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The Foundation and Development of the Taiwanese
New Religious Movement

Wéixīn Shèngjiào

唯心聖教

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Abstract (English)

A prominent feature of the twenty-first century is the global resurgence of religions and their associated value systems. The assumption that religions would shift from the public sphere to the private sphere has not been fulfilled, despite established religious communities in Europe experiencing high numbers of defections due to scandals. Instead, new religious groups and providers of spiritual guidance are gaining popularity. The esoteric scene is also a significant market for those seeking meaning and spirituality. The situation in East Asia proves to be similarly active. In the People's Republic of China (PRC), religious communities are subjected to strict state control, while in Taiwan, since the lifting of martial law and democratization, a free space for the development of diverse religious movements has emerged. Countless new religious movements have emerged across East Asia, rooted in Buddhist, Daoist, Confucian but also Christian teachings, while being significantly influenced by popular religious beliefs. Frequent aspect characterizing the identity of these movements are the reconnection to mytho-historical roots and millenarianism. If one looks around Taipei or other Taiwanese cities, the multitude of temples and Western churches of various sizes is striking—a testament to the religious diversity practiced in Taiwan. Chinese temple visitors, unlike Europeans, do not exclusively adhere to their preferred religious orientation but use local temples for prayer and spiritual upliftment, regardless of whether they align with their preferred religious affiliation. Confucian heritage, which emphasizes ancestor commemoration and filiality, that is, the obligations of descendants to their parents, also holds significant influence, which is reflected politically in the care for the aging society. In this favourable environment for religious movements, a new movement, Wéixīn Shèngjiào, emerged in 1982, founded by a Taiwanese businessman. His transformation into Grand Master Hùnyuán was achieved through self-cultivation and revelatory experiences. Wéixīn Shèngjiào is of interest because it is a markedly syncretistic movement that comprehensively connects Chinese cultural roots with the prevailing Chinese religious teachings, creating a self-styled “new world religion” for peace in the world. The emergence of this movement and an explanation of the novelty of its teachings and ritual practices are the objectives of this study.

Abstract (Deutsch)

Ein herausragendes Merkmal des 21. Jahrhunderts ist das weltweite Wiederaufleben von Religionen und der mit ihnen verbundenen Wertesysteme. Die Annahme Religionen würden sich von der öffentlichen Sphäre in die Privatsphäre verlagern hat sich nicht erfüllt, obgleich die etablierten Religionsgemeinschaften in Europa auf Grund von Skandalen hohe Austrittszahlen verzeichnen. Dafür finden neue religiöse Gruppen und Anbieter spiritueller Führung einen hohen Zulauf. Die Esoterikszene ist ebenfalls ein bedeutender Markt für Sinn und Spiritualität suchende. Die Situation in Ostasien erweist sich als ähnlich aktiv. In der Volksrepublik China sind Religionsgemeinschaften von strenger staatlicher Kontrolle betroffen wohingegen in Taiwan seit der Aufhebung des Kriegsrechtes und der Demokratisierung ein freier Raum zur Entfaltung vielfältiger religiöser Strömungen entstanden ist. In Ostasien sind unzählige neue religiöse Bewegungen entstanden, deren Wertesysteme in buddhistischen, daoistischen, konfuzianischen, aber auch christlichen Lehren wurzeln, sowie oftmals markant von volksreligiösen Vorstellungen mitgeprägt werden. Weitere Aspekte die die Identität dieser Bewegung prägen sind die Rückbeziehung auf mytho-historische Wurzeln und der Millenarismus. Wenn man sich in Taipeh oder anderen taiwanesischen Städten umsieht, so fällt die Vielzahl von Tempelanlagen und auch Kirchen westlicher Religionsgemeinschaften in allen Größen auf. Ein Beweis für die in Taiwan gelebte religiöse Vielfalt. Die chinesischen Tempelbesucher, die sich zum Unterschied von Europäern, bezüglich ihrer Tempelbesuche nicht exklusiv verhalten, sondern lokale Tempel zum Gebet und zur Erbauung nutzten, unabhängig davon, ob diese mit ihrer bevorzugten religiösen Ausrichtung übereinstimmen, sind ein weiterer Faktor. Großen Einfluss hat auch das konfuzianische Erbe, das das Ahnengedenken und die Verpflichtungen der Nachfahren ihren Eltern gegenüber betont, was auch politisch seinen Niederschlag bei der Versorgung der überalterten Gesellschaft findet. In diesem für religiöse Bewegungen günstigen Umfeld ist eine neue Bewegung, Wéixīn Shèngjiào, gegründet 1982, von einem taiwanesischen Geschäftsmann entstanden. Seine Transformation zum Grand Master Hùnyuán erfolgte durch Selbstkultivierung und Offenbarungserlebnisse. Wéixīn Shèngjiào ist deswegen von Interesse, weil wir es mit einer augenfällig synkretistischen Bewegung zu tun haben, die allumfassend die chinesischen kulturellen Wurzeln mit den vorherrschenden chinesischen religiösen Traditionen verknüpft und daraus eine selbst-propagierte „neue Weltreligion“ für den Frieden auf der Welt geschaffen hat. Die Entstehung dieser Bewegung und eine Darstellung der Besonderheit der Lehren und rituellen Praktiken ist Ziel dieser Arbeit.

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Preliminaries

This study represents an attempt to give a deeper insight into this new religious movement than is possible in the sparse English-language literature and the English publications of Grand Master *Hùnyuán*, such as “The New Religion of the World Taiwan - WEIXIN SHENGJIAO” or “Promoter of World Peace -Grand Master Huen–Yuan”. Apart from many repetitions and unclear text passages, there are also different spellings of names, designations, institutions, and places. Chinese characters are sparse for terms and there is no standardized transliteration employed.

The large body of writings is written exclusively in Chinese in the long-character script customary in Taiwan. But the difficulty is the incredible number of written publications, video recordings on the central teachings of *Yījīng* and *fēngshuǐ*, Online News from which a selection has to be made. Although the *Quellenbibliothek* of the University of Vienna’s Department of Religious Studies enjoys an extensive stock of original literature donated by *Wéixīn Shèngjiào* Taiwan, it is difficult to put together an accurate selection. For this study, in addition to the above-mentioned English literature, works about *Hùnyuán* such as “The Extraordinary Practitioner Grand Master Hun Yuan Chanshi” (Yang Ji Dong, 2007) and other works such as “Research on Chiyou Culture”, “Documentary of Disaster relief”, “A Summary of the 789 Wars of the World”, “Wang Chan Lao Zu Profound Sutra” in Chinese, as well as publications on Ancestor Commemoration Ceremonies, were selected for the most important written sources to name. Two more recent master’s theses written in Chinese complement the original literature. To ensure timeliness, numerous weekly reports such as *Wéixīn Shèngjiào* News, original videos and online sources have been used to reflect the current activities of *Wéixīn Shèngjiào*.

In order to delve deeper into the complex history of revelation, the mythical roots of the spiritual leaders and the foundation of Chinese civilization through *Hùnyuán*’s findings, the historical data described in the official mythological literature are compared with the interpretations of *Hùnyuán*. This explains the unique syncretism of this new religious movement.

This study can therefore only be regarded as a modest attempt at a comprehensive presentation. Many facets such as social commitment, institutional organization, international relations, the constant building activity and expansion and founding of temple complexes are only briefly addressed for the sake of completeness.

The transcription of Chinese is given according to the *Hànyǔ Pīnyīn* 漢語拼音 system including tonal marks. Simplified Chinese characters (*jiǎnhuàzì* 简化字) and traditional Chinese characters (*zhèngtǐzì* 正体字) are used in line with the dominant emic usage in Taiwan literature of *Wéixīn Shèngjiào* or Taiwan-based religious discourse. Geographical names and temple sites

are given in the notation of original English texts of *Wéixīn Shèngjiào* supplemented with Chinese transcriptions.

Abbreviations used for clarity

GMHY: 混元禪師 (混元禅师 *Hùnyuán chánshī*) is emically addressed as Grand Master Huen Yuan, Grand Master Hun Yuan, Grand Master Hunyuan Chanshi (WXTV) sometimes as Zen Master Hun Yuan in different publications.

Fiona Chang: is the daughter of GMHY and moderator of WXTV, addressed as author of her Master Thesis: Chang, Hsing-Fang 張馨方 (*Zhāng Xīnfāng*), as Director of the Research and Development Centre for Religious Affairs of Weixin Shengjiao: *Yuán Xīn* (Fiona Chang 元馨), WXTV moderator: Fiona, Chang, Hsin-Fang etc.

WXSJ: 唯心聖教 *Wéixīn Shèngjiào* also emically addressed as Holy Church of the Heart-Only, 唯心教 (*Wéixīnjiào*), Weixinism, “Only-Heart/Mind religion”, Holy Weixinism.

NRM New religious movement.

Dates of festivals, ceremonies, and revelations within *Wéixīn Shèngjiào* are primarily determined according to the commonly used lunar calendar in the religious context. Publications of *Wéixīn Shèngjiào* occasionally employ the *mínguó*¹ calendar, which is exclusively used in Taiwan to this day.

1 Introduction

This study focuses on a New Religious Movement (NRM) in Taiwan² which emerged in 1982. The “NRM” term is conventionally applied to all new religious groups that have arisen in all parts of the world over the past some two centuries. They are characterized by novel religious responses to the conditions of the time of their emergence and the then dominant religious institutions. A notable part of these movements represent themselves as rooted in ancient traditions. They are perceived as alternatives, syncretistic, pluralistic, and highly eclectic variants to

¹ The *mínguó* calendar, also known as the “Republic Era Calendar” (民國紀元曆 / 民国纪元历, *mínguó jìyuánlì*) or “Republic of China Calendar” (中華民國曆 / 中华民国历, *Zhōnghuá mínguólì*), is associated with the founding date of the Republic of China in 1912.

