships are constructed in hierarchical patterns, but Confucianism also stresses harmony in those relationships (252-3). In this framework, *guanxi* (shared reciprocity) becomes a crucial reference, as it is the proper *guanxi* between self and others that defines and constitutes the sense of selfhood (253). This is why family is the central social institution, Chou writes. “It has salience for each individual in terms of emotional support, personal growth, economic bonds, and the entire sense of personal selfhood,” he argues (253). In their examination of how Confucianism is a conceptual framework for contemporary East Asian family life, Mijung Park and Catherine Chesla argue that the family is the irreducible unit, rather than the individual (2007). In the Confucian construct, both community and society are an extension of the family. A person who does not do well within family relationships cannot do well in society (Park and Chesla 2007, 305). This is why parents’ value as human beings is judged by how well they perform as parents (306).

Within family relationships, filial piety is a central value (Chou 2000, 253). Being filial to one’s family members, particularly to one’s parents, includes the imperative to marry and continue the family line. Marriage in Chinese culture is traditionally regarded as a transaction between two households instead of two individuals (23). Historically, the basis of marriage and sex within marriage was not sexual desire or love, but the obligation to produce heirs, preferably boys (23). “Traditional Chinese focus their sexual concerns on marital procreation rather than different-sex pleasure,” Chou argues (23).

The nature of this strong Taiwanese family institution can make it challenging for parents to fully accept and support *tongzhi*. Chou argues that the traditional Chinese conception of the relational self—and the primacy of family as the most basic social institution—generate a set of challenges for *tongzhi* that are very different from their LGBTQ counterparts in the Euro-American world (254). Though the *tongzhi* community in Taiwan has experienced its share of harassment by police and harmful stereotyping in the media, *tongzhi* have never been oppressed legally to the extent that they have in the United States and former British Colonies, which have had sodomy laws derived from the Judeo-Christian tradition (Simon 2004, 79). “The major problem for most *tongzhi* is not state oppression, religious fundamentalism, or job discrimination but the family, especially the parents,” Chou argues (254). This is because the problem for parents is not only accepting that their child is *tongzhi*, but the shame of losing face for having a child who does not get married (heterosexually) and have children to carry on the family name (23, 254). The parents may also feel a loss of face with relatives, neighbors, and ancestors (257). In a society where filial piety is of the utmost importance for being a person, hurting one’s parents “could be the most terrible thing for a *tongzhi* to do,” Chou argues (254). Chou explains that this is why almost every *tongzhi* he has encountered in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the PRC agree that the most painful part of coming out is dealing with parents (254-5). He writes the concepts of ‘coming out’ and being ‘out and proud’ are Euro-American constructs and can be culturally problematic for the Chinese world, as being ‘out’ implies leaving one’s family, parents, and culture to become *tongzhi* (258-9).

Evan told me that his parents expect him to marry a wife and have children, and this is why they have made several attempts to try and ‘cure’ him of his same-sex desire

(see Chapter 1). Evan said that he has known that he was attracted to people of the same gender ever since he was in the third grade. He said his parents found out about his sexuality when, around 19 years old, he brought his boyfriend to his parents' house (Evan still currently lives with his parents). Evan told his father that his boyfriend was just a friend, but his father spotted a hickey on Evan's neck and figured it out. Evan said his father was furious, and slapped him. After that, his family began trying to attempt to cure him of his sexual orientation. They first brought him to a temple to the goddess Mazu in Banqiao District of New Taipei City—the temple he had grown up going to with his family. He saw a spirit medium (*jitong*) who said that Evan's true soul was away from his body, and that something dark and terrible had stuck to him instead. The medium performed a ritual to try and recover Evan's lost spirit. That did not change his sexuality, so that was when they decided to take him to see a psychiatrist, as described in the introduction of this thesis. He told me the doctor prescribed a psychotropic drug (*jingshenyao*), and when I asked why, Evan answered that his parents needed the psychiatrist to do something; otherwise they wouldn't leave the hospital. This medication of course did not change Evan, and so later his family took him back to the temple, still attempting to cure him. He told me he felt utterly helpless throughout this whole process.

Anthropologist Scott Simon writes that the expectation on men in Taiwan to marry and bear grandchildren for their parents is very intense, and can create a lot of guilt for *tongzhi* men, partly because they don't want their parents to lose face (2004, 72). Drawing on his own ethnographic work in Taiwan, Simon writes that the cultural expectations are so powerful that some gay men often feel the most pressure to marry after they've come out to their parents (72). Evan said he would suffer if he had to marry

a woman, because he only likes men. Though *tongzhi* men may feel pressure to have children, Evan and Lloyd (who facilitated my two interviews with Evan) pointed out that some would like to adopt children. These two members, as well as Master Lu, argued that the current laws make the process of adoption very challenging for *tongzhi*. Evan said that this was the next step (after the legalization of same-sex marriage) that needed to be done to advance *tongzhi* rights in Taiwan.

Not all *tongzhi* have such negative experiences with their families, however. Xiao'en, a 40-year-old Christian woman I introduced at the end of Chapter 2, told me that both her mother and father are very accepting of her.¹ Xiao'en does an extensive amount of advocacy work, trying to bridge relations between Taiwan's Christian community and the *tongzhi* community. Xiao'en's mother now joins her at some events (including speaking on a panel with other Christian mothers of *tongzhi*), as shown in the 2016 documentary *The Shepherds*, which features Xiao'en and other members of the pro-*tongzhi* Tong-Kwang Lighthouse Presbyterian Church. Lloyd, a 32-year-old project manager in software development who lives in Taoyuan, told me in our interview that he came out to his mother three years ago.² He said that she had already guessed his sexual identity and that she was accepting of it. He added that, while he was traveling in Japan and same-sex marriage was passed into law, his mother shared the news with him and sent him some related articles. "As a mother she intended to see her children got company for the rest of their life...no matter the gender," he said. Lloyd said he thinks his father can probably guess that he is *tongzhi*, but he hasn't talked to him about it. Nevertheless, Lloyd admitted that having a parent who is accepting of their child being

¹ Interview on August 13, 2020.

² Interview on January 16, 2021.

tongzhi is “not typical actually, because Taiwanese family [is] mostly very traditional.” So, he said, even having just one supportive parent is very fortunate.

3.2 Brilliant Light Temple and the Rabbit God

In this section I will introduce Brilliant Light Temple, the Daoist temple where Evan and Lloyd are members.³ I will also introduce one of the primary gods of the temple: a Rabbit God who is a deification of a same-sex attracted man, and who serves the needs of *tongzhi* worshippers. I will then introduce the head priest of the temple. He chose to focus his work on supporting *tongzhi* because he saw that few other religious traditions were putting any effort into working with this community. In later sections I will discuss the kinship ties that have been created at this temple, as well as how both priest and lay members are reinterpreting the cultural idea of filial piety.

Several members sought out and discovered the temple because they were experiencing relationship difficulties. None of those I interviewed were Daoists before coming to the temple, and when they sought out a temple for their needs they didn't have any specific religious tradition in mind. This highlights the highly syncretic nature of religious faith in Taiwan. People may visit Daoist and Buddhist temples for a range of reasons, or may follow certain practices at different times. In 2010, while Evan was still experiencing a lot of conflict with his family, he also experienced heartbreak that led him to turn more to religion. After his boyfriend at the time had cheated on him and then left him for the other person, Evan did some research to find a deity that could help him through this time. Though Evan had previously gone to folk and Buddhist temples with his family, he did not have any religious tradition in mind. This was the same with Lloyd,

³ Brilliant Light is my own translation of the Chinese name of the temple, *Weimingtang*.

who also did not grow up in a religious family, and sought out temples and religious specialists to help him with his relationship woes. Lloyd found that some of the religious options that he tried felt too business-like: he'd pay the religious specialist a fee and provide a photograph of his partner, and then the specialist would give him information about his partner that Lloyd did not find very useful. While religion in Taiwan is highly syncretic, and people search out temples and specialists for their personal needs, religion has also become a marketplace where priests, mediums, and other religious specialists have seen ways to profit off demand (Moskowitz 1999, 166-170; Pas 2003). Through their research, Lloyd and Evan came across a temple for the Rabbit God (*Tu'er Shen*). This was Brilliant Light Temple (*Weimingtang*).



Figure 3.1: Daoist priest Master Lu, founder and head priest of Brilliant Light Temple in New Taipei City, Taiwan. Photo courtesy Lu Weiming.

This temple, which is currently located in a commercial building in Zhonghe District in New Taipei City, is named after Daoist priest Lu Weiming, who first founded the temple in 2007. Master Lu, 35, told me in an interview that Daoist priests tend to choose a specific community or type of support they will offer, and depending on what they choose to specialize in, they will accordingly select gods for their temples.⁴ He said he decided to cater to the needs of *tongzhi* because few other religious leaders in any of Taiwan's religious traditions were concentrating their efforts on supporting this community. A few months after founding Brilliant Light Temple, Lu summoned the Rabbit God to the temple because he said this deity specifically supports *tongzhi*. This was done by taking a plaque in which the full name of the deity was carved (Uncle Rabbit God Hu Tianbao, *Tu'er Shen Hu Tianbao Daye*) and performing a ritual so that the god would be summoned to the plaque.

The Rabbit God is the deification of a man named Hu Tianbao, who is featured in a collection of supernatural stories titled *What the Master Did Not Discuss (Zibuyu)*, compiled by Qing Dynasty poet Yuan Mei (1716-1798) (Szonyi 1998, Vitiello 1992). According to this story, the young Hu Tianbao admired the appearance of an official that had just arrived in Fujian province on the Southeast coast of China (Szonyi 1998, 6; Vitiello 1992, 362). After Hu spied on the official while he was on the toilet to see him naked, the official had Hu killed (Szonyi 1998, 6). After a month Hu appeared in a dream to a local man, explaining that though he had violated propriety and deserved to die, the officials of the spirit world were not angry with him because he had not caused harm to someone. Instead they made him into the Rabbit God (Tu'er Shen), charged with

⁴ Interview on September 17, 2020.

supervising the affairs of men who appreciate other men. Hu asked the man to erect a temple for him (6-7). Szonyi argues that the cult of Hu Tianbao, largely centered in the Fujian city of Fuzhou in the eighteenth century, was focused around the deity's power to grant the wishes of men who desired to have sexual intercourse with young men (1).

The word 'rabbit' (*tuzi*) or 'little rabbit' (*tu'er*) was another of the many terms used to denote same-sex love in periods of China's history, and has also been used as an insult in contemporary times in the PRC (Szonyi 1998, 7; Vitiello 1992, 349-350). In the first half of the twentieth century in the PRC, 'rabbit' could also refer to male prostitutes (Kang 2009, 37). China scholars Michael Szonyi (1998) and Giovanni Vitiello (1992) both note that, interestingly, the identical symbolic association between rabbits and same-sex love also existed in ancient Rome, as described in scholarship by John Boswell (1980). In *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, Boswell argues that early Christian theologians also drew on this symbolism of the rabbit in their prohibitions against same-sex desire (Boswell 1980). He writes that these theologians drew on erroneous ideas about the animal—that the rabbit is a hermaphrodite, and that it could grow a new anal opening each year (this is quoted by Moses in the apocryphal Epistle of Barnabas, likely composed in the first century CE) (137-8, 306). Though the symbol of rabbits has sometimes been used to disparage same-sex love in China and elsewhere, the gods in Yuan Mei's story do not disapprove of same-sex love and willingly make Hu Tianbao the Rabbit God to serve the needs of same-sex attracted men.

Master Lu did not point to any Daoists being disapproving of what his temple is doing. In fact, it appears that the Daoist tradition he is a part of has publicly embraced his work in promoting Daoism. According to Brilliant Light Temple's website, Master Lu

has received praise from the 64th leader (Celestial Master) of the Way of Orthodox Unity tradition, even joining him on trips to the PRC to promote Daoism there. He believes it is his mission to care for *tongzhi*, and he carries out that concern regardless of shifting political winds or other worldly affairs such as harassment from anyone who opposes his work. Master Lu told me,

As a priest, I hope that I can solve some of the problems that have been caused in society, to reduce discrimination. To help more people live in the light with themselves, because some *tongzhi* are not comfortable with themselves. They should be encouraged, because they are unique. They are unique because god made them for a special purpose.

However, Master Lu primarily does this through his work at the temple and spreading Daoist teachings. To my knowledge, Master Lu did not publicly advocate for the legalization of same-sex marriage, unlike Buddhist nun Shih Chao Hwei, who I focus on in the next chapter. He did however indicate his support for it in an interview with the *Taipei Times*, in which he said Daoism recognizes the union of two people of the same gender, and that there is no reason why the state should not do the same (Yi 2007). When I asked Master Lu what his reaction was to same-sex marriage being legalized in May 2019, he said that this was a matter of politics and not religion. He said that while Taiwan's government has made this step forward in *tongzhi* rights, it is something that could always change: it is legalized now, but may become illegal later depending on what a different political climate decides. No matter what the government does or doesn't do, Master Lu said, "the care we provide for *tongzhi* remains the same." This idea of religious separation from the spheres of politics and society is also why he does not comment on his own sexuality (see also Gold 2015), which is a theme I return to in the final section of this chapter.

The temple has received a significant amount of media attention, both in the Chinese language and in the English language (for example, in the *Taipei Times* and internationally in *Reuters*). Lloyd couldn't remember exactly when he first heard of the temple, but he said it was when he saw news about the Rabbit God either on TV or on YouTube. For Evan, after his heartbreak, he specifically looked for a god that helps *tongzhi*, and through a Google search he found Brilliant Light Temple. Even visited the temple and felt warmly received. He found that Master Lu was able to give helpful advice and guidance with the problems he was experiencing, and felt that he was being well educated in the Daoist religion. For him, and other members, Brilliant Light Temple has become another home.

3.3. Fictive Kinship at Brilliant Light Temple

Though it was heartbreak that first brought Evan, Lloyd, and others to Brilliant Light Temple, it was the community they found there that made them stay and become members and disciples of Master Lu. This section explores how members of the temple have used religious frameworks and beliefs such as reincarnation to form fictive kin bonds that provide them with emotional support. I argue they are also reinterpreting filial piety through their rituals and devotion to deities they consider to be their adoptive parents.

Though Chou (2000) argues that it is the nature of family that can make it challenging for *tongzhi* to be accepted by their relatives, he emphasizes that family-kin relations can also be used to accept *tongzhi*. Chou describes several ethnographic examples in which a *tongzhi* son or daughter maintains a strong relationship with their parents, and then introduces their partner into the family as a good friend (263). This

relationship is then deepened through mundane practices such as shopping or playing mahjong together (263). Finally, the *tongzhi* may use quasi-kin categories such as half-sister/brother to integrate the partner into the family (263). Chou describes this process as “coming home,” and argues that it is more effective than trying to make a conceptual argument about same-sex eroticism and having that discussion understood by family members (263). Though there is a strong insider-outsider distinction based on family-kinship categories, Chou argues, the boundary and composition of the Chinese familial group are also fluid and elastic, potentially including those who are not biologically related (265-7). “In all the successful cases of coming home, the partner is perceived by the *tongzhi*’s parents through quasi-kin categories, which is a crucial indication that the insider-outsider distinction has been broken,” Chou writes (267). Though the nature of the family institution in Taiwan makes it challenging for parents to accept *tongzhi*, it is arguably the very same family-kinship structure that could possibly be used—rather than conceptual arguments and discussions—to accept *tongzhi* relationships as part of the family.