² Taiwan (Republic of China) is not formally recognized as separate national entity by the United Nations according to the General Assembly Resolution 2578 (XXVI) of October 26, 1971. Greater China, China (Mainland China, The Peoples Republic of China PRC) includes two special administrative regions Hongkong and Macau and Taiwan.

the mainstream religions in their region. Their belief systems are variations, as well as special and often divergent interpretations of the doctrines and canons they are derived from. The leaders are in many cases charismatic individuals, the followers ascribe exceptional powers and knowledge, as well as sometimes contact with the otherworld, gods, “immortals,” and sages of the past. East Asian NRMs are oft-times influenced by Western traditions, be it Christianity or alternative religious currents. Yet, many of these NRMs are deeply rooted in their own history and the so-called Three Teachings (*sān jiao* 三教) of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. WXSJ is a rather young NRM which draws not only from the Three Teachings but focuses on the ancient Chinese history as well on deep rooted customs, like ancestor commemoration, and filiality, as well as the ethnocentric belief the dominance of the Chinese culture not to say the superiority of being Chinese. The roots in Chinese mythology and the emphasis on ancestor commemoration as the key to lasting peace characterize this NRM in the Taiwanese religious environment, making it unique in its own way.

In the words of Fiona Chang: “The rise of Weixin Shengjiao can be described as the ‘institutionalization’ of these diffused folk beliefs, turning them into a systematic, organized religion” (Chang, 2017: 4). The other reinforcement is sought in the celebration of the mythic genealogy inherited from ancestral China.

1.1 The Religious Situation in East Asia

According to the United Nations, “Eastern Asia” encompasses “Greater China—that is, China, and the two special administrative regions Hong Kong and Macao—the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (i.e., North Korea), Japan, Mongolia, and the Republic of Korea (i.e., South Korea). This configuration of East Asia (commonly found with the explicit mention of Taiwan as well) is popular among those who advocate a politico-geographical rubric, often specifically tagged as ‘Northeast Asia’” (Pokorny and Winter 2018: 4). The term “Sinosphere” is introduced due to historical influence in neighbouring countries. It refers to the region culturally shaped by Chinese traditions, including political and economic interactions such as tributary relations. Regional cohesion primarily stems from the widespread use of the Chinese script and a unique set of religious and ethical practices. These emphasize the significance of self-improvement and social harmony. Proponents of a shared East Asian cultural heritage attribute this cohesion to the Confucian worldview and its practical application through behavioural norms. In essence, the Chinese cultural sphere is often viewed as a “Confucian cultural area” at its core (Pokorny and Winter 2018: 5). A key element contributing to the East Asian cultural repository has been

the process of sinicization, notably manifested through a shared lexicon and the intellectual and material legacy of the Three Teachings or Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism.

The Three Teachings significantly enriched the religious landscape of East Asia, exerting mutual influence on each other and on existing and newly introduced belief systems (e.g., Christianity). The ethical dimension of the Three Teachings, particularly emphasized by the Confucian tradition historically, provided a widely accepted moral framework deemed conducive to social well-being across the region. This framework became deeply ingrained and continues to serve as an underlying socio-cultural foundation.

The discursive realm of the Three Teachings, with its varying historical and regional variations in the degree of influence of each “tradition,” continues to function as a matrix or a unifying force for emerging and transplanted religious movements, especially in the context of increasing religious globalization. In this context, East Asia, including China and Taiwan, represents the part of Asia where the sociocultural landscape is notably characterized by these discursive elements, which have evolved over millennia across significant portions of what are now the nation-states of China and Taiwan (Pokorny and Winter 2018: 6).

1.2 Taiwan’s Religious Situation

The Taiwanese Context

The emergence of WXSJ, one of Taiwan's prominent indigenous New Religious Movements (NRMs) in the late twentieth century, can be contextualized through three key factors. Firstly, it was within the religious fervour in Taiwan post-World War II, stemming from a pre-existing mix of various religious organizations and beliefs, encompassing the Three Teachings and diverse folk religions. NRMs typically incorporated the Three Teachings and popular beliefs into syncretic endeavours driven by the religious creativity of their founders. Secondly, the imposition of Martial Law in Taiwan from 1949 to 1987 significantly constrained religious freedom. The lifting of Martial Law in 1987 resulted in the legal recognition and registration of several NRMs. Thirdly, the Cultural Revolution in China (1966–1976) led to the widespread destruction of libraries, temples, and cultural relics in the name of a strict interpretation of Marxism and Maoism. In response, Taiwanese authorities aimed to safeguard endangered Chinese cultural heritage, framing it as part of the policy of "Revitalizing Chinese culture." While this policy served as a political strategy for the last Martial Law governments to legitimize themselves, it resonated genuinely with the populace. Taiwanese individuals began seeking groups that preserved "Chinese orthodoxy," representing the authentic teachings of ancient Chinese religion and culture. Seizing this opportunity, various NRMs claimed to offer precisely such

orthodox teachings, initially to the Taiwanese population and later, as the effects of the Cultural Revolution waned and Cross-Strait relations improved, to Chinese residents in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the broader international Chinese diaspora (Introvigne 2017: 4–5).

“According to a survey by the Academia Sinica’s Institute of Sociology released in 2019, 49.3 percent of the population practices exclusively traditional folk religions, 14 percent practices Buddhism, and 12.4 percent practices Taoism, with 13.2 percent identifying as nonbelievers. The rest of the population mainly consists of Protestants (5.5 percent), I-Kuan Tao (2.1 percent), Catholics (1.3 percent), and other religious groups, including Sunni Muslims, Tien Ti Chiao (Heaven Emperor Religion), Tien Te Chiao (Heaven Virtue Religion), Li-ism, Hsuan Yuan Chiao (Yellow Emperor Religion), Tian Li Chiao (Tenrikyo), Pre-cosmic Salvationism, the Church of Scientology, the Baha’i Faith, Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Mahikari religion, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (Unification Church)” (2020 Int. Religious Freedom Report). Several studies have uncovered that a significant proportion, up to eighty percent, of individuals practicing religion engage in a syncretic approach, blending elements from multiple faith traditions. Many followers identify themselves as both Buddhists and Daoists, while also incorporating certain aspects of traditional folk religions, such as shamanistic practices, ancestor veneration, and animistic beliefs, into their religious framework, whether it be Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, or another faith. Additionally, it is worth noting that some practitioners of Buddhism, Daoism, and other religions also participate in groups such as *Fǎlún Gōng* 法輪功 (*Fǎlún Dàfǎ* 法輪大法), a self-professed spiritual discipline. According to the leadership of the *Fǎlún Gōng* Society of Taiwan, there are hundreds of thousands of *Fǎlún Gōng* practitioners in the region.

Religious groups can officially register with the courts upon obtaining an establishment permit. Registration involves submitting various documents like an organizational charter, asset inventory, and other administrative records. Registered religious organizations enjoy tax-exempt status, exceptions from building taxes on a case-by-case basis and are required to submit annual financial reports. In contrast, non-registered religious groups do not qualify for the tax benefits that registered religious organizations receive. “As of the end of 2019, there were more than 15,000 registered religious groups representing more than 20 religions. Many groups choose not to register individual places of worship and instead operate them as the personal property of the group’s leaders” (2020 Int. Religious Freedom Report).

Religious Diversity Index

Ranking of Countries

Assessing the proportion of the population in each country that adheres to the eight primary religious categories considered in the research, it becomes evident that twelve nations exhibit an exceptionally elevated level of religious multiplicity. Out of these twelve nations, six are situated within the Asia-Pacific region (comprising Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam, South Korea, China, and Hong Kong). Another five are located in sub-Saharan Africa (encompassing Guinea-Bissau, Togo, Ivory Coast, Benin, and Mozambique). One country falls within the Latin America and Caribbean region, specifically Suriname. Notably, no countries within Europe, North America, or the Middle East-North Africa region demonstrate a remarkably high degree of religious diversity based on the criteria employed in this study. Furthermore, it is important to note that religious diversity exhibits significant regional variances. Within the six regions scrutinized in the study by the Pew Research Center, the Asia-Pacific region ranks highest in terms of religious diversity, closely trailed by sub-Saharan Africa. In contrast, Europe and North America exhibit a moderate degree of religious diversity, whereas the Latin America-Caribbean and Middle East-North Africa regions showcase a notably lower level of religious multiplicity (Pew Research Center 2014).

2 History of *Wéixīn Shèngjiào* 唯心聖教

2.1 The Founder Grandmaster *Hùnyuán* 混元禪師

I present the eventful hagiography of GMHY in a chronological sequence of significant events in his life and for the development of key occurrences for his “New Religion of the World” *Wéixīn Shèngjiào* - WXSJ. I give a little more space to his education and transformation into GMHY, as well as the origins of his teachings received through revelations and union with mythical ancestors. I also follow the constant expansion of the canon, the development of his teaching activities, the construction activities, as well as the increasing media presence and international engagements related to peace efforts in the conflict between China-Taiwan. This compilation comes from different sources, which have been checked for consistency. However, this is only a selection, as ceremonies and festivals are repeated regularly throughout the year. Delving into the details would require an independent work.

1944: Chang Yijui (*Zhāng Yìruì* 張益瑞) was born on February 2, in (*Zhōngliáo* 中寮), *Nántóu* 南投-District, Taiwan.

1960: He graduated from Junior High school in June and was admitted to “Kuang-Hwa Senior Industrial Vocational High School in Taichung City”, (*Guānghuá xuéxiào cáituánfǎrén Táizhōngshì guānghuá gāoji gōngyè zhíyèxuéxiào* 光華學校財團法人臺中市光華高級工業職業學校), Taiwan.

1963 -1971: Chang (*Zhāng* 張) graduated at the Land Survey Department of Kuang-Hwa (*Guānghuá* 光華) Senior Industrial Vocational High School in Taichung City (*Táizhōngshì* 臺東市), Taiwan. Following this, he proceeded to instruct Engineering Measurement at the same institution and founded Zhong Xin Measuring Ltd., the inaugural land surveying and measurement company in Taiwan.

1972: He started to learn *fēngshuǐ* from one Mr. Qiu Zhitang (inherited from Japan).

1974: He continued to learn *fēngshuǐ* from one Mr. Li Shuyu (mainland continued tradition)

1975: He started to learn (as apprentice) from one Mr. Cai De *Yījīng*, the Eight Trigrams and numerology

1982: This is the crucial year of his transformation. In March, he began to fall ill and went to the “Dragon and Phoenix Palace” (*Lóngfèng gong* 龍鳳宮) in *Xīnyíng* 新營, *Táinán* 臺南 (where he later built “Zhongshan Dazen Temple”). A spiritual healer revealed to him that his healing could only be achieved through a unique life path and spiritual practice of his own. In his personal account he tells us: When he became seriously ill, suffering from kidney atrophy Avalokiteśvara (*Guānyīn* 觀音) Bodhisattva and the gods and Buddhas allegedly shared a great vow: “This life is full of illnesses and disasters and is almost dead. Things are impermanent. Because of the way of impermanence, I am willing to practice diligently and diligently. After the illness is recovered, I am willing to abandon the survey engineering career and switch to Buddhism to save all living beings. The world is peaceful. Worship, reach the state of concentration (a meditative state), and became one with Wang Chan’s ancestor Lao Zu that night.” (Liu H.-Y. 2018: 8) From this experience he attributed his healing to the influence of divine intervention. After the great aspiration and blessing of the Buddha’s, he recovered from illness in 1982. From this time onward he is deemed to serve all living beings with sincerity and professionalism in repaying the immortal Buddha’s great grace. He started to study the *Yījīng* and teach the philosophy to establish good relationships.

On July the 23, he undertook a pilgrimage to Mount *Dàwǔ* (*Dàwǔshān* 大武山) in Taitung (*Táidōng* 臺東) County with fellow practitioners to open the “Southern Heaven” (*Nántiān* 南天).

1983: Chang opened a family hall in Taichung City, Taiwan, for worshiping Buddha and solving his followers' problems through divination.

1984: The family hall was expanded and renamed *Shénnóng* 神農 Temple. Chang was given the name *Hùnyuán* 混元 by divine revelation.

1987: The end of Martial Law in Taiwan allowed GMHY to preach to larger audiences. Combined with Buddhism, he teaches a series of *Yijīng* mental methods courses at the Intensive Training Institute, including: "I Ching and Practice," "Cultivation into the Right Way," "Peace of Mind Dharma," etc.

1988: Land was purchased in Nantou to establish the "Chanji Mountain Immortal Buddha Temple" (*Chánjī shān xiān fó sì* 禪機山仙佛寺)

1989: The Hsien Fo (*Xiān-fó* 仙佛) Temple was inaugurated on *Chánjī* Mountain (*Chánjī-shān* 禪機山) Taiwan.

1990: The Amitabha Lecture Hall of *Xiānfó* Temple was completed and opened, and GMHY explained the Noble Eightfold Path.

1993: GMHY held the 99 Days Chanting Ceremony and the first research classes on *Yijīng* and *fēngshuǐ*. Grand Master *Hùnyuán* gave lectures on "Six Patriarch Altar Sutra" and "Buddha Said Amitabha Sutra".

1994: The first session of the "Book of Changes Mental Method Research Class" was held. "The Consciousness of Life and Death" was published, which recounts the origins of his practice after falling ill in 1982. It was the first time to write calligraphy in *Xiānfó* Temple, and then exhibited it in Taipei, Taichung, Kaohsiung (*Gāoxióngshì* 高雄市), and *Nántóu*, and organized the "Zen Jing Calligraphy Exhibition".

1995: The book "Feng Shui World View" was published. The convention "Propagating the Dharma of Feng Shui for the Home" at Linkou Stadium (*Línkǒu dà tǐyùguǎn* 林口大體育館), Taipei, drew a crowd of 36,000.

"Chanji Mountain Satellite TV Station" was established to accompany and film GMHY's lectures, speeches, etc.

1996: The propagation of teachings about *Yijīng* and *fēngshuǐ* increased, and the "I Ching University" (*Yijīng dàxué* 易經大學) was founded as an educational institution for this purpose.

1997: The first television lectures by GMHY were broadcasted, followed by regular preaching activity via television. The inauguration of the "One Day Zen Event with a Thousand Buddha" at the *Xiānfó* Temple was held, since then it has been held on the fourth Sunday of every month.

1998: The first annual pilgrimage to Mount *Yúnmèng* (*Yúnmèng shān* 云梦山) *Hénán* 河南 Province, People's Republic of China (PRC), took place, to worship the deified Chinese political and military strategist *Guīgǔzi* 鬼谷子.

Taiwan Television Company launched the daily program “View All Perspectives of I Ching – Feng Shui”, featuring GMHY. It would run until 2007, when it would be replaced by the program “Everybody Comes to Learn I Ching”. The movement estimates that, through the daily TV programs, its following increased ten times by comparison with the pre-1998 years.

The first international tour of GMHY took place. In the following years, he would speak at more than 500 events in Taiwan and abroad, with a global audience estimated by the movement at more than 1,000,000.

1999: A big earthquake occurred in Taiwan; the “I Ching and Feng Shui Interest Circle” (later renamed “Feng Shui Interest Circle Service Team”) was established. In October, he led believers to set up the “I Ching Feng Shui Service Love Group” to help community residents to rebuild after disasters.

2000: The formal incorporation of *Wéixīn Shèngjiào* took place. Taiwan's Ministry of Internal Affairs estimated its global following at 1,000,000.

2001: The first annual conference named “Cross-Strait Academic Cultural Communication on Bodhisattva Wang Chan Lao Zu Study” was held. A contract for constructing the “City of Eight Trigrams” (*Bāguà shèngchéng* 八卦聖城), also named Town of Chinese Culture, on Mountain *Yúnmèng* was signed with *Hénán* provincial authorities in the PRC.

2002: GMHY built the Yellow Emperor Temple in *Qiáoshàn* 乔善, *Zhuōlù* 涿鹿, *Héběi* 河北 Province, PRC, followed by the *Chīyóu* 蚩尤 Temple in *Fánshān* 矾山 and by the *Yándì* Temple in *Gǔshān* 鼓山.

2003: GMHY humbly recorded “The Sutra of Gui Gu Immortal Master's Heaven Virtue” which is now one of the central sutras in the canon.

2004: The first “Ancestor Worship Ceremony for Chinese in the twenty-first century” was held in Línkǒu Stadium, Taipei. As for 2016, it was repeated 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015.

Taiwan Television Company's digital channel launched the daily program “Feng Shui of My Home,” featuring GMHY.

A dharma service for peace and Cross-Strait reconciliation was held.

In December, GMHY led believers to Japan to find the tomb of *Xúfú* 徐福.

2006: “Weixin College of Buddhist Chants” was established.

2008: He led professors from various universities in Taiwan to visit Mount *Yúnmèng* in *Hénán* and *Zhuōlù* in *Héběi*.

Preparations were made to plan the establishment of Taiwan's "City of Eight Trigrams.

2009: Weixin TV, the movement's own TV channel, was inaugurated.

GMHY founded the "Taiwan Wei Xin Association for World Peace."

On June 20th GMHY explained: "I Ching and Feng shui are the driving force for world peace – the Dharmachakra of world peace."

"Tracing the Origins of the Chinese Army: The Soul of the Chinese Army Returns to the Spiritual Treasure" was published. An important source for an ancestor worship.

2010: January 3, a forum was held on "The Contributions to World Peace of the Three Great Chinese Ancestor Civilization, Bodhisattva Wang Chan Lao Zu's Thought, and The Art of War", with more than 1,000 scholars from both Taiwan and the PRC.

October 26, a "Letter of Intent" to promote Chinese culture and world peace was signed by organizations from both Taiwan and PRC in the City of Eight Trigrams.

2012: Taiwan's Ministry of Internal Affairs granted legal recognition to *Wéixīn Shèngjiào*. The movement's canon was defined as including thirty Sutras and 15,615 volumes of the *Wéixīn dàozàng* 唯心道藏.

GMHY was nominated and selected as a finalist candidate for the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize, although finally the prize was awarded to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

2013: A pilgrimage to *Kūnlún* Mountains (*Kūnlún-shān* 崑崙山), *Qīnghǎi* 青海 was undertaken. The mythical place for the evolution of the Chinese people.

2014: In June, GMHY attended the annual meeting of the Taiwan Religious Society as a leader and delivered a speech. He was invited to Korea to participate as a religious leader in the "World Summit of International Religious Leaders." During the meeting he was interviewed by local Korean media.

On July 15 the "Yunmeng Mountain Guigu Cultural Center and Cultural Development Committee" of Taiwan were established, it became the Taiwan exchange base for *Hénán* Province in the PRC.

2017: In March, he led believers, scholars, and experts to visit Mount *Yúnmèng* in *Hénán*, the Three Ancestors Hall of PRC in *Héběi*, the Yellow Emperor Hall, the *Chīyóu* Temple and the *Yándì* Temple the PRC. In May, he led believers to Nepal to visit the birthplace of Śākyamuni Buddha and related Buddhist holy places. In July, he led believers, scholars, and experts to the mainland to visit *Lǎozǐ*'s birthplace, *Fúxī* 伏羲 Mausoleum, and Confucius and Mencius former

residences, and went to *Méngshān* 蒙山 to communicate with the “Mengshan Guiguzi Cultural Research Association.”

2018: In June, during the Dragon Boat Festival, the great golden statue of the ancestor of Wang Chan was completed in City of Eight Trigrams, and a grand ceremony was held.³

2022: A major event was the celebration of 40 years turning the dharma wheel and the opening of the Southern Heaven by GMHY. A grand unveiling ceremony of the archives of video tapes was held on August 21, 2022, at Taichung branch temple for the now 80-year-old GMHY (WXTV Episode 202 2022).

3 The Linage of WXSJ

It is important to note that the descriptions of mythological rulers and mythical figures chosen here represent only scattered aspects of the complex Chinese mythology. There are numerous historical sources and evidence for these myths in which the characters are confused or exchanged, so that a uniform assignment does not seem possible. The characterization of the mythological figures from sources in mythological literature can only present a brief outline of the very extensive descriptions. The relationships and the interpretation of the role of the mythological figures relevant to WXSJ prefer very specific sources and their interpretation, from which GMHY subsequently derives essential teachings for his “New Religion of the World.” This is especially important for ancestor commemoration, in which *Chīyóu* 蚩尤 plays an essential role in achieving world peace.