Furthermore, *tongzhi* can turn to other people and communities outside of their family to create a fictive kinship group. Andrew Wong and Qing Zhang (2001) examine the use of Chinese kinship terms in their analysis of how readers and producers of the *tongzhi* magazine *G&L* draw on linguistic resources to construct a collective *tongzhi* identity. The authors discuss an advice column in which letters are addressed to “Auntie Bear” (*Xiong Dama*)—portrayed as an old lady who has been through the ups and downs of life and can provide advice, sympathy, and even ridicule; “expressing intimacy that one typically experiences from an old, loving and caring auntie” (Wong and Zhang 2001,

270). *Dama* literally means “elder mother”, and is a kinship term referring to the wife of the father’s elder brother (i.e. “aunt”) (269). Wong and Zhang write that *G&L Magazine* readers actively participate in the construction of the symbolic family through the use of pen names that portray themselves as junior members of the family (270). More than half the pen names they examined used either the structure of [adjective +] *Xiao* (little) + first name (i.e. *Xiao Ru*, Little Ru), or [adjective +] reduplication of a single-character first name—a structure usually used in nicknames for babies or young children (i.e. *Haoqi Baobao*, Curious Precious) (41). The authors argue that through the use of this linguistic resource, the magazine provides readers with an emotional shelter (41-2). “Members of this symbolic family can count on each other when faced with relationship problems, painful experiences in the process of coming out, and rejection of their blood family when they acknowledge their same-sex desire” (42).

3.3.1 Fictive Kinship at Brilliant Light Temple: Symbolic Fathers

These kinds of fictive kin relations have been formed at Brilliant Light Temple, between members, disciples and Master Lu, and between members and deities. Evan told me that he has gone through the ritual process of becoming an “adopted son” (*yizi*) of the Rabbit God (Tu’er Shen). Evan, who had been bringing many offerings of chocolate and flowers to the Rabbit God, was one day asked by Master Lu if he wanted to become an adopted son of the deity. Evan felt that the Rabbit God had been looking after him very well, and felt that the temple could become another home for him. So he agreed, and, with Master Lu’s guidance, Evan tossed divination blocks (*jiaobei*) to ask if the Rabbit God would accept him as an adopted son. Evan received three successive positive answers, which meant that the god agreed to accept him. Evan said that his dating life has

improved since he became an adopted son of the deity. Previously, he told me, he usually met ‘players’ and other men who weren’t very good to him. He says that since becoming an adopted son of the Rabbit God, he has met men who treat him better, and that rather than chasing after other men, they are attracted to him and are coming to him. He said that even though it has not worked out with some of these men, who he felt strongly for, Evan could tell that the Rabbit God had a hand in his relationships and was helping to control those who came into his life.

Through the means of religious ritual, Evan has obtained a new, symbolic father (the Rabbit God), following rejection from his own parents. Evan is devoted to his adoptive father. He proudly displays his status on social media with the words ‘adopted son of the Rabbit God’ (*Tuye yizi*; ‘Uncle Rabbit God’s adopted son’) on his Facebook page. In both our initial and follow-up interview he wore an amulet around his neck that represents the Rabbit God, and said he has been wearing it for over 10 years. With this amulet, his adoptive father is always with him, guiding his relationships. He said that to him, the relationship he has with the Rabbit God is just like one between a biological father and son. He feels protected and cared for by the Rabbit God. While his own father may not regard him as being filial, Evan is being filial to his spiritual father.

People of all genders can be adopted by the Rabbit God: Lloyd said that the Rabbit God currently has two adopted daughters who are female *tongzhi*; one is in Kaohsiung and the other lives in Australia. Some at the temple are disciples of Master Lu, but not adopted sons and daughters of the Rabbit God. Lloyd explained that if one becomes a disciple of Master Lu first, then—since they are given protection and assistance through that relationship—they cannot become adopted children of gods.

Others, like Evan, become an ‘adopted child’ of a god, and then later choose to also become a disciple. So it appears that the process only goes one way (if one is an adopted child of a god, they can also be a disciple, but if one is already a disciple one cannot become an adopted child). Through their devotion and worship, these adopted children are being filial to their symbolic, spiritual parents.

Disciples also demonstrate obedience and reverence to Master Lu, who they address as *shifu*, or “apprenticeship father”. Lloyd said that *shifu* implies a father-child relationship. In Adeline Herrou’s ethnography of a small Daoist temple in Shaanxi, China, she notes that the monastics used a range of kinship terms to refer to each other, including “apprenticeship father” (for disciples to address their master) and terms like elder brother, younger brother, uncle, father’s younger brother, and so forth (2013, 214-5). All of these terms have the prefix “master” or “apprenticeship” before the defining kinship term (215). Herrou writes that the monastics adopt the forms of reverential behavior denoted by these kinship terms: “The duties of the disciple toward his master resemble those of the son toward his father. The monastics say that they behave with filial piety, and treat their master with due reverence and obedience” (217). Master Lu has also become a symbolic father for the disciples of his temple. Evan, for example, credits Master Lu’s advice and teaching for helping him through a difficult period in his life when he was feeling suicidal. Like the temple in Herrou’s ethnography, members of Brilliant Light Temple also address each other as “apprenticeship brothers/siblings” (*shixiong*). Members of the temple have also practiced filial piety by participating in rituals to improve the merit of their fellow disciples’ fathers and grandfathers who have passed away. By improving their merit (i.e. adding to the merit they earned themselves

through their own individual actions), the temple members hoped that these deceased men could have a more favorable rebirth. In rituals such as these, Lloyd explained, they have a ceremony every day of the week for seven weeks (a total of 49 days).

3.3.2 *Fictive Kinship at Brilliant Light Temple: A Predestined, Symbolic Family*

In addition to the creation of symbolic, adoptive parents for members, those at the temple also have formed kinship bonds with each other, which they interpret through the belief of reincarnation. As Evan continued to face challenges with his family, he began spending even more time at Brilliant Light Temple. He calls the temple and its members his family (*jiaren*), and told me he comes to the temple to be with his ‘family’ and to feel comforted. This symbolic family also includes some who are heterosexual, like Olivia, a 22-year-old administrative assistant who also acts as a secretary for the temple. Though not *tongzhi* herself, Olivia’s reason for first coming to Brilliant Light Temple was the same as Evan and Lloyd: heartbreak. In an interview, Olivia said a male *tongzhi* friend brought her to the temple after she broke up with her boyfriend, who had returned to his home country of France.⁵ She said she was feeling anxious and insecure, but quickly felt a sense of peace during her first experience in the temple. Visiting a temple because of relationship troubles—or for almost any personal matter—is common practice in Taiwan. Those seeking a good relationship pray to the matchmaking Daoist god ‘The Old Man Under the Moon’ (Yue Xia Lao Ren). Evan, the *tongzhi* Daoist, had tried to seek help from The Old Man Under the Moon before coming to Brilliant Light Temple. However, as Lloyd explained during my interview with Evan, the Rabbit God is more suitable for

⁵ Interview over Skype on October 31, 2020. Since Olivia was roughly as proficient in English as I am in Chinese, the interview was done in a combination of English and Mandarin.

helping with *tongzhi* relationships because the Rabbit God was *tongzhi* himself when he was the human man Hu Tianbao. Master Lu told the *Taipei Times* that he advises *tongzhi* not to go to The Old Man Under the Moon because that deity may be confused by the request and match the supplicant with someone from the opposite gender instead (Ho 2007). Likewise, this is why Olivia does not pray to the Rabbit God for her relationship woes, but will instead pray to Mr. Sanshan Jiuhou, the other primary god at Brilliant Light Temple.

Like Evan, Olivia said she experienced “miracles” in various aspects of her personal life after visiting Brilliant Light Temple and praying to the gods in the temple. Olivia told me the value of her stock investments increased, and also her ex-boyfriend came back to Taiwan and they rekindled their relationship (and a few months after our interview they got engaged). Lloyd, who said that he was more skeptical than Evan and Olivia and took longer (a full year) before fully committing to being a disciple, also said that miraculous happenings in both his professional and personal life finally convinced him to become a Daoist. For example, he was going to be very late on delivering on a project because a device he had ordered from overseas still had to be manufactured and it was going to take a month or two to arrive. Suddenly, another client cancelled the order on the same part and, since that device had already been made, it was sent to Lloyd instead and he got it only one day late. In his personal life, his dating options have expanded: the partner who had initially caused him trouble came back into his life and has since been very good to him, and another *tongzhi* friend and he have become close. Furthermore, the (heterosexual) wedding of one of his former army colleagues has been

delayed, and to Lloyd even that person now seems to be a potential future partner (“I have three choices now,” he told me, laughing).

The members of Brilliant Light Temple also feel a deep connection with each other. Their kinship ties extend beyond just those that they have formed in this life—they interpret the bonds as having existing in previous lives before their current reincarnated state. The Chinese term used to refer to this kind of predestined relationship is *yinyuan* (chains of cause and effect, or principal and secondary causes), and, more casually, *yuanfen*. *Yuanfen* can be translated as “predestined affinity”, “fate”, or “pre-fated bond” (see for example Moskowitz 2001; G. Fisher, *From Comrades to Bodhisattvas*, 2014). The character (*yuan*) in both terms refers to “karmic destiny”: causes and conditions make up the world as we experience it, and these are often determined by actions in previous lifetimes (Farrer 2002, 197; G. Fisher, *Comrades*, 2014, 85). Though the term has religious origins, it is frequently used by both religious and non-religious people in Taiwan and China to refer to a wide range of relationships and feelings, not just between two people, but also between a person and a thing or place, or between a person and a deity (G. Fisher, *Comrades*, 2014, 85). The monastics in Herrou’s ethnography of a Daoist temple in Shaanxi also cited pre-fated bonds as the reason they became clergy (saying, for example, that they felt *yuanfen* with their master or with the temple, or that they did not feel *yuanfen* with their parents) (2013, 121). Lloyd told me the concept of pre-fated bonds explains why some—like Evan—felt a sense of familiarity when they first came to the temple, while others may visit once or twice and never return again (that is, they do not have a pre-fated bond with Master Lu and others at the temple). Lloyd even suggested in our interview that perhaps he and others at the temple have participated

in my research project and helped me so much because they owe a debt to me from a previous life.

Pre-fated bonds also explain why Olivia, a straight woman, has become so involved in a temple where the majority of disciples and members are *tongzhi*. When I asked Olivia what made her become a Daoist and a disciple of Master Lu, she laughed at first. Lloyd, who was facilitating the interview, broke into the conversation and said that, because Olivia is heterosexual, he and others at the temple did not expect that Olivia would go on to become a disciple and play such an important role at Brilliant Light Temple (temple secretary). “Even she doesn’t really understand how this happened,” Lloyd said. Olivia agreed, and said the process happened “just suddenly,” and expressed that it felt like she had found “another home.” Lloyd offered an explanation based on the Daoist belief in reincarnation, explaining that Olivia and the rest of the temple’s staff and members were brought together because they had already forged connections in a previous life:

It might be a past existence, and we were together in a certain group, many centuries ago. We now get together again because we were together already. So the connections and the relations keep us going to be together. This is from religious view. So when Olivia come to here, no matter, it doesn’t matter which instances urged Olivia to come to [Brilliant Light Temple], but when she saw this place, she felt warmth, felt familiar, but no sudden reason why, how this happened. And the people, and the Master Lu, and the friends in this temple, she just found another home, because her past memory urged her, encourage her to be here.

Olivia said she agreed with Lloyd’s explanation. She told me she specifically decided to become a disciple after hearing a lesson that Master Lu gave about Laozi, the ancient Chinese philosopher regarded as the founder of Daoism. Olivia said that the lesson emphasized the importance of having a teacher, and this resonated with her. Master Lu’s

teaching—and the feeling of peace and ‘home’ that she felt at Brilliant Light Temple—led Olivia to become a disciple and member.

This non-biological family also supports each other, even performing rituals to help members after death. My interview with Lloyd got pushed back from winter break until mid-January 2021, and when we connected over Skype he told me the tragic reason why: he and the other disciples had been busy performing rituals for a disciple who had killed herself at the end of 2020. Lloyd explained that the 25-year-old woman, who was also *tongzhi*, had long battled with depression. He said they were performing rituals (for 49 days) to help her merit, because, from the Daoist point of view, a disciple who takes their own life has violated the first of the five precepts (no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no false speech, and no taking of intoxicants). Lloyd explained that making a vow to follow the five precepts is one of the first acts one does after becoming a disciple. Breaking the precepts means losing the blessings and good fortune provided by the gods. Lloyd said that those who kill themselves may become a ghost or go to a hell until they pay off their debt, adding that Buddhism and Daoism have similar cosmologies of multiple heavens and hells. However, Lloyd told me, the disciples had all been performing rituals to help this woman’s future birth. These rituals included reading scriptures, as well as buying 150 fish from a fish market and setting them free in the river, dedicating the accumulated merit to her. “We have done our best for her. So we will meet again in the future, in the very, very long future. We believe so. She got an advantage from us. So when people owe each other, so people meet,” Lloyd said. The kinship bonds between members of the temple transcend this world and this life, when viewed through the lens of reincarnation and pre-fated bonds.

In Europe and North America, those who are gay, lesbian, and gender nonconforming have also formed these kinds of familial relationships. Kath Weston's pioneering ethnography *Families We Choose* (1991) examined how gay men and lesbians in the San Francisco Bay Area have "chosen families", with whom they apply kinship terminology. In this work, and in another book chapter (Weston 1995), Weston critiques the emphasis that society and scholars have put on blood and procreation for defining a 'real' family. She writes that the politics of defining kinship was especially relevant in the United States in the 1980s, when sweeping cuts in government spending of social services resulted in the categories of "blood" and "marriage" being increasingly used to mediate how assistance was provided (Weston 1995, 105). It also had tangible effects for the lives of gay and lesbian people in whether or not they could take time off for a partner's funeral, access a partner's health-insurance plan, have hospital visitation privileges, as well as joint adoption and property rights (99). However, Weston also notes that some gay men and lesbians she spoke to agreed with the view held by some that blood ties represent the only authentic form of kinship (1991, 35-6). One Latinx woman, for example, told Weston, "my friends can be *more important* than my family, but that doesn't mean they are my family. . . . 'Cause no matter what, they are just friends—they don't have your blood" (36, emphasis in original). Weston writes that those who disputed the validity of chosen families were often people "whose notions of kinship were bound up with their own sense of racial or ethnic identity" (36).

In a more recent study of kinship practices of LGBTQ people in Poland, the authors note that, given the particular emphasis on the heteronormative concept of family in that country, the need to use the term 'family' for fictive or chosen families may be

politically driven (Mizielińska and Stasińska, 2018). Mizielińska and Stasińska write that Poland is a family-centered nation in which marriage is regarded as a union reserved for heterosexual couples and legitimized by the constitution and Catholic Church (2018, 984). Similar to the Confucian societies of China and Taiwan, in Poland society is seen as being composed of families or family-like groups, rather than individuals (984). The authors write that participants in their multi-methods (quantitative and qualitative) study emphasized that their non-heterosexual unions counted as being a family, which, they argue, may be a political strategy to gain recognition and disrupt the heteronormative notion prevalent in the public discourse (997). The authors also argue that the participants in their study did not build families of choice separately from their families of origin, but instead tried to integrate them—actively creating a space for themselves and their partners within familial settings (990, 998). LGBTQ Poles depended on their families of origin for material support, and were also psychologically and emotionally attached to them (998). The authors note that some families of origin cannot cut their LGBTQ children off because they are dependent on their support (991). Central and Eastern Europe have familialist social policies, in which elderly or ill parents are dependent on the care of relatives (991) (this is very similar to the situation in Taiwan, as I described in Chapter 1). The authors note that this situation can, paradoxically, become an opportunity for the inclusion of non-heterosexual couples among the conservative family (991). They note as well that there is not a clear division between chosen families and families of origin, as described by Weston (1991), for example (991).