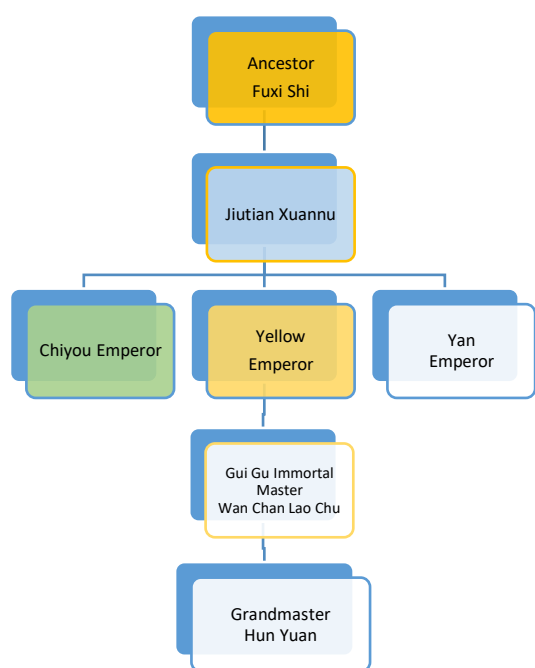
The basis is the mythological history of China. The origins of Chinese culture are seen in the *Kūnlún* Civilization, which developed along the *Kūnlún* Mountains in prehistoric times. According to the teachings of WXSJ, the *Kūnlún* Mountains continue to Taiwan and form a so-called “Dragon's Knot” in line with *fēngshuǐ* principles. The heritage of the *Kūnlún* culture was passed on to the mythical ruler *Fúxī*, the inventor of the Eight Trigrams (*bāguà* 八卦), hunting and fishing, and animal domestication. This is subsequently passed on to the mythical female figure *Jiǔtiān Xuánnǚ* 九天玄女, the goddess of longevity, sexuality, and war. In short, all Chinese mythology is deemed to define the cultural heritage. It is important to note, however, that the movement values the opinion of historians and encourages research into Chinese history. In 2003 the “*Guīgǔzi* Academy” was founded as a place of exchange about the life of *Guīgǔzi*.

³ Sources: (Introvigne 2016: 8; Introvigne 2017: 5-9; H.-Y. Liu 2018: 7-8; Chang 2014: 6; Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 8).

One has to start out between the historical and the most deified person of *Guīgǔzi* to understand his importance for the movement.

This mythical figure acquires a central importance through the appearance of *Guīgǔzi*, which GMHY experienced, the messages he sent to him and the scriptures that arose from them.

3.1 The Ancestors



Ancestor *Fúxīshì* 伏羲氏

Jiutian Xuannu (*Jiǔtiān Xuánnǚ* 九天玄女)

Three Chinese Ancestors

Yellow Emperor (*Huángdì* 黃帝)

Yan Emperor (*Yándì* 炎帝)

Chiyou Emperor (*Chīyóu* 蚩尤)

Gui Gu Immortal Master (*Guīgǔ xiānshī* 鬼谷仙師) Wan Chan Lao Chu (*Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ* 王禪老祖),

The leader of the “celestial world”

(*Tiānjiè* 天界) Grand Master *Hùnyuán* (master

of the world of humans).

The hierarchy deriving from *Fúxī* and the Three Emperors honours the mythic Chinese genealogy. Similar to Taiwan viewing itself as the preserver of ancestral China, its arts, and spirituality lost in the People's Republic of China (PRC) due to Communism, WXSJ integrates all its rituals and doctrines into the mythic lineage of the Chinese. It positions itself as the ideal agent to restore the long-lost harmony of Chinese culture and foster a meaningful symbiosis among ethnic communities that centuries of conflicts have fractured and displaced. The emphasis on Emperor *Chīyóu* is particularly noteworthy in this context. *Chīyóu*, one of the two mythical ancestors honored in WXSJ, the other being *Guīgǔzi*, a military strategist of the Warring States Period (475–221 BCE) believed to embody Bodhisattva *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ*, differentiates WXSJ from similar NRMs in Taiwan.

While it's unclear whether WXSJ interprets the mythical genealogy in a “canonical way,” if such an expression applies, a summary of attributes attributed to major ancestors in WXSJ literature is provided. The third chapter, “The Doctrines and Dogma of Weixin Shengjiao,” in

“The New Religion of the World,” Taiwan’s Weixin Shengjiao, authored by GMHY, begins with a visual representation of GMHY’s lineage, illustrating the positioning of ancestors.

At the origin is Ancestor *Fúxī*, the Primordial, representing emptiness, born 7,352 years ago. Below is *Jiǔtiān Xuánnǚ*, the Mysterious Lady of the Nine Heavens, inheriting Knowledge, giving rise to four phenomena through two polarities. Following are the three Chinese ancestors: Emperor *Chīyóu*, *Huángdì*, and Emperor *Yán*. Below them is *Guīgǔzi*, the Immortal Master *Wáng Chán Lǎozǐ*, leader of the celestial world, and beneath them, the figure of GMHY, a master in the world of mankind. *Guīgǔzi* and GMHY united, passing ancient knowledge, especially the *Yijing* and *fēngshuǐ*, to modern times (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 32–33, Rigal-Cellard 2017: 27–28).

The major character of WXSJ for establishing peace in the world is Emperor *Chīyóu*. While typically excluded from the esteemed lineage due to his role as an adversary who opposed the other two Emperors, in the context of WXSJ, he is reintegrated into the lineage and celebrated as the forefather of Chinese ethnic groups expelled from the central region. After his defeat, he led his forces away from the empire’s core to establish settlements in Korea and Japan. This reinstatement brings together ethnic groups with shared ancestry, even though they are situated on the fringes of the PRC. During the Ancestors Ceremony, as reported by Rigal Cellard (2017), it was evident that the indigenous people of Taiwan held a significant position. Their seating in the centre of the audience, directly facing the altar, and their role as the final performers emphasized their importance in an ecumenical finale to the celebration. The lineage of all Chinese Emperors, ranging from mythical figures to historical individuals, is traced back to this genealogy.

The elaborate ceremonies conducted by WXSJ are dedicated to all “15,615 ancestors.” Considering the multitude of lives lost in numerous wars, it becomes necessary to seek atonement in order to pave the way for a better future —a Pure Land— for the entire Chinese population. In this context, the term “all the Chinese” encompasses a broad scope, as WXSJ believes that the royal lineages of Koreans, Vietnamese, and Japanese all trace back to the original Emperors (Rigal-Cellard 2017: 30).

3.1.1 *Fúxī* 伏羲

Fúxī 伏羲, alternatively written as 伏羲 or 伏戲, is one of the prominent figures in Chinese mythology, recognized as one of the Three Augusts (*sānhuáng* 三皇) or, alternatively, as one

of the Five Emperors (*wǔdì* 五帝). Consequently, he is referred to as *Xīhuáng* 犧皇 or *Huángxī* 皇羲, meaning August Shepherd. *Fúxī* was both the brother and husband of *Nǚwā* 女媧, and together, they were legendary creators of the world. During the *Hàn* 漢 period (206 BCE-220 CE), stone bricks often depicted *Fúxī* and *Nǚwā* with human bodies that transformed into inter-twined dragon tails, with each holding architect's instruments, namely compasses (*jǔ* 槊) and rulers (*guī* 規). This mythological narrative was widespread, particularly in southern China, where the Miáo 苗 people considered themselves descendants of *Fúxī* and *Nǚwā*, thus regarding them as the progenitors of humanity. *Fúxī* is also credited in ancient texts with numerous inventions, including the Eight Trigrams (*bāguà* 八卦), the fishing net, musical instruments, and providing guidance on the use of fire. The Eight Trigrams were employed for divination, with each trigram symbolizing different aspects of the cosmos, such as heaven, earth, mountains, rivers, wind, and thunder (ChinaKnowledge Fuxi, n/a). In WXSJ *Fúxī* ranges as the “top ancestor” in GMHY's heritage structure (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 32).

Nǚwā 女媧 is a prominent figure in Chinese mythology, known as a female deity responsible for creation. She is counted among the mythical Three Augusts (*sānhuáng* 三皇), and for this reason, she is sometimes referred to as *Nǚhuáng* 女皇, meaning “Female Emperor.” *Nǚwā* possessed the body of a snake but the head of a woman, with the remarkable ability to transform into various forms up to seventy times a day. According to the *Hàn* period book *Fēngsú tōngyì* 風俗通義, *Nǚwā* played a pivotal role in the creation of humanity. It is said that at the very beginning, just after Heaven and Earth had separated, *Nǚwā* crafted humans out of mud. In popular mythology, *Nǚwā* and *Fúxī* were initially sister and brother but later became husband and wife, and together, they gave birth to the human race. *Nǚwā* is not only regarded as the mother of mankind but also as the originator of the institution of marriage. Another story recounted in the *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子 describes how *Nǚwā* mended the sky when it developed cracks that posed a threat to collapse. During this critical moment, fires and floods ravaged the land, and birds and beasts preyed on humans. To restore order, *Nǚwā* melted five distinct types of stone to fill the fissures in the sky. She employed turtle legs to fashion the four pillars, and reed ash was used to control the floods (Chinaknowledge Nüwa n/a).