Similarly, the division between fictive kin and families of origin is not always distinct in Taiwan either—one ‘family’ does not necessarily trump the other. Religious

clergy who renounce family life and form fictive kin bonds still stress that their actions are filial and ultimately benefit their parents and other blood relatives. I will explore this further in the following section, as well as in Chapter 4. Furthermore, given the Confucian emphasis on family, it is a challenge for *tongzhi* to embrace their sexual identity if it means leaving their families of origin (Chou 2000, 258-9). It is also why quasi-kin categories are sometimes used to integrate a *tongzhi* partner into one's family. Despite the pressure from Evan's parents leading him to become suicidal, he remains dedicated to them. He said that regardless of whether or not his parents accept his sexuality, he will still be obedient to them. "I love my parents," he told me. When I asked him if he thought he would get married one day (now that same-sex marriage is legal), he said yes, but then quickly added: "But I want my family to accept and support me." If one can still be filial to one's biological parents, and be accepted by them, that is desirable.

3.4 Celibate Clergy and Their Characterization as 'Rootless Rascals'

As evident in Evan's story described in the opening of this thesis, filial piety can create a lot of hardship for *tongzhi*, who are accused of disobedience if they do not marry heterosexually and bear children to continue the family line. I have described how *tongzhi* (and non-*tongzhi*) members of Brilliant Light Temple have reinterpreted filial piety through devotion and reverence to Master Lu and the Rabbit God. Master Lu however, may have something in common with the *tongzhi* that visit his temple—they are both unfilial in the traditional Confucian sense. Master Lu, unlike some Daoist priests in Taiwan, is celibate. He told me he could not discuss anything further than that, because a Daoist priest should personally be above worldly matters such as sexuality. By being celibate, Master Lu is not marrying and having children of his own. As I discussed in

Chapter 2, religious celibacy, and being outside of the Confucian norm, has at some historical moments led to Daoist priests and Buddhist monks being depicted as deviant. Historian Matthew Sommer, who examines legal cases focused on regulating sexuality during the Qing dynasty, notes that male Buddhist and Daoist clergy—along with local toughs, migrants, and single men without prospects—were regarded as “rootless rascals” that stood outside the family-based social and moral order (2002, 68-9). In fact, Sommer notes, the clergy were seen as the very personification of the rootless rascal and all the dangers he represented, with both Ming (1368–1644) and Qing dynasties (1644-1911) making repeated efforts to regulate the way clergy behaved (71). “By taking vows of celibacy, abstaining from marriage, and living apart from their natal families, these men stood outside the mainstream family order in the most basic ways,” Sommer writes (71).

This tension continues to the present day. In Herrou’s ethnography of a Shaanxi Daoist temple (which is part of a monastic Daoist tradition), those who left their families to become clerics found it to be a painful decision (2013, 137). Herrou writes that the men in her research struggled because they were viewed as betraying their patrilineage:

Although they think of Daoist monastics as wise and respectable and of the Daoist way as admirable, few Chinese actually wish such a destiny for their son or daughter. They prefer that their children take up a profession that may be less honorable but provides better comfort in life, leaves the family organization intact, and helps with the continuation of the group (2013, 138).

However, Herrou notes that the Daoist monastics in Shaanxi have found ways to reinterpret filial piety. Though the clerics assert that their original parents are of no concern to them anymore, they nevertheless suggest that the “virtuous and meritorious acts” they perform in the course of their monastic life will benefit their parents (2013, 227). It is believed that if they can excel enough in their practice to attain immortality,

then they will give their parents a great advantage as well (227). Therefore, the filial piety of monastics is often called “great filial piety” (*daxiao*) as it connects to celestial powers (227). It is unlike the “little filial piety” (*xiaoxiao*) that is limited to one’s parents (227).

Being unfilial is a major tension that *tongzhi* in Taiwan experience, as I discussed above in the case of Evan, who faces pressure from his parents to get married (to a woman) and bear children. Master Lu has taken a nontraditional life path for a young man in Taiwan, and this may give him more understanding of the *tongzhi* (especially male *tongzhi*, which appear to make up the majority of *tongzhi* devotees) who come to his temple. He too is partaking in the fictive kin network at Brilliant Light Temple. This tension is potentially also felt by Buddhist nun Shih Chao Hwei, and may relate to her vocal support for *tongzhi* and same-sex marriage; an issue I explore in the next chapter (Chapter 4).

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined how the nature of the family institution in Taiwan makes it challenging for some *tongzhi* to be accepted and supported by their families. This has been the experience of Evan, one of the members of Brilliant Light Temple. I have argued that he and other members of the temple have formed kinship bonds, which they interpret through the lens of reincarnation—members and the temple priest may have all met in a previous life. Members of the temple have also become adopted sons and daughters of deities at the temple. Since they are not filial to their biological families in the traditional sense, I argued that they are being filial through their religious practices and devotion. This mirrors the practices of celibate clergy in Taiwan, who have long been considered unfilial in the Confucian sense, and have been chastised by society because of it. In the following chapter I will continue this discussion, focusing on a Buddhist nun

who has personally been acute to some of the stigma surrounding celibate clergy in Taiwan.

Chapter 4

The ‘God of War’ and her Fierce Words: Buddhist Nun Shih Chao

Hwei’s Support of *Tongzhi* Rights

“In this spring of my life, despite the tears shed by my parents, I shaved my head, put on robes, renounced my home, and became a homeless monk”

Siddhartha Gautama Buddha (Majjhima-nikāya, I, 163)

On November 24, 2016, roughly two and a half years before same-sex marriage was legalized in Taiwan, Buddhist nun Shih Chao Hwei spoke at a public hearing on the issue. In this hearing, organized by Taiwan’s legislature, Shih gave an impassioned speech in support of same-sex marriage, and in the following days media reported her statements and other Taiwanese religious leaders gathered to refute her statements (*UP Media* 2016a, 2016b). One Buddhist leader stated that Shih does “not represent the Buddhist community” (*UP Media* 2016b). This was not the first time that Shih was outspoken on social issues, and neither was it the first time her statements proved to be controversial with the Buddhist establishment. Independent, feminist scholar-nun Shih has taken an activist approach to a wide range of social issues, arguing against nuclear energy and hunting, and arguing for increased animal rights and improved measures for environmental protection. She received worldwide media attention when she officiated a wedding for a Buddhist lesbian couple in Taiwan in 2012. Her activism and candor on

these issues differs from the approach taken by other monastics in Taiwan, such as Cheng Yen, the famed leader of the Tzu Chi Foundation (W. Cheng 2017; DeVido 2010).¹



Figure 4.1 Buddhist nun Shih Chao Hwei.
Photo courtesy Shih Chao Hwei.

This chapter will examine the argumentative strategies Shih deployed to support same-sex marriage in the speech she gave to the Taiwanese legislature, by focusing on four statements that were quoted by media outlets and discussed online by people in Taiwan and in Hong Kong. In these excerpts, Shih questions the nature of family, as well

¹ Both Cheng Yen and Shih Chao Hwei were influenced by the teachings of Buddhist modernizer Yinshun, and both belong to the tradition of Humanistic or socially engaged Buddhism. Lee and Han (2016) argue that Cheng Yen embodies the compassionate mother ideal, whereas Shih embodies the moral activist.

as the core concept of filial piety, which expects people to marry and bear children. Shih poses questions to her opponents to force them to address the illogical reasoning they are using, portrays her opponents negatively, and also deploys repetition and rapid pacing to emphasize her points. In the final section of this chapter I will explore how Shih's critiques of family are connected to how Buddhist monks and nuns have themselves been criticized by society for being unfilial. I argue that Buddhists like Shih have negotiated and reinterpreted family expectations to be more inclusive and cosmopolitan, and that this is something *tongzhi* have done as well. In this last section, I draw from a semi-structured interview I did with Shih. Shih has earned significant fame because of her support for issues like same-sex marriage, as well as attracted controversy, when, for example, at an academic conference in 2001 she publicly ripped up a copy of the "Eight Special Rules" that uphold the subordination of nuns to monks (for example that even a very senior nun has to bow to a novice monk) (DeVido 2010, 107; Lee and Han 2016, 67-9). She has a large following on Facebook, with hundreds of people commenting every time she posts. Since she also works as a professor and is a prolific writer, she is busy and in high demand—which is perhaps why it was only after several months of reaching out to her that we were eventually able to set up an interview. Since this was my final interview, and I had already written Chapter 3, many of my questions were focused on the connections between *tongzhi* experiences and family expectations. I also indicate below when I directly asked about some of these issues.

4.1 Shih Chao Hwei and her Humanistic Buddhist Activism

Shih, 64, is the founder of the Hongshi Buddhist Institute (a Buddhist monastery and college in Taoyuan), as well as a professor in the Department of Religious Studies

and Cultural Studies at Hsuan Chuang University. Shih's family is from Guangdong province, and they fled to Burma during the rise of communism in China (Lieblich 2020). Shih was born in Yangon, Myanmar in 1957, and then moved to Taiwan with her family in 1965. While studying Chinese literature at National Taiwan Normal University, she attended a summer camp designed to attract students to Mahāyāna Buddhism, and decided to become a nun (Lieblich 2020).² She studied Buddhism under the mentorship of famous Chinese monk Yinshun (1906-2005), who, along with other monks, came to Taiwan after the defeat of the Nationalist government in China in 1949 (DeVido 2010, 14-5, 102). Yinshun and his mentor Taixu are considered to be the major reformers of 20th-century Chinese Buddhism, arguing that one taking the bodhisattva path (see footnote) should undertake efforts to benefit humanity, and advocating for serving society in order to create a Pure Land on earth (99). Shih was influenced by these ideas, and became a tireless worker for a number of social causes. She and her colleagues at the Hongshi Buddhist Institute (which she founded in 1998) have published many works on Buddhist ethics with regard to issues such as abortion, stem cell research, euthanasia, suicide, the death penalty, organ transplants, animal and environmental rights, and indigenous Taiwanese hunting practices (102-3). However, Elise Anne DeVido points out that, unlike some of the other monastics in the tradition of 'Engaged' or 'Humanistic Buddhism' (*renjian fojiao*), Shih is a radical activist and feminist and one of the only

² Mahāyāna Buddhism is the dominant form of Buddhism in Taiwan (and East Asia generally). Mahāyāna, which means 'Great Vehicle', is one of two main branches of Buddhism, the other being Theravāda (the oldest existing school, which is practiced in Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia). Unlike the Theravāda tradition, Mahāyāna generally holds that pursuing only individual release from suffering (i.e. nirvana) is an inferior aspiration; instead the superior path is that of the bodhisattva. The bodhisattva could reach nirvana, but chooses to remain in the cycle of death and rebirth to liberate all sentient beings from this same cycle (Mitchell 2008).

monastics who is willing to engage in issues that are political (103). Shih claims her views cannot be categorized as either “left” or “right” (Chen and Chen 2018). She believes that Buddhists should be concerned with politics—and work to raise the public’s consciousness on issues and lobby to change laws if necessary—but they should not become directly involved with the political administration or run for office (DeVido 2010, 105). Shih has long supported *tongzhi* rights, including through writing about *tongzhi* rights and the issue of same-sex marriage over the years in her Institute’s bimonthly magazine Hongshi Newsletter (*Hongshi Tongxun*)—with issues fully or partially devoted to the subject in 2019, 2018, 2016, 2012 and 2006. Shih’s support for *tongzhi* rights comes from her view of Buddhist compassion. She argues that the central theme of Buddhist doctrine is that all beings should be able to abandon suffering and obtain happiness (Shih 2016). Therefore, it is wrong for society to discriminate against *tongzhi* people, and equal marriage rights can grant happiness and less suffering.

Hsiao-Lan Hu (2016) and Chengpang Lee and Ling Han (2016) have discussed Shih’s support for *tongzhi* rights, through some of her writings as well as her officiating a Buddhist lesbian wedding in 2012, but neither work has examined her more recent support for equal marriage rights. None of these sources focuses closely on Shih’s verbal discourses, nor employs a pragmatic analysis. It is important to examine her speech at the legislature hearing because this event represents one of Shih’s most prominent and political acts of support for equal marriage rights, and because it was an event that was extensively covered in the media. Since Shih often speaks out publicly on a range of social issues, it is important that attention is given to her verbal discourse—specifically how she constructs her arguments.

4.2. Background and Methods

I will be looking at the speech Shih Chao Hwei gave on November 24, 2016, at a public hearing to discuss same-sex marriage, organized by the Legislative Yuan (Taiwan's legislature). I have selected four points that she makes over the course of her speech, which was just over 8 minutes in length. I have chosen these four examples because they were quoted in media in Taiwan (*UP Media* 2016a) and Hong Kong (Chen and Chen 2018; *Stand News* 2017). Two of these articles—in *UP Media* and *Stand News*—published parts of all four examples I am using. The article that appeared in *Stand News* (a Hong Kong independent, not-for-profit online news website), was about Shih's attendance at an event in Hong Kong on January 22, 2017 in which she spoke to local *tongzhi* organizations. To give the reader background on Shih, this feature article discussed Shih's speech at the legislative hearing (which would have been just a few months prior) and described the words of her speech as powerful and impressive (*kengqiang*) (*Stand News* 2017). It was at this point in the article that parts of each of the four examples I have using were highlighted in the article in a grey text box that stood out from the rest of the text (see figure 4.2 on next page).³ The four excerpts I have chosen touch on a range of themes. One of the excerpts downplays the supposed differences between heterosexual and non-heterosexual (*tongzhi*) individuals. Two of the excerpts call into question hegemonic, heteronormative ideas of what constitutes a family. The remaining excerpt relates to the fear of the prevalence of homosexuality increasing once same-sex marriage is allowed.

³ My examples are longer than the ones used in the *Stand News* article, because they include some of the sentences spoken by Shih before the ones reproduced in the article.

走上講台，力挺同性婚姻合法化。

一開口，她字字鏗鏘、語驚四座。網民即封她為「戰神」，大讚法師口才了得，甚至紛紛節錄金句在網上傳閱：

「以單一的價值要求所有的人都要進入這個家，而且這個家還是要由你來定義的，我真的覺得有點強迫症。」

「家庭的功能非常非常多，請各位不要認為，都是為了精子跟卵子的結合好嗎？」

「如果有了同志婚姻，異性戀者就會變成同性戀？那你會嗎？你不會你為什麼擔心呢？奇怪！」

「剛才我又聽到一個很荒謬的消息說，你們同志經常換性伴侶。喂！他不就因為不想要經常換性伴侶，所以要結婚嗎？」

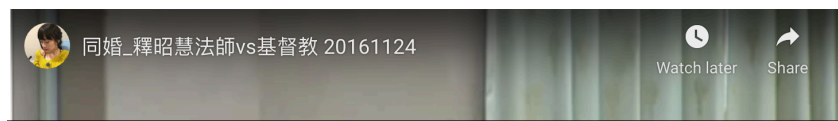


Figure 4.2: Screenshot of *Stand News* article, with grey text box between main text of article and YouTube video of Shih's speech.