3.1.2 *Jiǔtiān Xuánnǚ* 九天玄女

Jiǔtiān Xuánnǚ, the Mysterious Lady of the Nine Heavens, is a legendary Daoist immortal who resides at the celestial court of the Yellow Emperor (*Huángdì*). According to the legend, she

had a human head but a bird's body (*rénshǒu niǎoxíng* 人首鳥形) and served as a teacher to the Yellow Emperor. During the prolonged battles against his enemy *Chīyóu*, the Yellow Emperor faced defeat in nine successive battles. Following the guidance of the Mysterious Lady on Mount *Tài* (*Tàishān* 太山) during a three-day and three-night session, he acquired methods of divination, military strategies, maps, and more. With these newfound abilities, he was finally able to defeat *Chīyóu* in the Battle of *Zhuōlù* 涿鹿. Thus, she played a pivotal role in shaping historical events. This story is recounted in various apocryphal texts, story collections such as *Huángdì nèizhuàn* 黃帝內傳, and in the universal history *Shǐjì* 史記, which is a renowned early Chinese universal history and the first of the official dynasty histories. The text *Xuánnǚjīng* 玄女經 is a divinatory text that focuses on auspicious days for marriage (ChinaKnowledge Xuannü n/a; Yang, An and Turner 2008: 141). In WXSJ she plays an important role especially because *Huángdì* and *Chīyóu*, are considered as two of the three Chinese ancestors in *Hùnyuán*'s doctrines.

3.1.3 The Yellow Emperor - *Huángdì* 黃帝

The Yellow Emperor (*Huángdì*), occasionally written *Huángdì* 皇帝 (August Ancestor) is the legendary forefather of the Chinese people and one of the Five Emperors (*wǔdì* 五帝). Early twentieth-century Chinese historians believed that there existed a particular Chinese tribe residing in the region of River *Jī* (*Jī shuǐ* 姬水) (around *Qīng dī* 青地, *Shǎnxī* 陝西) that revered *Huángdì* as their common ancestor (*dì* 帝 signifies a deified ancestor). This is known as the “*Qíjiā* Culture” (*Qíjiā wénhuà* 齊家文化). The people of this culture were believed to frequently intermarry with the people from the *Jiāng* River (*Jiāng shuǐ* 姜水) valley around modern *Qíshān* 岐山 and *Wǔgōng* 武功, *Shǎnxī*, who were known as the *Huá* 華 people. The *Huá* people venerated *Yándì* 炎帝, the “Red Emperor,” as their shared ancestor. Descendants of the *Huá* people later migrated to the southern part of modern *Shǎnxī* province, where they established the *Xià* Culture (*Xià wénhuà* 夏文化), from which the *Xià* 夏 dynasty (21st–17th century BCE) emerged. Another group or tribe tracing their lineage to the *Huá* people was the *Zhōu* 周 (11th century–221 BCE), who established a dynasty bearing the same name, reflected in the ruler's surname, *Jī* 姬. Traditional historians recount that the Yellow Emperor, following his victory over *Chīyóu* and the Red Emperor, implemented a form of government and appointed

rulers (“nobles”) to oversee the various regions of his empire (the “ten thousand states” or *wànguó* 萬國). He adopted the title of “Son of Heaven” (*tiānzǐ* 天子), succeeding *Shénnóng* 神農, the “Divine Husbandman.” The Yellow Emperor subsequently established the “hundred state offices” (*bǎiguān* 百官), enacted legal codes and statutes (*diǎnzhāng* 典章), and oversaw the construction of an imperial palace. In addition to his contributions as a ruler, the Yellow Emperor is celebrated for various inventions, including bronze tripods, boats, carts, and even the compass cart (*zhǐnán chē* 指南車). The Yellow Emperor is also revered as a Daoist deity. The Daoist text *Zhuāngzi* 莊子 mentions that the Yellow Emperor was deeply concerned with the pursuit of the “Way” (*dào* 道) and sought guidance from the Daoist master *Guǎng chéngzǐ* 廣成子 on Mount *Kōng dòng* 崆峒 (chapter *Zàiyòu* 在宥). He explained to his imperial disciple that one must abandon preoccupation with sight and hearing (*wú shì* 無視, *wú tīng* 無聽) and maintain silence and purity (*bìjìng bìqīng* 必靜必清) (ChinaKnowledge Huang Di n/a). “On April 5, the tomb-sweeping Day of 2003, a large sacrificial ritual offering to Huang Di was held at the Xuanyuan Temple in Huangling County Shaanxi Province. Among the attendants of the ceremony were important officials of the Communist Party, representatives of overseas Chinese from Hongkong, Taiwan, Macao, Canada, Australia and South-East Asia. They came together to worship “the Common Ancestor of the Chinese People” and “the Founder of Human civilization” (Yang, An and Turner 2008: 138–145).

3.1.4 *Yándì* 炎帝

Yándì, the “Fire Emperor,” sometimes referred to as *Chìdì* 赤帝, the “Red Emperor,” is a deity in early Chinese mythology. He is frequently regarded as the same figure as the cultural hero *Shénnóng*, the Divine Husbandman. In the persona of the Fire Emperor, this deity represented the elemental and political authority of fire, whereas as *Shénnóng*, he symbolized human culture. *Shénnóng* was credited with inventing agriculture, pottery, metallurgy, and pharmacology. *Yándì* supported the Yellow Emperor in the conflict against their adversary *Chīyóu*. Nevertheless, there are also accounts of conflicts between the two emperors, such as in the Battle of *Bǎnquán* 坂泉, where *Yándì* achieved a victory. Eventually, the tribes of both emperors returned to peace and assimilated into the Chinese population, with the Yellow Emperor as their supreme leader. The battle against *Chīyóu* at *Zhuōlù* 涿鹿 most likely occurred after the unification of the two tribes. This version has been a long-standing belief, with both *Huángdì* and

Yándì recognized as the common ancestors of the Chinese people (ChinaKnowledge Yan Din/a; Yang, An and Turner 2008: 138–145).

3.1.5 *Chīyóu* 蚩尤

Chīyóu is a mythological figure associated with being a minister or descendant of *Yándì*, the Red Emperor whom he eventually overthrew. He is credited with inventing the art of warfare and creating numerous weapons. In mythology, *Chīyóu* is often depicted with a human body, six bird's feet, four eyes, and a horn on his head, as described in the *Shùyìjì* 述異記, while another lost source portrays him with eight arms and eight feet. His eighty-eight brothers were characterized as beings with animal-like features, having bronze heads, iron-clad fronts, and subsisting on stone and sand.

The conflict between *Chīyóu* and the Yellow Emperor was waged using magical powers. The Yellow Emperor received assistance from the Lord of the Winds (*Fēnghòu* 風后), and the Dragon Yīng (*Yīnglóng* 应龙). Meanwhile, *Chīyóu* was supported by the Earl of Winds (*Fēngbó* 風伯), and the Marshall of Rains (*Yǔ Shī* 雨師). Ultimately, it was the intervention of the Heavenly Maiden *Bá* 魃 also known as *Nǚbá* 女魃, the Goddess of Drought, that secured victory for the Yellow Emperor. After *Chīyóu*'s defeat and execution on Mount *Lí* (*Lí-shān* 黎山), his weapons were scattered in the wilderness, where they transformed into a forest. His limbs were dispersed across the empire, resulting in the presence of several tombs in China., however, continued to be revered as the God of War and remains a figure of worship to whom sacrifices are offered.

Nine of *Chīyóu*'s brothers became leaders of the Nine *Lí* tribes (*jiǔ lí* 九黎), each divided into nine groups. They resided in southern China within the region of the river Hàn and the middle Yangtze River. After *Chīyóu*'s defeat, the *Lí* tribes formed a small state, which was later integrated into the Zhōu 周. Other groups assimilated with the inhabitants of the central plains, while some established the alliance of the three *Miáo* tribes (*sān Miáo* 三苗). *Chīyóu*'s legacy endures in customs and beliefs, as he is still worshipped as the distant ancestor of the *Miáo* ethnic group. He remains a part of *Miáo* mythology and cosmology, influencing various aspects of *Miáo* daily life to this day (ChinaKnowledge Chiyoun/a; Yang, An and Turner 2008: 92–94).

3.1.6 Research on *Chīyóu* Culture *Hùnyuán*'s Encounter and Interpretation

GMHY considers the figure of *Chīyóu* as an essential figure for his teachings on world peace. In his book “Research on Chiyou Culture” he explains what the ancestors and in particular *Chīyóu* revealed to him and how WXSJ integrates *Chīyóu* into the ancestral system. *Chīyóu* as one of the three Chinese ancestors plays a crucial role in the teachings of WXSJ. As the opponent of *Huángdì* and *Yándì* *Hùnyuán* considers *Chīyóu* as forsaken by the historical records. It is impossible to deny *Chīyóu* as one of the ancestors because the bloodlines of the Chinese civilisations’ sons and daughters traced back over the generations have intermixed. The souls of the deceased who have descended from the *Chīyóu* tribes had for long time to suffer this corruption in the spirit world. To avoid revenge from the rebuffed souls of these ancestors the necessity of vindication is indispensable. The examination of history should therefore examine the common Chinese bloodline, the different forms of wisdom the ancestors acquired and the secrets of their divine profundities they have to offer. If one fails to trace back the roots, and fails to convey gratitude, then s/he does not fulfil the virtue of filial piety.

My translation of some quotations of GMHY shall give us an impression how he encountered the spirit of *Chīyóu* and explains the historical account with the aim to reconcile the ancestors.

“The quarrel (right and wrong) between *Huángdì*, *Yándì*, and *Chīyóu* has been in chaos for thousands of years, and no one can figure it out. Let me tell you that there was no one to discuss the false accusations *Chīyóu* has been suffering for 4,644 years”. (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 3).⁴

“Four thousand six hundred and forty-four years ago, *Chīyóu* and *Shénnóng* were originally good friends, but because of the conflict between their offspring (descendants) or subordinates, it evolved into a conflict between the leaders. [...] *Huángdì* and *Shénnóng* fought together against *Chīyóu* in eighty-one rounds before defeating *Chīyóu*. *Chīyóu* fled to *Fánshān*, but was captured and killed, his body being dismembered at *Lǐmǎ* Pass due to exhaustion of his riding animal. Since then, there has been an endless hatred and resentment” (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 5).⁵

⁴ 黃帝、炎帝、蚩尤之間的是是非非，幾千年來一直是混混沌沌，誰也弄不清楚。我告訴各位，蚩尤含冤莫辯已經四千六百四十四年了。

⁵ 四千六百四十四年前，蚩尤和神農本來是好朋友，但二人因為子孫或屬下的衝突，演變成領導人的衝突。[...]黃帝神農聯合作戰，打蚩尤打了九九八十一回合，才戰勝蚩尤。蚩尤往裡面的礬山逃，在立馬關因坐騎力竭被擒殺，身首異處。此後恨和怨沒完沒了。

Hùnyuán explains that the history of the battle was written by the victors and concludes that the underlying cause of *Chīyóu*'s defeat is rooted in the art of war, which he relates to the central teachings of *Yījīng* and *fēngshuǐ*:

“In the end, why was *Chīyóu* defeated? This involves the art of war, that is, the laws and rules of *Yījīng* and *fēngshuǐ*” (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 6).⁶

After *Chīyóu* was defeated, his subjects fled, and those who did not escape surrendered to *Yándì* and *Huángdì*. According to historical textual research, a large group of *Chīyóu* people went to southern *Xīnjiāng* and became the *Miáo* nationality, and some of them withdrew to the east to South Korea. [...]” (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 7).⁷

蚩尤打敗了之後,子民逃的逃,沒逃的就歸順炎黃。根據歷史考證,蚩尤子民有一大群跑到南疆,成為苗族,有一部分往東撤,到了韓國。

Hùnyuán tells the story of his encounter with *Chīyóu* in Taiwan: “[...] I was in Taiwan. Suddenly, a tall and mighty person with a long beard, straight eyebrows, and a long face, mighty and yet compassionate. appeared in front of me. I said: May I ask what heavenly being you are? He replied: “I am *Chīyóu*. “ “Where do you come from?” “From Mount *Yúnmèng*.” “What's Your concern?” “My case must be settled, otherwise the *Bāguà* City cannot be built” (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 7–8).⁸

After this divine apparition *Hùnyuán* contacted the ancestors and was told that there was still hate and resentment. So, it was necessary to conciliate *Chīyóu* and then there will be no trouble building the *Bāguà* City. *Hùnyuán* established again contact with *Chīyóu* to solve the problem. On the way to *Bāguà* City *Chīyóu* appeared again and made an appointment with *Hùnyuán* in *Zhuōlù* province, *Héběi*, in Mainland China.

“In the afternoon of the next day, the *Zhuōlù* County Government used an escort vehicle to guide us to the ‘*Guīgēnyuàn*’ – Three Ancestors Temple of the Chinese. When I entered, I was surprised that the three ancestors *Huángdì*, *Yándì*, and *Chīyóu* were enshrined in the hall. I asked the secretary of *Zhuōlù* County, *Rèn Chānghuá*, don't you oppose *Chīyóu*? He said that

⁶ 最後蚩尤為什麼打敗?這牽涉到兵法,也就是易經和風水的法則。

⁷ 蚩尤打敗了之後,子民逃的逃,沒逃的就歸順炎黃。根據歷史考證,蚩尤子民有一大群跑到南疆,成為苗族,有一部分往東撤,到了韓國。

⁸ [...] 我在台灣,這天突然有一個鬍鬚很長,眉毛直的,臉也很長,威猛而又慈悲,高大威武的人出現在眼前。我說:「請問是何方神聖?」祂回答:「我就是蚩尤。」「請問從何來?」「從雲夢山來。」「有何貴事?」「我的事情要擺平,不然八卦城蓋不起來。」

it was others who opposed, but he made a vow to Ancestor *Chīyóu* to vindicate him” (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 9).⁹

The country secretary disclosed that he had had a final diagnosis of bone cancer with no expectations of healing, so he made a vow to ancestor *Chīyóu* to vindicate him and reconfirm his history. After his bone cancer got better, he decided to build the Three Ancestors Temple.

We see here a parallel of healing by invoking divine powers. *Hùnyuán* changed his way of life after he was unexpectedly cured from his kidney problems. *Hùnyuán* was grieved by the thought that only very few of the descendants of the Chinese nation have realised that *Chīyóu* is likewise one of their ancestors:

“We have been reincarnated from age to age for hundreds of generations. I believe that in our blood, there must be that of *Chīyóu*, our ancestors. Why are we so ignorant?” (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 10).¹⁰

Hùnyuán discusses the alleged omissions of the historians and explains why *Chīyóu* became the devil for thousands of years. He describes the magical powers of *Chīyóu* and explains the latter’s relations to the Yellow Emperor and *Guīgǔzi*. Important is the next encounter with *Chīyóu* on Mount *Yúnmèng* mountain which gives us a basis for the importance of ancestor worship and subsequently the disaster relief actions:

“When I was in *Chīyóu*’s camp, I saw thousands of horses galloping. Suddenly, my eyes seemed to see something. Everyone surrounded a tall general, it was none other than *Chīyóu* whom I had seen on Mount *Yúnmèng*. He opened up to me again: ‘My affairs should be levelled, or within seven days there will be a world war.’ I asked the secretary Rèn beside me, ‘Did you see the tall horse man? He said no’” (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 11).¹¹

Hùnyuán started to collect money from Taiwanese businessmen to build a shrine and ward off the danger of war: “I reported to Ancestor *Chīyóu*, ‘We will build a shrine for you, so that future generations, the children of the entire Chinese nation, will know that there is an old ancestor

⁹ 第二天下午,涿鹿縣政府用前導車引導我們到了「歸根苑」——中華三祖堂。我入內一看,吃驚不已,殿堂上竟然供奉黃帝、炎帝、蚩尤帝三位老祖宗。我問涿鹿縣任昌華書記,你們不是反對蚩尤嗎?他說,反對的是別人,我向蚩尤祖發願,要為祂平反。

¹⁰ 我們生生世世轉生輪迴,已經幾百代了,我相信,我們身上流的血液裡面,一定有蚩尤老祖宗的我們為什麼那麼沒有智慧?

¹¹ 在蚩尤寨時,只見萬馬奔騰。突然間,我的眼睛好像看到一些東西,眾人簇擁一位高頭大馬的將領,就是我在雲夢山所看到的蚩尤。祂又跟我開示:我的事情要擺平,不然七天之內一定發生世界大戰我問在旁的任書記,看見那位高頭大馬的人沒有?他說「沒有啊。」

Chīyóu.’ [...] Ancestor *Chīyóu* said, ‘Okay, it’s settled in tranquillity.’ He left, and everything returned to tranquillity” (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 12).¹²

The conversations with the ancestors resulted in ancestor worship ceremonies in the years 2004, 2005 and 2006. “Our offering sacrifices to our ancestors means to know history, know the will of heaven, and know the realm of Dharma. In the joint ancestor worship ceremony in 2004, we invited 11,978 ancestor spirits, the holy spirits of 872 sons of heaven, and other emperors, to be offered sacrifices. [...] The ancestors taught that the ancestral spirits and the emperor’s holy spirits of the surnames we invited are not enough. So, we continued our search and finally found 15,615 surnames and 917 emperors” (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 13).¹³



The surnames of the ancestors are collected in a separate volume where the name tablets are shown.

Page 139 from “A record of the Sacred Names of the Emperors and the Ancestral and Religious Registry of Chinese Ethnicities.” Huang Feng Shi, Taiwan Gui Gu cultural Academy 2011 (1157 pages)

中華民族 天子帝王聖號錄列祖列宗姓氏譜

唯心聖教台灣鬼谷子學術研究會恭印
Weixin Shengjiao Gui Gu Zi Academic Research Association of Taiwan

The major reasons for the divisions of Chinese ethnicities into thousand different family clans lies in the past, when wars were waged and led to an inevitable splitting up of victors and losers.

¹² 我稟告蚩尤祖,「我們為祢蓋個祠,讓後代子孫,整個中華民族的兒女們,都了解有位蚩尤老祖宗。[...] 蚩尤祖說:「好,於平靜言為定。」就走了,一切歸於平靜。

¹³ 我們祭祖,就是要知道歷史、知道天意、知道法界。二〇〇四年的聯合祭祖大典,我們奉請了一萬一千九百七十八的祖靈、八百七十二天子帝王聖靈,來受納祭拜。[...] 老祖開示,我們請來的各姓氏祖靈和天子帝王聖靈是不夠的。所以我們又繼續找尋,終於找到一萬五千六百一十五姓氏、九百一十七位天子帝王。

The victors passed down their family names whereas the defeated sometimes changed their family names due to exile. The number of 11,978 ancestral surnames was determined by Weixin Shengjiao Taiwan's Association for Gui Gu Zi Research. This list was used as an offering during the Chinese Ancestors Worship Ceremony held on the lunar New Year of 2004. GMHY received a divine message to continue compiling the list. The final list of 15,615 family names is used at Dharma ceremonies at various branch temples and regularly at each year's Chinese United Ancestor Worship Ceremonies. A list of finally 917 emperor sons of heaven was specially compiled into this print edition. Additional textual research was carried out in order to include the sagacious rulers of the Chinese bloodline who became prominent in Korea and Vietnam. This is our heartfelt contribution towards ethnic harmony and integration.