I have produced a line-by-line transcription based on video of Shih's speech (Yvon Lin 2016), which I also compared with a transcription that was made by a student organization and published in Hongshi Institute's magazine (Shih 2016). The organization's transcriptions edited out some repetitive words and phrases in Shih's speech, but I included those in my transcription. My transcription also captures Shih's pauses as well as other elements of her delivery.⁴ The translation is my own, with some reference to an English translation in the *Taiwan Gazette* (Chen and Chen 2018). The left side is the English translation, and the right side is the Chinese written out using *pinyin* (the traditional characters can be found in Appendix B). I have followed sociolinguistic

⁴ The four examples are spread out over the course of Shih's speech (of 8 minutes and 14 seconds). Because I did not transcribe the entire speech the line numbers continue from one example into the other, but this is not to suggest that these separate examples were spoken right after each other, as they were not. They were however spoken temporally in this order.

conventions (see Chun 2001 for example) in my transcription, as well as taken the liberty of underlining words to indicate which parts of Shih's speech were quoted in media.

These are the conventions I use:

((comment))	transcriber's description of speech quality
bold	emphasis signaled by increased pitch or amplitude
(number)	seconds of silence, for a pause
CAPITALS	increased volume
<u>underline</u>	parts of excerpts quoted in other media

4.3 Analysis

This first example occurs in Shih's speech after she had been speaking at some length about her interpretation of Buddhism as it relates to non-heterosexual relationships and ethics. She also specifically mentions how Christian leaders and organizations that are against same-sex marriage have used the concept of family values to try and sway public opinion, because, as Shih argues, if they had used Christian reasoning it would not have resonated with the larger (predominantly non-Christian) public. Ke-hsien Huang (2017) argues that the organizations and NGOs that publicly rallied against same-sex marriage in Taiwan learned to downplay their Christian identity and instead use the secular rhetoric deployed by the global Christian Right campaign against gay rights movements. Specifically, he writes, these groups focused on "advocating the positive values of protecting family institutions and caring first for children, rather than the negative approach of opposing gay rights, which may be condemned as discriminatory" (122). Huang also argues that Christian leaders were behind the formation of a group called the League of Taiwanese Religious Groups Caring for Family (*Taiwan zongjiao tuanti aihu jiating dalianmeng*), which consisted of leaders representing Buddhism, the Unity/Yiguandao sect and the Chinese Confucian-Mencius Association (123-4). The

spokesperson from this group said in a press conference in 2014 that same-sex marriage would destroy Chinese traditional culture, eliminate filial piety, as well as collapse the order of human relations (124). It is this notion of family values that Shih is arguing against in the first excerpt.

4.3.1 Example 1

1	To say it honestly and bluntly	1	<i>Na laoshi bu keqi de shuo</i>
2	the value of family has never been	2	<i>jia de jiazhi xianglai jiu bushi</i>
	absolute		<i>wuxian shang gang</i>
3	the value of family has never been	3	<i>jia de jiazhi xianglai jiu bushi</i>
	absolute		<i>wuxian shang gang</i>
4	I must say it again	4	<i>wo bixu yao zai zheyang shuo</i>
5	in other words	5	<i>ye jiushi shuo</i>
6	whether in Europe or	6	<i>zai ouzhou ye hao,</i>
7	in	7	<i>zai</i>
8	in	8	<i>zai</i>
9	India	9	<i>yindu ye hao</i>
10	from an early time there have been	10	<i>zao jiu yijing you xuduo suowei de</i>
	many of what are called homeless		<i>homeless ((Shih uses the English</i>
	people		<i>word here))</i>
11	and they have created the most	11	<i>erqie tamen chuangzaole renlei</i>
	glorious civilizations in human society		<i>shehui zui canlan de wenming,</i>
12	And	12	<i>Name</i>
13	These individuals did not necessarily	13	<i>zhexie ren bujian deyi jia wei</i>
	have a position in a family		<i>gangwei baokuole fotuo zai nei</i>
	including the Buddha among them		
14	and including many wandering	14	<i>baokuole xuduo de you fang seng</i>
	monks.		
15	Therefore	15	<i><u>Name yinci ne</u></i>
16	for you to continuously <u>require that</u>	16	<i><u>Yi danyi de jiazhi zai yaoqiu suoyou</u></i>
	<u>everyone enter the family</u>		<i><u>de ren dou shi yao jinru dao zhege</u></i>
			<i><u>jia</u></i>
17	<u>based on this single value that is also</u>	17	<i><u>erqie zhege jia haishi yao you ni lai</u></i>
	<u>defined by you</u>		<i><u>dingyi de</u></i>
18	<u>this is actually</u>	18	<i><u>na zhege qishi shi</u></i>
19	<u>I really feel it is a bit obsessive-</u>	19	<i><u>wo zhen de juede youdian qiangpo</u></i>
	<u>compulsive</u>		<i><u>zheng</u></i>

In this example Shih uses Buddhism to critique a widespread conception of family. She argues that the idea of what constitutes a family has never been absolute, and repeats this statement twice (lines 2-3), stating she must “say it again” (4), describing what she is doing to emphasis her point. She increases her pitch in lines 15-16, to address and mock a distal ‘you’ of the ‘family values’ groups mentioned above. Her increased pitch also signifies her displeasure at those who “continuously” promote a narrow view of the family—a perspective she describes as “obsessive-compulsive” (line 19). This is one construal of a pathological and parochial personhood limited to thinking only of a narrow notion of family, which she immediately contrasts with individuals from around the globe who chose alternative paths to the benefit of entire societies and not just a single family. Specifically, she uses the example of the Buddha as well as wandering monks to illustrate how people who have renounced family life have made great achievements. In many ways Buddhism is seemingly incompatible with Confucian notions of filial piety, which dominate Taiwan to this day. However, filial piety can be reinterpreted, argues Simon Scott, an anthropologist who researches Taiwan (2004). In his discussion of gay men and filial piety, Scott argues that many celibate Buddhist monks and nuns emphasize that their Buddhist practices (such as chanting and other rituals to help their dead ancestors enter the Pure Land) are filial, even when they reject marriage and rearing children (73). I will explore this Buddhist interpretation of filial piety in more detail in the last section of this chapter. Finally, the *Stand News* and *UP Media* only quoted the last part of this excerpt (see underlined); arguably because this is where Shih accuses her opponents of being “obsessive-compulsive” (line 19). The use of this description is another example of how Shih sets up contrasting and dueling figures of personhood: one may be filial in the

narrow traditional sense, but adhering to such a limited view borders on the pathological, she argues. Instead, the alternate path Shih constructs for her audience is that of admirable “homeless” individuals (line 10).

Shih’s code-switch into English with the word “homeless” may also be a socio-indexical rhetorical device to display a sense of cosmopolitanism and to appeal to a wider audience who might align in mocking the parochial narrow-minded figure disparaged above. Cosmopolitanism can be understood as the appreciation of ideas, things, and beings “from many places”, as well as the casting off of a parochial mindset (Tsing 2005, 121, 126). In Taiwan, English words and phrases are frequently seen in print and television advertisements, interspersed in Mandarin pop songs, and also appear (often with spelling and/or grammatical errors) on items such as t-shirts, sweaters, and students’ stationary cases. This use of English is often cosmopolitan.⁵ According to a study by Jia-Ling Hsu (2008), copywriters who mix English words into larger Mandarin text generally agree that the use of English conveys the following socio-psychological effects to the audience about the advertised product: internationalism, metropolitan orientation, authenticity, urban experience, the trendy taste of the younger generation, and is attention-grabbing (159). Drawing on surveys of both English-literate and illiterate readers, Hsu argues that the use of English in advertisements is “overwhelmingly popular” in Taiwan, even among monolingual Chinese speakers (180). For them, the use of English words and phrases alongside Chinese words indexed themes such as ‘internationalism and standardization’ and ‘American and English culture’ (173-7). One

⁵ Cosmopolitanism may also explain why Evan and Lloyd of Brilliant Light Temple (see Chapter 3) told me they like to use the English word ‘gay’ to describe their sexual identity. They were showing themselves to be globally minded.

copywriter Hsu interviewed (who wrote ad copy that was fragmentary, ungrammatical, and filled with misspellings) said that it is the English form rather than the English context that communicates to the target audience, and therefore English accuracy is outside the concern of copywriters (161). Shih's use of English in this speech may be attention-grabbing—similar to how she used “obsessive-compulsive” (line 19) to describe her opponents, and goes on to discuss combining sperm and eggs (see example 3, line 31), something her audience may not have expected a Buddhist nun to discuss. Shih designed her speech to be quoted and disseminated in the media, which it was (as evident in the articles I mention above). As I describe later, her speech resonated with the media and public.

Shih's cosmopolitan display may also have been intended to contest the global leanings of her opponents. Scholars and observers in Taiwan have pointed out how the conservative organizations and NGOs that fought against the legalization of same-sex marriage were affiliated with global Christian organizations (Cole 2017; K. Huang 2017; J. Ho 2010). As I described above, Ke-hsien Huang (2017) described how the groups campaigning against the legalization of same-sex marriage adopted the rhetoric deployed by the global Christian right campaign against gay rights movements. Huang argues that, in the face of criticism, the Christian-led League of Taiwanese Religious Groups Caring for Family “appealed to the West” to confirm they were on the right path (130). He writes that they translated, edited, and spread foreign news stories that were not favorable to LGBTQ rights, in an attempt to convince their supporters that they are truly on the side of global progress (131). Some of the churches that campaigned against same-sex marriage also received tactical support from anti-LGBTQ Christian organizations in the United

States, as well as from the extreme-right group MassResistance (Cole 2017). Therefore, in using an English word, Shih is also combatting the cosmopolitan influences of her opponents: these quasi-Christian organizations may have global connections, but Shih and her tradition of Taiwanese Humanistic Buddhism are also globally minded. She is casting off any charge of parochialism (Tsing 2005, 121). Also, by not choosing a referent for denoting homelessness in the Chinese language, she avoids the social-indexical chain of assumptions that would be connected to that referent. It is interesting to note that Shih may not have realized the negative connotation that the word ‘homeless’ could have for native English speakers. However, like the copywriter in the study by Hsu (2008), Shih is not concerned with English accuracy, but with being cosmopolitan—one aspect of her multi-pronged strategy to combat her opponents, which I will expand on in section 4.4 of this chapter.

After this excerpt, Shih continues discussing ideas of family and tradition, responding to some of the main themes that her opponents have used (see K. Huang 2017).

4.3.2 Example 2

20	In all of Taiwan	20	<i>Quan taiwan</i>
21	because of alarmist talk many people have been swept up as a consequence	21	<i>bian de yinwei weiyansongting henduo ren bei juan jin dao zhege gong ye (2)</i>
22	for example saying that <u>if you have same-sex marriage then heterosexual people will become homosexual</u>	22	<i>Piru shuo ni ruguo youle tongzhi hunyin yixing lian zhe jiu hui biancheng tongxinglian</i>
23	<u>so WILL YOU?</u>	23	<i>na NI HUI MA?</i>
24	<u>if you aren't why are you worrying?</u>	24	<i>ni bu hui ni weisheme danxin ni?</i>
25	<u>Crazy</u>	25	<i>qiguai</i>

Here Shih dismisses the fear that same-sex marriage will lead to more people becoming homosexual. This dismissal is pragmatically packaged in the metalanguage of “alarmist talk” (line 21), which is construed as illogical and irrational, yet nonetheless powerful as it draws other people into that mindset. In line 23, she raises her voice to emphatically ask, “Will you (turn gay)?” This is a response to groups like the one mentioned above (the League of Taiwanese Religious Groups Caring for Family), which stated that same-sex marriage would collapse the order of human relations (K. Huang 2017, 124).

Here too Shih addresses her opponents who say society will collapse (through the legalization of same-sex marriage), by arguing that throughout time marriage hasn’t always consisted of one man and woman. In previous eras, men in China could have many wives, she said in her speech just prior to this excerpt, adding that the concept of family is not a fixed, stable construct (and in previous times in Chinese history, same-sex love was also widely accepted; a topic I explored in Chapter 2). Attitudes to same-sex love have long been linked to fears of imperial decline, as Jeffrey Weeks writes in his examination of sexual life in Britain from the 1800s to the present (Weeks 2012, 133). In this framework, the family is seen as being vitally important to the security of the nation. This is not unlike much of the scholarly discourse in China on sexuality and same-sex love in particular at the dawn of the 20th century, in which same-sex love came to be viewed as a threat to heterosexual marriage and the cause of a weak nation (see Chapter 2). Shih’s opponents draw on a heteronormative notion of family as the base of society, while same-sex love is seen as threatening the structure of society itself.

This, again, is all framed by Shih as ‘alarmist talk.’ Her emphatic question in line 23 provides a pragmatic bookend to contain its further spread while also pointing out the

flawed thinking in her opponents. Shih quickly moves on to ask her detractors why they are worrying. “Crazy” (line 25) is her evaluation of the typified persona responsible for the alarmist talk, and is quickly spoken (before Shih moves on in her speech, without missing a beat). Once again, it is the last part of this excerpt (see underlined) that *Stand News* and *UP Media* quoted. Both these lines involve the construction of a characterological personhood that is illogical and parochial, in contrast to the logical and cosmopolitan Shih. I will revisit Shih’s use of figure producing language in section 4.4.

Shih continues in her speech and quotes someone else who discusses how children leave their parents when they grow up, and start families of their own.

4.3.3 Example 3

26	So	26	<i>Yushi ne</i>
27	if it is said that family must ((rapid speech))	27	<i>ruguo shuo yiding yao ba jia</i> ((rapid speech))
28	be regulated so that its existence is to serve the purpose of producing the next generation ((rapid speech))	28	<i>guifan wei zhishi weile yunyu xia yidai er cunzai</i> ((rapid speech))
29	in that case may I ask, are people who are infertile also swept aside by you? ((rapid speech))	29	<i>name wo qingwen, bu yun zheng de ren shi bushi ye bei ni sao daole?</i> ((rapid speech))
30	<u>The family has many, many functions, please everyone, don't think it's all just for</u> ((rapid speech))	30	<u><i>jiating de gongneng feichang feichang de duo, qing gewei buyao renwei dou shi weile</i></u> ((rapid speech))
31	<u>combining a sperm and an egg okay?</u>	31	<u><i>jingzi gen luanzi de jiehe hao ma?</i></u>

Here Shih, who spoke fairly rapidly throughout her speech, spoke at an even faster rate, a verbal crescendo to signal that she was nearing the end of her speech and was making her

final concluding points.⁶ As in example 1, she critiques her opponents' narrow views of 'family'; in this instance, discussing the purpose of family. The underlined section (lines 30-1) are those quoted by *Stand News*, *UP Media* and the *Taiwan Gazette*. Shih contests the assumption that procreation (and having progeny, another important Confucian belief) is the only function of family. In the *Taiwan Gazette* (Chen and Chen 2018), the writers highlight this quote as an example of how Shih shocked the audience at the public hearing.⁷ As seen in excerpts 1 and 3, Shih may be personally acute to the stigma about nonconformity to hegemonic ideas of family because, as a celibate monastic, she has not married and is going against (or, reinterpreting) Confucian notions of filial piety. I will explore this further in the final section of this chapter.

Next, as Shih reaches the conclusion of her speech, she discusses stereotypes of *tongzhi*.

4.3.4 Example 4

32	<u>Just now I once again heard the absurd statement that said</u> ((rapid fire speech))	32	<u>Gangcai wo you tingdao yige hen huangmiu de xiaoxi shuo</u> ((rapid fire speech))
33	<u>you tongzhi often change sexual partners</u> ((rapid speech))	33	<u>nimen tongzhi jingchang huan xing banlǚ</u> ((rapid speech))
34	Hello ((rapid speech))	34	wei ((rapid speech))
35	<u>Isn't it that because he doesn't want to change sexual partners often that he wants</u> ((rapid speech))	35	<u>ta bu jiushi yin wei buxiang yao jingchang huan xing banlǚ suoyi yao</u> ((rapid speech))
36	<u>wants</u>	36	<u>yao</u>
37	<u>wants</u>	37	<u>yao</u>
38	<u>to get married?</u> ((softer voice))	38	<u>jiehun ma?</u> ((softer voice))

⁶ After having interviewed Shih myself, and I can say that she was speaking particularly fast during her speech (compared to her normal speed of conversing); she was clearly impassioned.

⁷ The video I was using was only focused on Shih the whole time, so I was unable to see expressions on the faces of audience members, and could not make out any audible sound from them either.

39	Why should one not help them achieve this?	39	<i>na weishenme bu you chengrenzhimei ne?</i>
40	Furthermore	40	<i>erqie</i>
41	there are also many people of the opposite sex who often change sexual partners you know?	41	<i>yixing yeyou henduo ren jingchang huan xing banlǚ ma</i>
42	therefore should we order that heterosexuals not be permitted to marry?	42	<i>yinci you jiao yixinglianzhe bu zhun jiehun ma?</i>
43	I think before we speak of these things	43	<i>wo juede women shi bushi zai jiang zhexie shiqing yiqian</i>
44	shouldn't our logical reasoning be rearranged <i>some</i> ?	44	<i>women de luojj sikao shi bushi keyi zai chongxin zhengli yixia?</i>

In this excerpt Shih again speaks very quickly, but then slows down as she seemingly stutters over the word *yao* (to want, to wish/desire), getting quiet when she asks the question about getting married (line 38). Here she questions the logic of her opponents (and the underlined portion is that which was quoted in *Stand Times* and *UP Media*), and calls for their logical reasoning to be rearranged (line 44). The logic Shih uses both points out the flawed thinking of her opponents, but also possibly indicates some of her own moral values. Her argument presupposes the following: 1) Changing sexual partners often is immoral; and 2) Marriage encourages moral behavior (because it means committing to one partner and not frequently changing partners). Therefore her implicatures are that 1) *Tongzhi* are not immoral, for they want to marry, and because they are not the only ones frequently changing partners—some heterosexual people do this as well. 2) Those who want to prevent *tongzhi* from marrying are being illogical, because they are accusing *tongzhi* of immortality while not supporting *tongzhi*'s desired moral lifestyle.

When interviewing Shih, she did not seem concerned with the morality of marriage, so I believe she was instead trying to get her opponents to question their own

assumptions and logic (and perhaps even trying to find common ground with them).⁸ Shih told me that Buddhism does not make any moral judgments on same-sex love. Like she stated at the beginning of the speech examined in this chapter, Shih told me as well that Buddhism sees desire as being instinctual and not wrong as long as it doesn't hurt others. Also, there is no difference between heterosexual or homosexual desire. However, Shih said, excessive desire can lead to suffering (this is the second of the four noble truths taught by the Buddha). She said that Buddhism believes desire can eventually make one numb to what one experiences, and lead one to seek out more stimulation or variety—and that this can happen for both straight and *tongzhi* couples. Therefore, marriage can be a way to control desire, but it is not the only way, Shih said. However, she added, “if we have marriage for heterosexual people, why not have it for *tongzhi* as well?” Shih's promotion of marriage is not based on moral principle, but on the Buddhist idea of compassion—compassion to ease the suffering (caused by excessive desire) that others experience. I will explore this notion of compassion later in this chapter.

Shih told me that while the anti-*tongzhi* groups argued that *tongzhi* are more promiscuous than those who are straight, she sees no evidence to support that. She said that *tongzhi* who are not committed in their relationships are acting this way because of larger systemic discrimination and lack of societal support. Anthropologist Tiantian Zheng's ethnography of *tongzhi* men in Dalian, China, describes how social stigma, the threat of police raids, and the secretive nature of same-sex relationships has led many men to engage in risky sexual practices (Zheng 2015). Zheng writes that in order to survive in society many of these *tongzhi* lead a double life, having wives or girlfriends

⁸ Interview on February 12, 2021.

while also seeking out random sexual encounters to temporarily satisfy their needs (2015, 167). While some did form romantic relationships, social and cultural pressures usually made these unions hard to sustain (167). As a result, *tongzhi* men engaged in underground, risky behaviors in places such as bathhouses, or public parks and toilets—where they were so frightened by possible police patrols that they were in too much of a hurry to put on condoms (167). Shih told me that the anti-*tongzhi* groups (which she also said were mostly Christian organizations) were being hypocritical, because if they think *tongzhi* are promiscuous then they should allow them to get married (the same argument she made above in example 4). She said that the opinion that some Christian churches have that *tongzhi* should stop their desire for people of the same gender does not make sense (from the perspective of Buddhism in which desire is instinctual) because these Christians wouldn't be able to switch off their heterosexual desires either. For Shih, Christians' lack of support for same-sex marriage is completely illogical. Shih believes that having support from society and government—namely in terms of same-sex marriage—can cause less suffering for *tongzhi*, which is why she has made active efforts to support it.

4.4 Argumentative Strategies to Question 'Family'

In the excerpts I examined, Shih questions heteronormative ideas of what constitutes a family, and what the function of the family is. She does this in part by portraying her opponents as illogical through metapragmatic display. In his ethnography of Navajo poetry, linguistic anthropologist Anthony K. Webster examines the reportive metapragmatic devices used in a short story about boarding school experiences by Navajo poet Laura Tohe (Webster 2015). Webster argues that Tohe creates a contrast in the story

“So I Blow Smoke in Her Face” between the metapragmatic terms ‘tell’ on one hand, and ‘tease’ and ‘joke’ on the other (2015, 44). He writes that her use of the verb ‘tell’ functions as a directive or monologic critique: for example, the narrator (a Navajo girl) ‘tells’ two Chicano boys to drop her and her cousin off, stating that they are government property (45, 48). The use of the verbs ‘tease’ and ‘joke’ however, create a mark of social intimacy between Navajos, Webster argues (45). He writes that metapragmatic forms can aid in the construction of characterological images—one recognizes characters as playful or serious by the metapragmatic terms used for them (for example, ‘jokes’ versus ‘explains’) (41). Through her use of metapragmatic forms, “Tohe constructs an image of the boarding school as a place where Navajos are silenced and humiliated, but also a place where at times they assert their own voices and challenge the boarding-school regimes,” Webster argues (44). Similarly, Shih also uses terms to create patterns of affective social relations—specifically describing her opponents negatively through the use of meta-cognitive construals. Those who obsess over family are being “obsessive-compulsive” (line 19); those who worry about increased rates of homosexuality are “crazy” (line 25). She is responding to those who are contributing to the “alarmist talk” (line 21) spreading around Taiwan, from people who make “absurd statement[s]” (line 32) such as the claim that *tongzhi* frequently change sexual partners. In this speech Shih is directly addressing the League of Taiwanese Religious Groups Caring for Family and others who subscribe to a heterosexual, Confucian idea of ‘family’—that family is between a man and a woman, and involves giving birth biologically to a child. Shih uses metapragmatic strategies to place all those who agree with this narrow conception of family into a faction and personhood she decries as illogical. Included in this faction—

holding the same views about family—are potentially some of the legislators listening to her speech, as well as some members of the public (either attending the speech in-person or hearing/reading it through media transmission). This ‘illogical’ faction is referred to with the second-person pronoun “you” (lines 16, 17, 24, 29). However, if members of this faction were to think before speaking (line 43) and rearrange their logical reasoning (line 44), they could become part of the collective “we” that, like Shih, is logical and ethical.

Furthermore, by paraphrasing some of the things her opponents have said (rates of homosexuality will increase; family’s purpose is producing the next generation; *tongzhi* rapidly change partners) and then stepping into direct address (i.e. line 23 “So will you?”), Shih puts their logic on display and invites those who hear or read her speech to decide their next step—more specifically, their footing vis-à-vis these discursively figured political positions (Goffman 1981). In the essay “Footing,” Erving Goffman (1981) introduces his concept of the same name by examining a newspaper article describing an interaction between Nixon (the U.S. president at the time) and female White House journalist Helen Thomas in which the president comments on Thomas’ wearing of slacks (124-5). Goffman writes that through the president’s comments, Thomas was forced from her occupational capacity into a “sexual, domestic one,” and argues that underlying this incident is the assumption that a woman must always be ready to change ground, or have the ground changed for her (125). For Goffman, this is an example of a change in footing, “the alignment we take up to ourselves and others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance” (128). In his essay Goffman also defines three different aspects of the speaker: the author (who has

selected the sentiments and words expressing them), the principal (person responsible for the message), and the animator—the “individual active in the role of utterance production” (144). Shih animates the words of her opponents, and then characterizes them as illogical both through metapragmatic display and through her use of direct address, asking questions to point out her opponents’ illogical thinking. By doing so, she also invites her audience (legislators and the general public) to decide whether they want to be irrational like her opponents or follow her footing and take her rational, progressive, globally minded path that recognizes *tongzhi* rights.

Shih also uses other strategies. She appears to question the rigidity of her opponent’s heterosexuality (lines 23-4). Her use of questioning (lines 23, 31, 38, 42, 44) forces her opponents to confront themselves and the arguments and assumptions they are making. In line 31, her question to her opponents to consider the role of families going beyond just combining eggs and sperm ends with “okay?” (*ma*). In the final excerpt she uses *wei* (a question word akin to “hello”) with emphasis when bringing up (and subsequently dismissing) the argument that *tongzhi* are promiscuous. These phatic forms (Jakobson 1960, 355-6) are part of her strategy of questioning; they serve to direct and focus attention as well as underline her points. Another poetic technique she uses to emphasize her argument is repetition. As stated previously, she deliberately repeats her claim that “the value of family has never been absolute” (lines 3-4). In the other excerpt (example 3) dealing with family, she states that the family has “many, many functions” (line 30). Shih draws on a variety of ideas and issues—Buddhas and traveling monks, sexual partners and marriage, egg and sperm, infertility—to argue for a broader definition

of family and to downplay the differences between heterosexual and non-heterosexual people. I will return to this rethinking of the family in the final section of this chapter.

Ultimately, these pragmatic-poetic strategies, often exploited in political speech, seem to have resonated with the media and the public. The excerpts I have chosen were quoted in both Taiwanese and Hong Kong media, and, according to *Stand News*, were widely discussed by netizens in the Chinese-speaking world (*Stand News* 2017). These same netizens nicknamed Shih “the god of war” (*zhanshen*). *UP Media* (2016a) described Shih as “fierce” in the headline and body of their article, evoking military imagery. It is possible that the rapid-fire delivery of her speech—as she neared her conclusion—contributed to this characterization. It is important to examine Shih’s methodology of verbal discourse, because it is a part of her radical activism on ongoing social issues in Taiwan. Shih takes the arguments used in anti-*tongzhi* discourse and exposes their logical fallacies and limiting, hegemonic perspectives. This approach is informed by Buddhist doctrine—both the Buddhist perspective on family and ethics, as well as the Buddhist call to be compassionate and support all who are suffering. For Shih, this includes *tongzhi*.

4.5 Shih Chao Hwei, *Celibate Monks and Nuns, and Filial Piety*

In this section I will explain how Buddhist monks and nuns have long had to defend their decision to leave their families, not marry, and not have children. I will examine how Shih herself has negotiated family responsibilities. Shih also questions the very nature of family—especially Confucian ideas and heteronormative expectations of family—and in doing so defends both *tongzhi* as well as her own chosen path as a monastic.

Questioning her opponents' idea of family—in which marriage serves the purpose of bearing offspring—was a major theme in Shih's speech. Shih may be especially acute to the stigma attached to those who do not conform to this view of family because monks and nuns are unfilial from a Confucian perspective. When Buddhism spread to China from India around the first century C.E., it encountered resistance and was attacked by the Chinese (especially by Confucian scholars) for being antithetical to filial piety, the fundamental organizing principle of Chinese society (Chandler 2004; Hinsch 2002; Mitchell 2008). The word used to describe becoming a monk or a nun is *chujia*, which literally means to "leave home". Buddhism stressed individual salvation and encouraged the devout to leave their homes and become celibate, devoting their energy to religious practice instead. Shaving one's head was also regarded as unfilial because Confucius believed hair was a gift from one's parents (Hinsch 2002, 53). Monks were accused of failing in their responsibility to care for parents, and—even worse—to produce sons to continue the patriline (Chandler 2004, 238). Historian Bret Hinsch writes that women were also on the front lines of this battle between native family values and imported Buddhist ideals:

When a woman became a nun, from the traditional filial viewpoint she committed a terrible wrong. By removing herself from family life, she would no longer be in a position to take care of parents who became ill or destitute. She would not provide children to carry on a prospective husband's family line...she had violated the fundamental principle of filial piety that held together China's patrilineal kinship system—a principle that Confucian rhetoric canonized as supreme virtue. She might easily be seen as an ungrateful failure by refusing to adhere to the expected roles of daughter, wife, and mother (Hinsch 2002, 53).

Shih Chao Hwei is very much aware of the longstanding criticism of monks and nuns for being unfilial. She mentioned that this hostility was expressed in literary work by Han

Yu, a Tang dynasty writer and government official, who wrote that monks and nuns are not fully human because they do not bear children.

Stuart Chandler (2004) writes that contentious feelings towards monks and nuns continue to this day. In his book on Buddha's Light Mountain (*Foguangshan*), one of the major Humanistic Buddhist organizations in Taiwan, Chandler writes that monastics find Chinese New Year to be an especially difficult holiday for them, because this is normally a time when people return home to reaffirm familial affection (Chandler 2004, 238).

Also, Chandler writes, some of the public who visit these temples during this time "either unintentionally or sometimes even maliciously remind the clerics of their failure to fulfill this minimal act of filial respect" (238). Chandler also writes that there is an ongoing suspicion that Buddhist masters scheme to lure young people away from their parents. This impression was confirmed when a monk from another major Taiwanese monastic order tonsured 158 new disciples without their parents' consent in September 1996, after they had initially gone to the monastery to join a short-term retreat (238). News coverage showed images of shocked and grieving parents flocking to the monastery to try and retrieve their sons and daughters, and editorials condemned the pressure techniques used to "brainwash" the young people and expressed concerns over the rising popularity of youth in Taiwan entering monastic life (239). Chandler writes that because of incidents such as these, the founding master of Buddha's Light Mountain has taken pains to emphasize that Buddhist monasticism is not contrary to filial piety (239).