This extends the Chinese ancestry to neighbouring countries of China and even to all Chinese on earth. Because of the mixing of peoples around the globe practically everybody could have a lineage to the ancient ancestors (Huang, 2011: x). "Recently, the ancestors revealed that the ancestor worship ceremony traced back to the source is closely related to the four points of Japan, South Korea, the mainland, and Taiwan. Everyone should find a point of balance in their hearts (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 15).¹⁴

In a question and answer dialogue GMHY asks after the belief in ancestors, reincarnation and the importance of the family name. He concludes with the possibility for everybody to have a common genealogical root in the ancestor *Chīyóu*:

"The Chinese nation started with the battle of *Zhuōlù* and there have been 3,762 large and small wars, accumulating hatred, repaying grievances, repeating itself, and it is still criticizing, fighting and arguing. Both sides of the Taiwan Strait are also the sons and daughters of the three ancestors of China, and they are still humiliating each other. For thousands of years, among the nearly 1.8 billion Chinese sons and daughters in the world, it is believed that countless people have the *Chīyóu* bloodline. The 'superior instructor' finally agreed with me" (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 21).¹⁵

¹⁴ 最近老祖開示,追根溯源的祭祖大典,日本、韓國、大陸、台灣這四個點息息相關,大家要去尋找一個心的平衡點。

¹⁵ 中華民族從涿鹿之戰開始,到現在已經有三千七百六十二次的大小戰爭,積累仇恨,冤冤相報,週而復始,至今還在批、鬥、爭。包括海峽兩岸同樣是中華三祖的兒女,也還在相互地欺凌。幾千年下來,在全世界近十八億中華兒女中,相信有數不清的人都有蚩尤氏血脈「上級指導員」終於同意我的說法。

As all the teachings culminate in world peace, his revelations of the common Chinese ancestors are deemed by GMHY the proper basis to establish peace talks with mainland China. The question remains if the party rulers can be impressed by those deeds. So he goes on declaring his mission:

“My purpose is to hope that the Chinese nation will not be divided. The Chinese people must trace their roots and understand our ancestors, the three ancestors of China. The future of the Chinese nation will be bright in the next 5,000 to tens of thousands of years. Otherwise, there will be constant wars and incessant reports of injustice and grievance” (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 23).¹⁶

This idea that the whole world can be traced back in some form to Chinese ancestors may possibly apply to parts of the Asian region, for the rest of the world this hypothesis seems quite daring to me. However, this idea forms the basis for the concept of a religion of peace and asserts the claim to bring about peace for the whole world for the next thousands of years.

In his explanation for why *Chīyóu* was ultimately defeated, he references the *Art of War* (*Sūnzi bīngfǎ* 孫子兵法), the *Yijing*, and the principles of *fēngshuǐ*. The emphasis on humankind’s shared kinship is further reinforced by the doctrine of reincarnation. GMHY speculates that he might have been born on a different continent in one of his past lives:

“In this lifetime, I was born with the appearance of a member of the *Hàn* Chinese ethnic group, with yellow skin. However, it is possible that several generations ago, I may have been reincarnated in Africa, with skin as dark as charcoal, deeply black (Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi 2008: 27).¹⁷

3.1.7 *Guǐgǔ Immortal Master Wáng Chán Lǎozǐ*

Guǐgǔzi 鬼谷子, literally “Master of the Ghost Valley,” and sometimes referred to as *Xuánwēizi* 玄微子, meaning “Master of the Mysterious Small,” is a philosophical treatise attributed to a master bearing the same name. The true identity of the author remains

¹⁶ 我的目的是希望中華民族不能分裂,中華兒女要追根溯源,要認識我們老祖宗——中華三祖,中華民族未來五千年到萬萬年才能光明,不然還是戰爭不斷,冤冤相報不停的。

¹⁷ 我這一生出生為中華民族的形狀,黃種人,但可能我好幾輩以前曾投胎到非洲,皮膚像木炭,黑漆漆的。

ambiguous. It is said that he resided in the Ghost Valley (*Guǐgǔ* 鬼谷) within the region of *Yǐngchuān* 潁川 during the Spring and Autumn period (c. 770–481 BCE).

Daoist writer *Dù Guāngtíng* 杜光庭, noted in the *Lùyìjì* 錄異記, claims that the master's name was *Wángxǔ* 王詡 and that he had attained immortality during the time of the Yellow Emperor, existing for centuries. The extent of his later fate is shrouded in uncertainty. Notably, the book *Guǐgǔzi* does not appear in the official dynastic history *Hànshū* 漢書 or in the imperial bibliography *Yìwénzhì* 藝文志. Recent discoveries of original writings by advisors of various coalitions confirm that *Guǐgǔzi* is a later forgery, likely from the Southern and Northern Dynasties period (c. 300–600).

At times, the *Guǐgǔzi* is classified among military treatises. It stressed the critical importance of continually assessing current conditions in an era of constant change. Regarding military strategy, the text expounds on the art of conjecture, political counsel, secret planning, and the use of occasional pressure and restraint (*fēi qián* 飛箝, “flying and pinching”). It asserts that gathering intelligence on the enemy while safeguarding one's own plans is the most effective method for achieving success in campaigns.

The teachings within the *Guǐgǔzi* are generally considered to be of lesser quality compared to those of other masters from the Warring States period. Only the commentary by the Daoist master *Táo Hóngjǐng* 陶弘景 (c. 456–536 CE) has endured. *Táo* was responsible for the Daoist reinterpretation of the *Guǐgǔzi*, adding the final three chapters and incorporating it into the Daoist Canon, known as *Dàoàng* 道藏 (ChinaKnowledge Guiguzi n/a).

Guǐgǔzi is in direct contact with GMHY – he is venerated as *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ* a reincarnation of *Guǐgǔzi*: “Today Wang Chan Lao Chu and the founder of Weixin Shengjiao Grand Master Hun Yuan united” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 53). Hence, GMHY is in direct contact with the sages of Chinese history and transmits their advice to humanity.

GMHY taught: “Wang Chan Lao Chu, in the world of tai chi, called “Wang Chan Lao Chu”. In the Warring States period, he was called Guiguzi. He had 108 disciples. Strategists Su, Zhang Yi, military strategist Sun Bin, Pang Juan, Japanese immortal Xu Fu, the elixir Mao Meng, orator Mao Sui, etc. were born in that time. Guiguzi was also the descendant of the Yellow Emperor. His wisdom is a major stop in Chinese cultural journey, from the Yellow Emperor culture to the present sciences, humanities, education and so on. He cultivated himself to be an immortal, named Guigu.” *Guǐgǔzi* became a sage in the tai chi world through his spiritual enlightenment. During the decline of the Dharma “the merciful Grand master of Taiwan

ancestor in the invisible world respectfully invited the Sage Gui Gu Immortal Master Wan Chan Lao Chu to descend and instruct his Dharma: I Ching Feng Shui Studies” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 53–54). GMHY’s teachings and instruction are uniting heaven and humanity. His merging of Buddhism, Daoism, different religious ideas with the *Yijing* is an interpretation of *Guiguzi*’s Dharma. The wisdom of *Guiguzi* includes self-cultivation, running one’s family, governing the country even ruling the world. GMHY made it his human destiny to propagate the dharma which “is more than just about war, diplomatics and politics but it is a beacon of merciful salvation. It includes eighty-four thousand Dharmas. [...] Guiguzi’s great wisdom has spread from China, glowing everywhere in the world and it has benefited people. His divine wisdom has saved Taiwanese fellows and shined over every corner of the world, which cannot be understood by ordinary people. His merits are as respectable as heaven. Whether the peace between cross-straits or world peace, all should rely on Guiguzi wisdom in order to successfully realize wishes” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 53-54).

3.1.8 *Kūnlún* Civilisation – *Kūnlún* Mountain

There are different sources concerning the remarkable mystical mountains in Chinese mythology which are important for the teachings of WXSJ. It is considered as the basis for human civilization.

“The Kunlun range 崑崙, also simply written 昆侖, was according to Chinese mythology a mountain range far in the west. According to the book *SHANHAIJING* 山海經, it was the terrestrial capital (*xiadu* 下都) of the Heavenly (Yellow) Emperor 黃帝. [...] The book *HUAINANZI* 淮南子 says that the Kunlun Range was 11,000 *li* high (one *li* being about 500 m), while the history book *SHIJI* 史記 only speaks of 2,500 *li*. Another mountain range called Kunlun is mentioned in the *Shanhaijing*. It is identified with a mountain called Fangzhang 方丈 that is located in the southeast or in the Eastern Sea. This proves that the term *kunlun* just meant a very high mountain. Today, the mountain range locking the Tibetan Highland against the Takla Makan Desert in the Tarim Basin in the north is called Kunlun Range” (ChinaKnowledge Kunlun n/a).

In various other sources “Kunlun appears as a pillar of the sky, (or a pillar of the earth) located at the centre of the world. This was the paradise of the deities and immortals, the place where the sun and the moon hid in turn while the other one glared out of the blue sky, and a huge divine mountain that contained numerous marvellous and wonderful items.” Some versions state that *Kūnlún* Mountain was composed of three tiers. The highest one was named the Palace

of Heaven and was the residence of the Supreme Divinity (*Tàidì* 太帝). *Kūnlún* was associated with *Xīwángmǔ* 西王母, or the Queen Mother of the West. *Kūnlún* still plays a significant role in later traditions, novels, and opera (Yang, An and Turner 2008: 160–163).

In an article on the platform “German.CHINA.ORG.CN” dated September 5, 2016, it was reported that field investigations have begun in the *Kūnlún* Mountains. The aim is to unravel the mysteries that have puzzled researchers for decades. Numerous stories begin with the *Kūnlún* Mountains being considered the geographical starting point and origin of Chinese civilization in ancient China. However, the mountains were only a legend, and their exact location remained unknown. Yang Lin, the archaeological expert from the Chinese National Museum, believes that in ancient China, people regarded *Kūnlún* as the abode of gods and sacred animals. Records of worship towards *Kūnlún* can be found on bone and bronze inscriptions from the *Shāng* and *Zhōu* dynasties. During the *Qín* dynasty, people perceived the heavens and earth as representatives of the gods, and they began promoting the unity of the country, hence *Kūnlún* was seen as a symbol for the emperor. During the Western *Hàn* Dynasty, Emperor *Wǔ* [*Hàn wǔdì* 漢武帝] mapped the mountains and established the name *Kūnlún* in southern *Xīnjiāng* 新疆. Ye Shuxian, a scholar from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, attributes the naming of the location by Emperor Wu to the region’s renowned jade deposits. Yang Lin also presents another argument related to the Yellow River. In ancient China, it was believed that the Yellow River was the longest river in the world, so it must have been formed by the confluence of small rivers originating in the western highlands. “Kunlun Mountains were referred to as the source of the Yellow River and even the origin of Chinese civilization. This also reflects the emperor’s authority and the ancient Chinese people’s pursuit of unity.” According to experts, the origin of the Yellow River in the minds of the ancient Chinese is a cultural concept and not necessarily tied to an exact geographical location (German.CHINA.ORG:CN: 2016).