Through Shih's questioning of the hegemonic Confucian concept of family, she is defending both Buddhist clergy like herself as well as *tongzhi*. In my interview with Shih she challenged the assumptions, values, and expectations placed around 'family' (as she

did in her speech), as well as the Confucian emphasis on filial piety in Taiwan's culture. As I described in the previous chapter, Confucian ideas have shaped the view in Chinese culture that family (and not the individual) is the irreducible unit and the most basic social institution (Chou 2000; Park and Chesla 2007). Buddhism is generally individualistic. It stresses individual liberation: through meditation and other practices one aims to break out of the cycle of rebirth and become a buddha or bodhisattva (Mitchell 2008). Therefore when Shih questions the notion of family to defend *tongzhi* against those who oppose same-sex marriage, she also defends the individualistic path of becoming a cleric and the individualistic nature of Buddhism in general. She does this by using the examples of Siddhartha Gautama Buddha (who she also referred to in her speech; see example 1) and Jesus of Nazareth. Siddhartha Gautama Buddha left his wife and son to undertake his spiritual quest, and Jesus of Nazareth did not marry or have any children. Both wandered in their spiritual journeys and also traveled and spread their teachings, hence Shih's use of the English word "homeless" in her speech (line 10). Jesus' and the Buddha's lives offend Confucian sensibilities, yet they are the founders of major world religions and have positively impacted many people's lives. Shih defends the individualism of monks and nuns by referring to those like the Buddha and other wandering monks who have "created the most glorious civilizations on earth" (line 11 in excerpt 1 above). She said she specifically criticized the concept of family put forth by groups like the League of Taiwanese Religious Groups Caring for Family because she said they influenced a lot of Buddhist monks and nuns into thinking that same-sex marriage was wrong. "If monks and nuns are saying that family is the only value in this life, then aren't you contradicting yourself?" Shih asked rhetorically during our

interview. Since clerics also do not marry and bear children, they are also not following traditional Chinese familial obligations—so criticizing *tongzhi* for failing to do so is illogical and contradictory in Shih’s view.

The pressure of filial piety not only negatively impacts *tongzhi*, as I described in Chapter 3, but also affects others who cannot fulfill the filial responsibility to bear progeny—such as monks, nuns, and those who cannot have children because of certain health conditions. Infertile women in both China and Taiwan describe the shame they feel because of not being able to bear children (particularly for their in-laws), and the pressure they experience to try infertility treatments that may not always be successful (Cheng et al. 2018; Yao et al. 2018). In her speech, Shih questioned why her opponents also want to “sweep aside” (line 29) these people. In our interview, Shih also mentioned heterosexual couples and individuals who are unable to bear children as an example of those who experience significant stress because of the expectations of filial piety. Shih spoke of this—drawing links between infertile people, clergy, and *tongzhi*—when I asked if she saw parallels between Buddhist clergy and *tongzhi*. I asked, given that monks, nuns, and *tongzhi* are not filial in the sense of marrying (or marrying heterosexually) and bearing children, if they face some of the same pressures and whether or not this has given her some insight into the experiences of *tongzhi*. She said there are some “subtle similarities” between them:

When a Buddhist nun announces that she does not marry, that means she does not want to have offspring. She does not want to share the burden of continuing the family with her partner. That is his business, not hers. As for *tongzhi*, without artificial reproduction or adopting children that are not blood relatives, they also need to cope with their parents’ demand, which is to continue the family lineage. [...] I think we need to be reflective about why we put such emphasis on having offspring, in Confucian ideology.

Shih said that it is her compassion for the suffering of others that leads to her support for *tongzhi*. However, her chosen path as a nun has also given her insight into the struggles *tongzhi* have when they cannot be filial in the Confucian sense by providing offspring (Chou 2000). She and other clergy have also had to fight back against Confucian ideology.

Buddhists have long had to defend themselves against the charge that they are unfilial, and Shih too has taken up the strategy of stating that her practice of Buddhism is not inimical to filial piety. Some of the earliest Buddhist works in Chinese, such as the *Treatise on the Disposing of Error* (*Mouzi lihuo lun*) of late 2nd century CE, made efforts to refute the charge that Buddhist doctrine was unfilial (Hinsch 2002, 50). In contemporary times, monks and nuns of Taiwan's Buddha Light Mountain have emphasized how they revere their parents by guiding them to appreciate and learn from Buddhist teachings, and the monastery allows clergy to take extended leave if their parents fall ill (Chandler 2004, 240-2). Shih also uses Buddhist framing to explain why she would still prioritize her family. She does this through her understanding of compassion (*cibei*). Compassion is a core component of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which regards the 'bodhisattva path' as superior to the path in which one who becomes an arhat (one who achieves nirvana and disappears from the cycle of rebirth at the end of their lifetime) (Mitchell 2008). In the 'bodhisattva path', one perfects oneself over many eons in order to become a Buddha, and during this time compassionately helps others gain enlightenment (Mitchell 2008, 103-6). Humanistic Buddhism (*renjian fojiao*)—the tradition to which Shih and her mentor Yinshun belong—sees the compassionate action of the bodhisattva as providing a role model for how to solve worldly problems and

reduce suffering (Pacey 2005). Compassion for others, which is one of the reasons Shih supports *tongzhi* rights, also affects her negotiation of her familial responsibilities while being a monastic. During the time she was still a novice nun at a small monastery in New Taipei City, Shih's younger sister was diagnosed with schizophrenia, and their mother needed help finding medical care for her (Lieblich 2020). Her Buddhist master told her she had to choose between the monastery and her family, arguing that her first responsibility was to attain personal enlightenment. After struggling over whether to leave her master, she decided to go (Lieblich 2020). She moved with her family to a lay Buddhist community in southern Taiwan, and it was here that she found Master Yinshun and continued her learning. "If you want to develop compassion for everyone, then you start with the people that are closest with you. So, whenever my family is suffering, I will choose my family over what I'm doing right now," Shih told me. Shih interprets obligations to her family through the bodhisattva notion of compassion.

Tongzhi can also reinterpret their filial obligations. As I explored in the previous chapter, members of the Daoist Brilliant Light Temple have become adopted children of Daoist gods, and they show filial piety through their devotion to their spiritual parents. Temple members have also been filial through ritual action in which they've improved the merit of disciples' fathers and grandfathers who have passed away. From my interviews, it also seemed like having a family that includes children is important to *tongzhi*. Almost all the *tongzhi* I interviewed, as well as Daoist priest Master Lu and Buddhist nun Shih Chao Hwei said that the next step in *tongzhi* rights in Taiwan (given that same-sex marriage has been legalized) is making adoption easier for *tongzhi* couples.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I examined Shih Chao Hwei's support for *tongzhi* and how she critiques and reinterprets the concept of family and filial piety. I first made a pragmatic-poetic analysis—drawing upon techniques used in ethnographical approaches to political speech events—of excerpts of a speech Shih gave at a public hearing in support of same-sex marriage in 2016. I examined how Shih critiqued her opponents' ideas of what constitutes a family, and how she also questioned the Confucian notion which views marriage as being primarily for the purpose of bearing children. I also argued that Shih challenges and dismisses her opponents and their logic through the use of strategies such as phatic poetic forms including repetition and rapid pacing, rhetorical questions using constructed dialogue, and negative characterizations via metapramatic construal. I then continue the discussion of Shih's critique of family and filial piety, drawing from my interview with her. I argue that, like many Buddhists have had to do, Shih has had to defend herself against those who criticize monks and nuns for being unfilial. I argue that this is not unlike the challenge *tongzhi* encounter, in which they also have to face criticism from family members who will only fully accept them if they bear children. I conclude by arguing that both *tongzhi* and Buddhist clerics like Shih find ways to negotiate and reinterpret their family responsibilities. For Shih, it is choosing to not fully isolate herself from her family, as some Buddhist clergy would. For the *tongzhi* I have interviewed for my project, they enact filial piety through devotion to gods, rituals to help the merit of disciples' deceased fathers and grandfathers, and their desire to have children through adoption.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Daoist Master Weiming Lu and Buddhist nun Shih Chao Hwei come from different religious traditions, but they have both made serving the needs of *tongzhi* in Taiwan a core part of their work. While they do that in part through religious guidance and advocating for equal rights, many of the *tongzhi* that seek their counsel on an individual basis complain not of political or legal discrimination, but instead lament the struggles that they experience with their families of origin. Shih has facilitated conversations between some of her *tongzhi* students and their families who were “shocked and angry” when they learned of their children’s sexual orientation.

Taiwan’s Confucian-inspired culture means that the family is strictly defined, with expected roles for each member. Given the nature of the family institution, and the belief that children need to marry and bear children to fulfill the expectation of filial piety, it can be challenging for some parents to accept *tongzhi* family members. In the previous pages, I drew on scholarship describing the familial pressure that *tongzhi* face, as well as fictive kin studies, in order to argue that *tongzhi* at the Daoist Brilliant Light Temple in Taiwan have created their own fictive kin network through the use of religious frameworks. These relations—with deities, Master Lu, and peers—provide members with emotional and social support. I argue that, through their negotiation of familial obligations and filial piety, religious *tongzhi* are not unlike celibate clergy such as Master

Lu and Shih Chao Hwei, who are also outside of the Confucian norm by not marrying and bearing children. Celibate monks, nuns, and priests have long had to defend their chosen path and argue that their religious work is in fact filial. The same Confucian pressure to marry and bear children acts on clergy as well as *tongzhi*, and this may motivate at least some of the support that Shih and Master Lu give to *tongzhi*.

In my thesis I examined how Shih challenged the anti-same-sex marriage groups' heteronormative view of family by portraying these groups as illogical, narrow-minded, and parochial—in contrast to progressives like herself who she argues are enlightened and cosmopolitan. Through this argument in support of *tongzhi*, Shih was also justifying her own chosen path as a monastic. Both *tongzhi* and clergy in Taiwan have found ways to negotiate and reinterpret their family responsibilities. To my knowledge, this connection between *tongzhi* and religious clergy in Taiwan has not been made before. This thesis also addressed a gap in the literature, as little scholarship has been done on the intersection of *tongzhi* with Daoism and Buddhism.

Buddhism, Daoism, and a variety of folk religious beliefs and practices were brought to Taiwan with the immigrants who crossed the Taiwan Strait to come to the island from China starting in the 1600s, as well as introduced by Daoist and Buddhist missionaries. While these religious traditions were repressed in China during the Maoist era, for much of Taiwan's history they were given the freedom to thrive and innovate. It is for this reason that Taiwan has become a source of information on Chinese religious practices: when some communities in China began to revive their religious practices starting in the 1980s, they could look to temples of the same gods in Taiwan as well as other connections across the Strait to restore and reinvent their traditions (Overmyer

2003). Therefore, Taiwan is arguably not on the periphery of Chinese religious practices, but is the very center. It is the complete religious freedom that Taiwan has today, as well as its democratic rights, which have made it possible for Buddhist nun Shih Chao Hwei to speak in front of the Taiwanese legislature to passionately call for same-sex marriage. It is also why Brilliant Light Temple—a Daoist temple focused on openly supporting *tongzhi*—can exist as well as be featured in both Taiwanese and international media reports. I believe it would be very difficult for this temple to exist in China, and that if it did, it would be underground and not publicized (given the stigma facing *tongzhi* in the PRC; see Zheng 2015). This thesis resituates Taiwan as the center of Chinese religion.

While I have chosen to focus on the topic of how *tongzhi* and religious clergy navigate and reinterpret family bonds and familial obligations, there are other themes that are apparent in my research. One is the role of patriarchy for both the *tongzhi* community in Taiwan and LGBTQ communities in the Euro-North American world. In Chapters 1 and 2 I stated that I was choosing to use the term *tongzhi* throughout my thesis because the *tongzhi* community in Taiwan has its own unique facets and historical trajectory that differ from that of the LGBTQ communities in Europe and North America. Therefore, I argued, *tongzhi* is a more appropriate umbrella term than LGBTQ for this community. However, despite their different histories, the LGBTQ community in North America and the *tongzhi* community are both affected by patriarchy. The pressure that *tongzhi* face is patriarchal. They are expected to marry heterosexually, and heterosexual marriage is for the purpose of producing heirs, preferably boys through whom the family name is continued. Stigma against LGBTQ in North America often has a basis in patriarchy as well: some men use homophobic jokes and slurs to assert their heterosexual masculinity

and adherence to patriarchal gender norms (which reflects a preference for male dominance, female submission, and hetero-cis-normativity) (Cameron 1997; Worthen 2020). The social pressure that *tongzhi* in Taiwan and LGBTQ people in North America experience is often connected to a desire to preserve the patriarchy.

As I described in Chapter 2, there are a range of terms used in Taiwan by people who are same-sex attracted: there is *tongzhi*, the English terms ‘LGBTQ’ and ‘gay’, as well as gendered binary terms such as 1 and 0 and *T* and *Po*. One may use one term over another for a strategic political purpose. For example, one may use LGBTQ to align themselves with the global queer community. Or, for the organizers of the ‘First Hong Kong Gay and Lesbian Film Festival’ in 1989, using *tongzhi* as the Chinese language translation of ‘gay and lesbian’ was a conscious effort to use an indigenous term for same-sex love instead of a Western term (and using the Chinese term for ‘homosexuality’ was not feasible because of its negative connotations as a medical term connoting a pathology). Linguistic anthropologists Andrew Wong and Qing Zhang argue that the use of the term *tongzhi* by bimonthly *tongzhi* magazine *G&L* constitutes a discourse of resistance—namely reappropriating a term deeply rooted in the history of the Chinese communist revolution to describe a non-heteronormative sexual identity is an act of rebellion (2001, 267-8). Xiao’en, a 40-year-old Christian *tongzhi* woman (see Chapters 2 and 4), chooses to use the term *tongzhi* because she said it is so broad—it can describe someone like her who is not sure if she is only attracted to women—and inclusive of a range of sexual identities. This is not unlike the description of the term by pioneering ‘*tongzhi* theorist’ Chou Wah-shan, who argues that the term “rejects essentialism” and can refer to all forms of sexual practice that have been marginalized by hegemonic

heterosexism (2000, 3). The term *tongzhi* evokes the fluid conception of sexuality that prevailed for much of China's history.

There are other terms in use that are more gendered, such as 1 and 0 among same-sex attracted men (with 1s being associated with masculinity and 0s with femininity) and the masculine *T* and feminine *Po* identities among same-sex attracted women. These terms indicate an essentialism that didn't previously exist in the imperial Chinese view of sexuality. While scholarship by anthropologist Zheng Tiantian (2015) suggests these gendered binaries are fairly rigid (one becomes a 1 or 0 and then is disciplined to stay in that role, for example), my research suggests these categories aren't as fixed, at least not in Taiwan. Lloyd of Brilliant Light Temple described a whole spectrum that exists between tops and bottoms. His fellow temple member Evan said he decided to go from being a 0 to a 1 several years ago, and said that though he now enjoys being a 1, he also displays some behavior that is more associated with being a 0. For Evan, using 1 and 0 may be more for the purpose of specifically describing the sexual role he takes in his relationships, for both he and Lloyd told me that they prefer to use the English word 'gay' to describe themselves. This appears to be a cosmopolitan display. Like Buddhist nun Shih Chao Hwei's use of English in her speech to the Taiwanese legislature, Evan and Lloyd's use of the English term 'gay' may be a strategy to show themselves as globally minded in contrast to those who oppose *tongzhi* rights (who are portrayed as parochial and illogical by Shih, as I described in Chapter 4).

The various terms for sexual orientation in use in Taiwan—some of which are in English, some of which are in Chinese; ranging from a fluid conception of sexuality to one that is more essential and gendered—can sometimes be used simultaneously by the

same person. Though there are reasons to see these terms as having their own unique histories and demarcated meanings, there is sometimes overlap: patriarchy often plays a role in the lives of both those who identify as LGBTQ and *tongzhi*. As I explored in this thesis, regardless of the term one may use, in Taiwan the main source of conflict for those who are same-sex attracted comes from the family—because of heteronormative expectations to marry, bear children, and continue the family line.

Finally, while I examine how the symbolic family formed among worshippers at Brilliant Light Temple provides emotional support and allows members to navigate familial responsibilities, it should be acknowledged that being a family also involves quotidian forms of support. Parents feed, clothe, and shelter their children, and family members take care of each other when someone is sick and help out with tasks and errands. Research on fictive kin networks has shown that these communities do often fulfill the same tasks. In Eric Shaw's (2008) study of three different kinship groups (Haitian immigrants, Christian fundamentalists, and gang members), he notes that nonrelated members of these communities helped each other with everyday tasks and problems. Shaw writes that new immigrants to a Haitian community in New England relied on fictive kin for help with the immigration process and with food, shelter, and transportation when they first arrived (2008). In a different fictive kin community—that of gang members—individuals helped each other with small tasks such as providing transportation as well as larger concerns (such as bringing someone with a broken arm to a hospital) (2008). Shaw writes that helping members with “trivial” needs is often commonplace and expected—and that this same type of help is evident in the fictive kin communities he studied.

Ultimately, I argued that members of Brilliant Light Temple are receiving substantial emotional support and care (an equally important function of family) through the fictive kin network they have created. I have made the new argument that clergy in Taiwan like Master Lu and Shih Chao Hwei are not unlike the *tongzhi* they serve—for as celibate priests, monks, and nuns, they are also outside of the heteronormative Confucian social order. I have demonstrated that through religious frameworks, both celibate clergy and *tongzhi* reinterpret family obligations and can therefore see themselves as being filial. Evan, who has had many struggles with his family, hopes that they too will see him as being filial—and that one day they will love him and accept him for who he is.

References

- Adawai, Jason Pan. 2020. "Taiwan." In *The Indigenous World 2020*, edited by Dwayne Mamo, 323-331. Copenhagen, Denmark: Eks-Skolen Trykker.
- Altman, Dennis. 1996. "On Global Queering." *Australian Humanities Review*, July 2. <http://australianhumanitiesreview.org/1996/07/01/on-global-queering/>.
- American Anthropological Association (AAA). 2012. "Principles of Professional Responsibility." AAA Ethics Forum. Published November 1, 2012. Accessed May 5, 2020. <http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/>.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Anon. 2016a. "(Marriage Equality Public Hearing) Shih Chao Hwei's Fighting Support: Buddhists Do Not See LGBTQ People as Evil" ((*Hunyin pingquan gongtinghui*) *Shi Zhao Hui zhanli chao gao: fojiaotu mei ba tongzhi dang zui'e* (婚姻平權公聽會)釋昭慧戰力超高：佛教徒沒把同志當罪惡). *UP Media*. Published November 24, 2016. Accessed March 16, 2020. https://www.upmedia.mg/news_info.php?SerialNo=7948.
- Anon. 2016b. "Master Jing Yao of the Religious Alliance Against Marriage Equality says Chao Hwei does not represent the Buddhist community" (*Zongjiao da lianmeng fan hunyin pingqian jing yao fashi: Shi zhao hui bu daibiao fojiao jie* 宗教大聯盟反婚姻平權：淨耀法師：釋昭慧不代表佛教界). *UP Media*. Published November 30, 2016. Accessed August 25, 2018. http://www.upmedia.mg/news_info.php?SerialNo=8242.
- Anon. 2017. "(Special Report) Supporting Same-Sex Marriage – Venerable Shih Chao Hwei: Marriage is a peaceful homeland in the sea of life and death. ([*Zhuanfang*] *li ting tongxing hunyin shi zhao hui fashi: Hunyin shi shengsi dahai li ping'an di* [專訪]力挺同性婚姻：釋昭慧法師：婚姻是生死大海裡平安的歸宿). *Stand News*. Published January 27, 2017. Accessed April 23, 2020. <https://www.thestandnews.com/lgbtq/專訪-力挺同性婚姻-釋昭慧法師-婚姻是生死大海裡平安的歸宿/>
- Boswell, John. 1980. *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Cameron, Deborah. 1997. "Performing Gender Identity: Young Men's Talk and the Construction of Heterosexual Masculinity." In *Language and Masculinity*, edited by Sally A. Johnson and Ulrike Hanna Meinhof, 86-107. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Carpenter, Edward. 1899. "Affection in Education." *International Journal of Ethics*. Vol. 9, No. 4: 482-494.
- Carroll, Peter. 2018. "'A Problem of Glands and Secretions': Female Criminality, Murder, and Sexuality in Republican China." In *Sexuality in China: Histories of Power and Pleasure*, edited by Howard Chiang, 99-124. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Chandler, Stuart. 2004. *Establishing a Pure Land on Earth: The Foguang Buddhist Perspective on Modernization and Globalization*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Chao, Antonia. 2000. "Global Metaphors and Local Strategies in the Construction of Taiwan's Lesbian Identities." *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 2(4): 377-390.
- Chen, Qian'er and Chen Qiwen. 2018. The Buddhist Nun that Supports Same-sex Marriage. *Taiwan Gazette*. Translated by Daigengna Duoer. Published January 30, 2018. Accessed March 16, 2020.
<https://www.taiwangazette.org/news/2018/10/5/the-buddhist-nun-that-supports-same-sex-marriage?rq=Buddhist%20nun>.
- Cheng, Ching-Yu, Eleanor Lowndes Stevenson, Cheng-Ta Yang, and Shwu-Ru Liou. 2018. "Stress and Quality of Life for Taiwanese Women Who Underwent Infertility Treatment." *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing* 47 (4): 498-508. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jogn.2018.03.005>.
- Cheng, Hao. 1934. *The Sexual Life of Mankind (Renlei de xingshenghuo 人類的性生活)*. Shanghai: Yadong shuju.
- Cheng, Wei-Yi. 2007. *Buddhist Nuns in Taiwan and Sri Lanka: A Critique of the Feminist Perspective*. New York: Routledge,
- Chin, Ting-Fang. 2019. "Addressing heteronormativity: Gendered familial appellations as an issue in the same-sex marriage debate in Taiwan." *Sexualities* Vol 0 (2019): 1-17.
- Chou, Wah-Shan. 2000. *Tongzhi: Politics of Same-Sex Eroticism in Chinese Societies*. New York: The Haworth Press.
- Chou, Yueh-Ching, Toshiko Nakano, Heng-Hao Chang, and Li-Fang Liang. 2013. "Parent-carers in Taiwan and Japan: Lifelong Caring Responsibilities Within a Familistic Welfare System." In *Combining Paid Work and Family Care: Policies*

- and *Experiences in International Perspective*, edited by Teppo Kröger and Sue Yeandle, 143-159. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Chun, Elaine. 2001. "The Construction of White, Black, and Korean American Identities through African American Vernacular English." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 11(1): 52–64.
- Cole, Michael J. 2017. "US hate group MassResistance behind anti-LGBT activities in Taiwan." *Taiwan Sentinel*. Published January 2, 2017. Accessed March 26, 2020. <https://sentinel.tw/us-hate-group-anti-lgbt/>.
- DeVido, Elise Anne. *Taiwan's Buddhist Nuns*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2010.
- Dikötter, Frank. 1995. *Sex, Culture and Modernity: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Ellis, Havelock. 1915. "The School-Friendships of Girls." In *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, vol. 2: *Sexual Inversion*, 368-84. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis.
- Estévez-Abe, Margarita, Kim, Yeong-Soon. 2013. "Beyond the Familialist State? Outsourcing Care in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan." *Carlo Alberto Working Papers Series*, no. 343, 1-28.
- Everington, Keoni. 2020. "Breaking News: Taiwan bans all foreign visitors." *Taiwan News*. Published March 18, 2020. Accessed March 19, 2020. https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3899387?fbclid=IwAR1Y1PAATF9NAcG3maLpF_uveLEjA8qA3gcl6FTAfdvof9D7IFgMWFT6_Kc.
- Farrer, James. 2002. *Opening Up: Youth Sex Culture and Market Reform in Shanghai*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Fisher, Gareth. 2014. *From Comrades to Bodhisattvas: Moral Dimensions of Lay Buddhist Practices in Contemporary China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Fisher, Gavin. 2014. *Pride and Prejudice*. The Early Edition, Vancouver, BC: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Radio One, July 28 – August 1. <https://soundcloud.com/gavinfisher>.
- Foucault, Michel. 1978. *The History of Sexuality*, vol.1: *An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books.
- . 1985. *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 2: *The Use of Pleasure*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books.

- Gold, Michael. 2015. "Taiwan's gays pray for soul mates at 'Rabbit' temple." *Reuters*. Published January 19, 2015. Accessed August 28, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/taiwan-gay-temple/taiwans-gays-pray-for-soul-mates-at-rabbit-temple-idINKBN0KS0R120150119>.
- Goffman, Erving. 1981. "Footing." In *Forms of Talk*, edited by E. Goffman. 124-59. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Herrou, Adeline. 2013. *A World of Their Own: Daoist Monks and Their Community in Contemporary China*. Translated by Livia Kohn. St. Petersburg, FL: Three Pines Press.
- Hinsch, Bret. 1990. *Passions of the Cut Sleeve: The Male Homosexual Tradition in China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 2002. "Confucian Filial Piety and the Construction of the Ideal Chinese Buddhist Woman." *Journal of Chinese Religions*, 30: 49-75.
- Ho, Josephine Chuen-juei. 2010. "Queer Existence under Global Governance: A Taiwan Exemplar." *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* Vol. 18, No. 2 (Fall 2010): 537-554.
- Ho, Ming-sho. 2019. "Taiwan's Road to Marriage Equality: Politics of Legalizing Same-sex Marriage." *The China Quarterly*, 238 (June 2019), 482-503. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741018001765>.
- Horton, Chris. 2019. "Taiwan's Status is a Geopolitical Absurdity." *The Atlantic*. Published July 8, 2019. Accessed September 21, 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/07/taiwans-status-geopolitical-absurdity/593371/>.
- Hu, Hsiao-Lan. 2016. "Bhiksuni Chao-Hwei's Buddhist-Feminist Social Ethics." In *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Chinese Philosophy and Gender*, edited by Ann A. Pang White, 376-398. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Hu, Yu-Ying. 2017. "'Are you a T, Po, or bufen?' Transnational cultural politics and lesbian identity formation in contemporary Taiwan." In *Perverse Taiwan*, edited by Howard Chiang and Yin Wang, 89-109. New York: Routledge.
- Huang, Hans Tao-Ming. 2011. *Queer Politics and Sexual Modernity in Taiwan*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Huang, Ke-hsien. 2017. "'Culture Wars' in a Globalized East: How Taiwanese Conservative Christianity Turned Public during the Same-Sex Marriage Controversy and a Secularist Backlash." *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* 4 (2017): 108-136. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22143955-00401006>.

- Hsu, Jia-Ling. 2008. "Glocalization and English Mixing in Advertising in Taiwan: It's Divorce Domains, Linguistic Patterns, Cultural Constraints, Localized Creativity, and Socio-Psychological Effects." *Journal of Creative Communications*, 3(2): 155-183.
- Jakobson, Roman 1960. "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics." In *Style in Language*, edited by Thomas A. Sebeok, 350–77. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Jones, Charles B. 2003. "Religion in Taiwan at the End of the Japanese Colonial Period." In *Religion in Modern Taiwan: Tradition and Innovation in a Changing Society*, edited by Philip Clart and Charles B. Jones, 10-35. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Kam, Lucetta Y.L. 2014. "Desiring T, Desiring Self: 'T-Style' Pop Singers and Lesbian Culture in China." *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 18(3): 252-265.
- Kang, Wenqing. 2009. *Obsession: Male Same-Sex Relations in China, 1900-1950*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Lee, Chengpang, and Ling Han. 2016. "Mothers and Moral Activists: Two Models of Women's Social Engagement in Contemporary Taiwanese Buddhism." *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, 19(3): 54–77.
- Liebllich, Julia. 2020. "Buddhist Nun Leads Asia's Fight for Gay Marriage." Harvard Divinity Bulletin. Published Spring/Summer 2020. Accessed February 8, 2021. <https://bulletin.hds.harvard.edu/buddhist-nun-leads-asias-fight-for-gay-marriage/>
- Liu, Petrus. 2007. "Queer Marxism in Taiwan." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* Vol. 8 No. 4 (2007): 517-539.
- Lu, Elvis, director. 2018. *The Shepherds*. Documentary. 1 hr., 10 min. GagaOOLala (streaming service). <https://www.gagaoolala.com/en/videos/1075/the-shepherds-2018>.
- Miller, Peggy J., Su-ha Wang, Todd Sandel, and Grace E. Cho. 2002. "Self-Esteem as Folk Theory: Comparison of European American and Taiwanese Mothers' Beliefs." *Parenting: Science and Practice*. 2(3): 209-239.
- Mitchell, Donald W. 2008. *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mizielińska, Joanna, and Agata Stasińska. 2018. "Beyond the Western Gaze: Families of Choice in Poland." *Sexualities* 21 (7): 983–1001. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460717718508>.

- Morris, Andrew D. 2004. "Taiwan's History: An Introduction." In *The Minor Arts of Daily Life: Popular Culture in Taiwan*, edited by David K. Jordan, Andrew D. Morris, and Marc L. Moskowitz, 3-31. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Moskowitz, Marc L. 2011. "Introduction." In *Popular Culture in Taiwan: Charismatic Modernity*, edited by Marc L. Moskowitz, 1-22. Oxon: Routledge.
- . 2001. *The Haunting Fetus: Abortion, Sexuality, and the Spirit World in Taiwan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Overmyer, Daniel L. 2003. "Religion in China Today: Introduction." *The China Quarterly* 174 (June): 307–16. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443903000196>.
- Pacey, Scott. 2005. "A Buddhism for the Human World: Interpretations of *Renjian Fojiao* in Contemporary Taiwan." *Asian Studies Review* 29 (4): 445–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357820500398457>.
- Park, Mijung, and Catherine Chesla. 2007. "Revisiting Confucianism as a Conceptual Framework for Asian Family Study." In *Journal of Family Nursing*. 13(3): 293-311.
- Pas, Julian F. 2003. "Stability and Change in Taiwan's Religious Culture." In *Religion in Modern Taiwan: Tradition and Innovation in a Changing Society*, edited by Philip Clart and Charles B. Jones, 36-47. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Phillips, Steven. 1999. "Between assimilation and independence: Taiwanese political aspirations under Nationalist Chinese rule, 1945–1948." In *Taiwan: A New History*, edited by Murray A. Rubinstein, 275–319. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Pletcher, Kenneth, Ed. 2010. *The History of China*. New York, NY: Britannica Educational Pub. in association with Rosen Educational Services.
- Rubinstein, Murray A. 2007. "Political Taiwanization and Pragmatic Diplomacy: The Eras of Chiang Ching-kup and Lee Teng-hui, 1971-1994." In *Taiwan: A New History (Expanded Edition)*, edited by Murray A. Rubinstein, 524-595. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Shaw, Eric K. 2008. "Fictive Kin and Helping Behavior: A Social Psychological Exploration Among Haitian Immigrants, Christian Fundamentalists, and Gang Members." *Sociation Today*, 6(2).
- Shih, Chao Hwei. 2016. "Taiwan Cannot Become a Witch Hunting Society—Legislative Yuan Marriage Equality Public Hearing." (*Taiwan buneng chengwei yige lie wu de shehui—lifayuan hunyin pingquan gongtinghui* 台灣不能成為一個獵巫的社會——立法院婚姻平權公聽會). *The Hongshi Newsletter (Hongshi tongxun* 弘誓通訊) Issue 83. Published December 2016. Accessed March 16, 2020.

<http://www.hongshi.org.tw/special.aspx?code=1C3233EAC1038ABE722881776F256E8D>.

- Shih, Chao Hwei. 2006. "Why Must 'LGBT' Bear the Stigma?" ('Tongzhi' qi bi cheng fu zui'e? 「同志」豈必承負罪軛?) *The Hongshi Newsletter (Hongshi tongxun 弘誓通訊)* Issue 83. Published October 2006. Accessed August 25, 2018. <http://hongshi.org.tw/writings.aspx?code=A2A35E55C42B4B2E3D64CCB01E451784>.
- Simon, Scott. 2004. "From Hidden Kingdom to Rainbow Community: The Making of Gay and Lesbian Identity in Taiwan." In *The Minor Arts of Daily Life: Popular Culture in Taiwan*, edited by David K. Jordan, Andrew D. Moriss, and Marc L. Moskowitz, 67-88. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Sommer, Matthew H. 2002. "Dangerous Males, Vulnerable Males, and Polluted Males: The Regulation of Masculinity in Qing Dynasty Law." In *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities: A Reader*, edited by Susan Brownell and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, 67-88. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Stainton, Michael. 1999. "The politics of Taiwan's aboriginal origins." In *Taiwan: A New History*, edited by Murray A. Rubinstein, 27-44. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Szonyi, Michael. 1998. "The Cult of Hu Tianbao and the Eighteenth-Century Discourse of Homosexuality." *Late Imperial China* 19(1): 1-25. doi:10.1353/late.1998.0004.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. 2005. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Van Gulik, Robert. 1961. *Sexual Life in Ancient China: A Preliminary Study of Sex and Society from ca. 1500 B.C. till 1644 A.D.* Leiden: Brill.
- Vitiello, Giovanni. 1992. "The Dragon's Whim: Ming and Qing Homoerotic Tales from *The Cut Sleeve*." *T'oung Pao* 78 (4/5): 341-372.
- . 2011. *The Libertine's Friend: Homosexuality and Masculinity in Late Imperial China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wang, Frank T.Y., Masaya Shimmei, Yoshiko Yamada, and Machiko Osawa. 2013. "Struggling for Recognition: Working Carers of Older People in Japan and Taiwan." In *Combining Paid Work and Family Care: Policies and Experiences in International Perspective*, edited by Teppo Kröger and Sue Yeandle, 89-104. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Webster, Anthony K. 2015. *Intimate Grammars: An Ethnography of Navajo Poetry*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

- Weeks, Jeffrey. 2012. *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800*. Third edition. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Weston, Kate. 1991. *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 1995. “Forever is a Long Time: Romancing the Real in Gay Kinship Ideologies.” In *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis*, edited by Sylvia Yanagisako and Carol Delaney, 87-112. New York: Routledge.
- Wills, John E., Jr. 1999. “The Seventeenth-Century Transformation: Taiwan Under the Dutch and the Cheng Regime.” In *Taiwan: A New History*, edited by Murray A. Rubinstein, 84–106. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Wong, Andrew and Qing Zhang. “The Linguistic Construction of the *Tóngzhì* Community.” *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 10(2): 248-278.
- Worthen, Meredith G. F. 2020. “The Young and the Prejudiced? Millennial Men, ‘Dude Bro’ Disposition, and LGBTQ Negativity in a US National Sample.” *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, May. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-020-00458-6>.
- Wright, David Curtis. 2001. *The History of China*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Wu, Cuncun. 2004. *Homoerotic Sensibilities in Late Imperial China*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Yang, Huinan (楊惠南). 2005. *Love and Belief: The Rights Movement of Taiwanese Gay-Lesbian Buddhists and Deep Ecologies (Ai Yu Xinyang: Taiwan Tongzhi Fojiaotu Zhi Pingquan Yundong yu Shenceng Shengtaixue 愛與信仰：台灣同志佛教徒之平權運動與深層生態)*. Research Center for Digital Humanities, NTU. “Digital Library and Museum of Buddhist Studies.” Accessed August 25, 2018. <http://buddhism.lib.ntu.edu.tw/museum/TAIWAN/md/md03-09.htm>.
- Yao, Hong, Celia Hoi Yan Chan, and Cecilia Lai Wan Chan. 2018. “Childbearing Importance: A Qualitative Study of Women with Infertility in China.” *Research in Nursing & Health* 41 (1): 69–77. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.21846>.
- Yeandle, Sue, Teppo Kröger, Bettina Cass, Yueh-Ching Chou, Masaya Shimmei, and Marta Szebehely. 2013. “The Emergence of Policy Supporting Working Carers: Development in Six Countries. In *Combining Paid Work and Family Care: Policies and Experiences in International Perspective*, edited by Teppo Kröger and Sue Yeandle, 23-50. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Yi, Ho. 2007. “Taoist homosexuals turn to the Rabbit God”. *Taipei Times*. Published October 21, 2007. Accessed August 28, 2018. <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/feat/archives/2007/12/21/2003384192/1>.

Yvon Lin. 2016. "Gay Marriage_Venerable Shih Chao Hwei vs. Christianity 20161124"
(*Tonghun_shi zhao hui fashi vs jidujiao* 20161124 同婚_釋昭慧法師 vs 基督教
20161124). Uploaded November 24, 2016. Accessed April 23, 2020.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YJ0ekCk5IE.

Zheng, Tiantian. 2015. *Tongzhi Living: Men Attracted to Men in Postsocialist China*.
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Appendix A

Glossary

Table A.1 Glossary of Chinese Terms

Pinyin	Characters (Traditional)	English meaning
<i>baoshou</i>	保守	Conservative
<i>binghuan</i>	病患	Illness, disease
<i>bufen</i>	不分	Term used among same-sex attracted women in Taiwan and PRC denoting neither masculine <i>T</i> or feminine <i>Po</i> ; no visible gender identification
Cheng yen (pinyin: Zhengyan)	證嚴	Famous nun in Taiwan who leads the Tzu Chi Foundation
<i>chong</i>	寵	To favor, term used in homoerotic writing to refer to how emperors had male ‘favorites’
<i>chujia</i>	出家	To renounce and become a monk or nun (literally “leave home”)
<i>cibei</i>	慈悲	Benevolence
<i>Ciji jijin hui</i>	慈濟基金會	Tzu Chi Foundation; international NGO based in Taiwan
<i>Daodejing</i>	道德經	A fundamental text for both philosophical and religious Daoism, traditionally attributed to Laozi

<i>dan</i>	旦	Type of female role in traditional opera that came to be associated with boy actors; term also synonymous with catamite
Dong Xian	董賢	Male favorite of Emperor Ai
<i>duanxiu</i>	斷袖	‘(Passion of the) cut sleeve’; a term denoting same-sex love in early Chinese history
<i>Duanxiu pian</i>	斷袖篇	<i>The Cut Sleeve</i> ; anthology of homoerotic short stories and anecdotes with stories chronologically arranged from 5 th century up to 19 th century
<i>fentao</i>	分桃	‘Divided peach’, metaphor referring to same-sex love
Foguangshan	佛光山	Buddha’s Light Mountain; one of the major Humanistic Buddhist organizations in Taiwan
<i>H</i>		Term used among same-sex attracted women in Taiwan and PRC denoting neither masculine <i>T</i> or feminine <i>Po</i> ; no visible gender identification; see also <i>bufen</i>
<i>Hongshi Tongxun</i>	弘誓通訊	Hongshi Newsletter
Hu Tianbao	胡天保	Name of a person who became deified into a god in Qing Dynasty China
<i>Hongshi Tongxun</i>	弘誓通訊	Hongshi Newsletter (newsletter of the Hongshi Institute)
<i>jiaobei</i>	筴杯	‘Moon blocks’—a pair of

		mussel-shaped objects used for divination
<i>jiaren</i>	家人	One's family, or a family member
<i>jijian</i>	雞姦	Literally 'chicken lewdness'; connotation in English is 'sodomy'
<i>jingshenyao</i>	精神藥	Psychotropic drugs
<i>jitong</i>	乩童	Spirit medium
<i>kengqiang</i>	鏗鏘	Impressive, resounding
<i>kuan</i>	寬	Broad
<i>lala</i>	拉拉	Term for 'lesbian' used in PRC
Laozi (alternate spelling: Lao Tzu)	老子	Semi-legendary Chinese philosopher, traditionally credited with writing the <i>Daodejing</i>
<i>lazi</i>	拉孜	Term for 'lesbian' used in Taiwan
Lu Weiming	盧威明	Name of Daoist priest in New Taipei City who runs a temple dedicated to Tu'er Shen
Mazu	馬祖	Mazu—the name of a sea goddess widely worshipped in Taiwan and SE China coast
<i>Mouzi lihuo lun</i>	牟子理惑論	<i>Treatise on the Disposing of Error</i> ; one of the earliest Buddhist works in Chinese, dating to the late 2 nd Century CE
<i>nütongzhi</i>	女同志	Term used among same-sex

		attracted women in Chinese societies; literally ‘female’ <i>tongzhi</i>
<i>Po</i>	婆	Female <i>tongzhi</i> inclined to feminine gender performances; ‘femme’
<i>Quanguo zongjiao da lianmeng fan hunyin pinggqan</i>	全國宗教大聯盟反婚姻平權	National Religious Alliance Against Marriage Equality
<i>renjian fojiao</i>	人間佛教	Buddhism for the human world/realm (or ‘Engaged’ Buddhism)
Sanshan Jiuhou xiansheng	三山九侯先生	Mr. Sanshan Jiuhou; Daoist deity (other main god at <i>Weimingtang</i> temple, in addition to the Rabbit God)
<i>shifu</i>	師父	Apprenticeship father; term used by Daoist disciples to address their master. Also used as a term of respect for a monk or nun. See also <i>shixiong</i>
Shih Chao Hwei (in pinyin: Shi Zhao Hui)	釋昭慧	Name for a Buddhist independent scholar-nun and activist
<i>shixiong</i>	師兄	Apprenticeship brother/sibling. Term used among Daoist disciples and/or temple members to address each other
<i>T</i>	拉攏	Female <i>tongzhi</i> inclined to masculine gender performances; ‘butch’
<i>Taiwan banlu quanyi tuidong lianmeng</i>	台灣伴侶權益推動聯盟	Taiwan Alliance to Promote Civil Partnership Rights (TAPCPR)

<i>Taiwan zongjiao tuanti aihu jiating dalianmeng</i>	台灣宗教團體愛護家庭大聯盟	Alliance of Taiwanese Religious Groups Caring for Family
Taixu	太虛	Name of a modernist Buddhist monk (1890-1947) who reformed Chinese Buddhism. Mentor to Yinshun
<i>Tong fanjing she</i>	童梵精舍	‘Child-Brahman Abode’, the first <i>tongzhi</i> Buddhist group in Taiwan (see Yang 2005)
<i>Tongguang tongzhi zhanglao jiaohui</i>	同光同志長老教會	Tong-Kwang Lighthouse Presbyterian Church; first openly pro- <i>tongzhi</i> church in Taiwan; opened in Taipei in 1996
<i>tongzhi</i>	同志	Most popular contemporary word used in Taiwan, China, and Hong Kong by same-sex attracted people, those who are transgender, and others who are sexually and gender nonconforming. Literally ‘comrade’; roughly equivalent to LGBTQ
<i>tongxing'ai</i>	同性愛	Translation of English word ‘homosexuality’
<i>tongxinglian</i>	同性戀	Translation of English word ‘homosexuality’
<i>tongzhi</i>	同志	LGBTQ (lit: comrade)
<i>tu'er</i>	兔兒	‘Little’ rabbit
Tu'er Shen	兔兒神	Name of a Chinese rabbit god
<i>Tuye yizi</i>	兔爺義子	Uncle Rabbit God’s adopted son

<i>tuzi</i>	兔子	Rabbit
<i>Weimingtang</i>	威明堂	Name of Daoist temple devoted to the Rabbit God; named after head priest Master Lu (see entries for Tu'er Shen and Lu Weiming); I have translated it as 'Brilliant Light Temple'
<i>Xia yidai xingfu lianmeng</i>	下一代幸福聯盟	Alliance For The Next Generation's Happiness
<i>xiao</i>	孝	Filial piety; some monastics divide this into "great filial piety" (<i>daxiao</i> 大孝), connected to celestial powers and the state, and "little filial piety" (<i>xiaoxiao</i> 小孝) that is limited to one's parents
<i>xiao</i>	小	Little/small; can be used with a first name to mean "Little so-and-so"
Xiao'en	小恩	Name of Christian <i>tongzhi</i> woman interviewed for this thesis
<i>Xinxin xiwang lianmeng</i>	信心希望聯盟	Faith and Hope League (FHL)
<i>Xiong Dama</i>	熊大媽	"Auntie Bear", a person to whom letters to <i>tongzhi</i> magazine <i>G&L</i> could be addressed. <i>Dama</i> literally means "elder mother", and is a kinship term referring to the wife of the father's elder brother (i.e. "aunt").
Yinshun	印順	Name of a Chinese monk (1906-2005) who, along with his mentor Taixu, reformed Chinese

		Buddhism. Was a mentor to Shih Chao Hwei.
<i>yizi</i>	義子	Adopted son
<i>yuanfen</i>	緣分	Term used to refer to a predestined relationship; can also be translated as “fateful coincidences”, “predestined affinity”, or “pre-fated bond”.
Yuan Mei	袁枚	Qing Dynasty poet and scholar (1716-1798)
Yue Xia Lao Ren	月下老人	‘The Old Man Under the Moon’; Name of a Chinese matchmaking god responsible for love and marriage
<i>yutao</i>	余桃	Half-eaten peach/part of a peach that is not eaten; metaphor for same-sex love
Zhengyi Dao	正一道	Way of Orthodox Unity (Daoist movement)
<i>Zibuyu</i>	子不語	<i>What the Master Would Not Discuss</i> , a collection of supernatural stories by Qing Dynasty writer Yuan Mei

Appendix B

Excerpts from Shih Chao Hwei's Speech (In Traditional Chinese Characters)

1. 那老實不客氣地說，家的價值向來就不是無限上綱，我必須要再這樣說，也就是說，在歐洲也好、在印度也好，早就已經有許多所謂的 homeless，而且他們創造了人類社會最燦爛的文明，那麼這些人不見得以家為崗位，包括了佛陀在內，包括了許多的遊方僧，那麼因此呢，以單一的價值在要求所有的人都是要進入到這個家，而且這個家還是要由你來定義的，那這個其實是…我真的覺得有點強迫症。
2. 全台灣變得因為危言聳聽，很多人被捲進到這個共業。譬如說，你如果有了同志婚姻，異性戀者就會變成同性戀，那你會嗎？你不會你為什麼擔心呢？奇怪！
3. 於是呢，如果說一定要把「家」規範為只是為了孕育下一代而存在，那麼我請問，不孕症的人是不是也被你掃到了？家庭的功能非常非常的多，請各位不要認為都是為了精子跟卵子的結合好嗎？
4. 剛才我又聽到一個很荒謬的消息說，你們同志經常換性伴侶，喂！他不就是因為不想要經常換性伴侶，所以要結婚嗎？那為什麼不有成人之美呢？而

且異性也有很多人經常換性伴侶嗎，因此有叫異性戀者不准結婚嗎？我覺得，
我們是不是在講這些事情以前，我們的邏輯思考是不是可以再重新整理一下？