Kūnlún from the view of WXSJ referred to in a feature story of Weixinism News. “WXSJ is based on heaven and earth as our teacher. We learn and follow the Law of the Universe to operate. WXSJ’s orthodoxy was originated from the true God of the Universe Hong Jun Lao Zu [*Hóngjūn Lǎozǔ* 鴻鈞, 老祖]. That was about fourteen thousand and five hundred years ago. The universe was during the period of primordial chaos that before human life began on earth. Hong Jun Lao Zu was the first ancestor of Kunlun civilisation opened the primal chaos mystery. He was the Great Primal Ancestor” (Weixinism News 2016-11-01 2016: 2:03-7:24; Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 36). The origin of human civilization is dated 14.500 years ago, and the first ancestor of the mythical hierarchy is *Hóngjūn Lǎozǔ* who in Chinese creation myths

appears as “Great Primal Ancestor” also referred to as “Ancestor of Original Chaos” (*Hóngyuán Lǎozǔ* 鴻元老祖) (Hongjun Laozu 鴻鈞老祖, n/a).

The geography of *Kūnlún* is an important factor for the connections with Taiwan and the relations of Chinese people. In WXSJ dragon veins and dragon knots are mythical places and connect mainland China with Taiwan. But there are many different interpretations of *Kūnlún* in the mythological literature, which even link Africa with China and historical situations of slavery (ChinaKnowledge Kunlun, n/a).

3.2 *Wéixīn Shèngjiào*’s Classic Scriptures

The notion of classical texts holds a rather flexible position within the WXSJ. GMHY maintains a high level of inclusivity towards the Three Teachings, welcoming any sacred scriptures for recitation. This approach is deeply rooted in the belief that these scriptures embody the wisdom of the sages and serve as guides for the pursuit of enlightenment. As a result, practitioners from other religious groups are encouraged to recite diverse scriptures, as they all contribute to personal growth and self-improvement. Consequently, there exists an unrestricted range of scriptures recited by the followers, encompassing texts from different traditions and schools.

Fiona Chang gives a list of six Buddhist classics, including the “Avalokitesvara Sutra,” *Diamond Sūtra*,” and “Buddha Says Great Amitabha Sutra,” along with several scriptures from folk sects revealed through planchette writing (*fúluán* 扶鸞).

Within the teachings of WXSJ, there exists a considerable influence of Buddhist doctrines. However, GMHY’s interpretation is predominantly rooted in the essence of the *dào*, making it an integral part of the practices within the WXSJ. When elucidating folk religions and Confucian classics, he skilfully employs the concepts of *yīn* 陰 and *yáng* 陽 and Five Elements (*wǔxíng* 五行) to harmonize with Buddhism, particularly emphasizing the integration and intercommunication between the *Yijing* and Buddhism.

The prevailing trend of “Three Teachings in one” during the *Míng* 明 and *Qīng* 清 dynasties greatly impacted the formation and evolution of various folk sects. However, each religious group adopted a distinct approach in blending the three religions, and each cherished its preferred doctrines and classics. By examining the scriptures employed in their rituals, it becomes evident that the fundamental teachings lean towards Buddhism. However, in the elucidation of scriptures, Buddhist concepts intersect with those of the three religions, all the while infused with the spirit of Dao. As WXSJ evolved, there was a notable shift in the emphasis of their lectures from Buddhist classics to Daoist scriptures. While the Daoist classics cover a wide

array of cultivation practices, the primary focus within WXSJ remained on “cultivation” rather than “alchemy¹⁸.”

This change in focus reflects the significance placed on spiritual development and inner refinement through various cultivation processes found in Daoist teachings. Whereas alchemy is a vital aspect of Daoism, WXSJ prioritizes the transformative and self-improvement aspects of spiritual cultivation to guide its followers towards a more enlightened path (Chang 2014: 17–20). Alongside the teachings of the Three Teachings, GMHY also began to produce his own revelatory classics. These classics were born with their unique social and cultural backgrounds, addressing issues related to cross-strait relations or resolving natural disasters. Additionally, in various self-created disaster-eliminating and calamity-resolving rituals within WXSJ, the teaching scriptures were progressively incorporated and used in conjunction with written texts. Reciting the revelatory classics became an important daily practice for WXSJ followers. The appearance of such writings (i.e., revelations from heaven) is a common phenomenon in many new religions, where the divine will is recorded in human words through the comprehension of prophets, sages, or saints, guiding the direction of the religious group.

Among the “Thirty Sūtras” used by WXSJ, eighteen of them were born through divine revelations within the church. There are forty-seven scriptures in total, rich in variety, including classics, divine decrees, manuals for ritual practices, verses, and hymns. Their contents are closely related to the elements of the *bāguà* and Five Elements, and they are meant to fully embody the philosophy of the *Yijing*. The architectural design of WXSJ’s places of worship also reflects the concept of the Five Elements from these scriptures. It can be said that the divine revelations not only express the ideological thoughts of WXSJ but also serve as practical guiding principles in religious practice.

GMHY, seen as embodying the unity of heaven and humanity alongside Patriarch *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ* (*Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ Chánshī* 王禪老祖禪師), has allegedly experienced direct revelations from higher realms on multiple occasions throughout his spiritual journey. These divine insights have directed his various undertakings, including the establishment of sacred sites, the documentation of rituals and scriptures, the dissemination of teachings to followers, involvement in spiritual healing, and the practice of *fēngshuǐ*. All these endeavours have been guided by the divine will of *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ*. GMHY’s dedication to serving Patriarch *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ* with his body, speech, and mind is thought to demonstrate his selflessness and commitment to benefiting all sentient beings. This selfless and altruistic mindset naturally resonates

¹⁸ Chinese alchemy *Jīndān zhī dào* 金丹之道 divided into two methods of practice: outer *wàidān* 外丹 and inner *nèidān* 内丹 alchemy

with divine spirits, eliciting their guidance and support. As a result, GMHY's actions, words, and deeds are seen as a reflection of Patriarch *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ*'s teachings and influence. Emically, these scriptures are deemed "revelations of the Patriarch," signifying teachings directly imparted to GMHY by the Patriarch *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ* himself. Serving as the earthly spokesman for the divine, GMHY extracts the essence from the celestial realm and translates it into human language.

In 1996, GMHY reportedly received direct divine inspiration from Patriarch *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ* and recorded the "Feng Shui Zhen Jing" (*Fēngshuǐ zhēnjīng* 風水真經) which became the first revelatory scripture of WXSJ. Since then, every one or two years, new scriptures or sacred decrees have been revealed, gradually becoming the foundation of rituals and spiritual practice in WXSJ.

Furthermore, the revelation of this scripture also aimed to prove that *fēngshuǐ* is not merely superstition or quagmire, but rather the manifestation of the true harmony between heaven and earth.

In addition to stressing the importance of adhering to the rightful path of *fēngshuǐ*, the "Feng Shui Zheng Jing" also provides practical explanations of the fundamental principles of *fēngshuǐ*, along with the favourable and unfavourable qualities associated with the Five Elements in different directions. It underscores the notion that aligning with proper *fēngshuǐ* contributes to personal alignment, resulting in a harmonious mental state that aids meditation practice and facilitates the attainment of "samadhi" or profound concentration. Therefore, *fēngshuǐ* is intricately connected to Buddhist teachings. Ultimately, it motivates adherents to diligently recite and study this scripture, as persistent engagement will eventually yield a deep comprehension of the intricate techniques of *fēngshuǐ*, ultimately culminating in the realization of a spiritually enlightened Buddhist realm (Chang 2014: 23–28).

3.3 *Wéixīn Shèngjiào*'s Classics Revelations from Heaven

Throughout the evolution of WXSJ, GMHY fused the classical texts of the Three Teachings, *Yijing*, and *fēngshuǐ* with the writings that were personally revealed to him by his spiritual guide through meditative and spiritual experiences. This fusion gave rise to a distinctive and exceptional canon of religious texts within WXSJ.

Below I give an overview of the texts received by GMHY through his connection with Guīgǔzi, as listed in English publications combined with the original Chinese titles which have been

matched according to a compilation by Fiona Chang in her master's thesis. The year of revelation is given in brackets.¹⁹

- (1) “Feng Shui Sutra”: *Fēng shuǐ zhēn jīng* 風水真經 (1996)
- (2) “Weixin Female Heart Method”: *Wéixīn zōng nǚxīn fǎ jì* 唯心宗女心法偈 (1997)
- (3) “Hun Yuan Bao Zhao Jue Sutra”: *Hùn yuán chánshī xiūzhēn bǎo zhào jué jīng* 混元禪師修真寶照覺經 (2002)
- (4) “The Weixin Sutra for Three Chinese Ancestors”: *Zhōnghuá sān zǔ wéixīn bǎo gào* 中華三祖唯心寶誥 (2002)
- (5) “The Story of holy spirits of Chinese Ancestor's Merits and virtues”: *Zhōnghuá mínzú yánhuáng zǐsūn liè zǔxiān xián shènglíng guī huáng líng jìngtǔ yuánmǎn gōngdé jīng* 中華民族炎黃子孫列祖先賢聖靈歸黃陵淨土圓滿功德經 (2001)
- (6) “The Sutra of Gui Gu immortal Master's Heaven Virtues”: *Guǐ gǔ xiān shī tiān dé jīng* 鬼谷仙師天德經(2003) English translation (2021)
- (7) “Grand Master Hun Yuan Worship Thirty-Six Tian Gang Achievements”: *Hùn yuán chánshī sānshíliù tiāngāng xīn fǎ chéngjiù fǎ yí* 混元禪師三十六天罡心法成就法儀 (2005)
- (8) “Prayers for the World Peace and inviting Five Hundred Immortal Nobles Together to turn the Wheel of Falun”: *Qíqiú shìjiè héping fèng qǐng wǔbǎi zūn zhě jiāchí gòng zhuǎn héping fǎlún jì wén* 祈求世界和平奉請五百尊者加持共轉和平法輪偈文 (2006)
- (9) “Worship Seventy-Two Immortals to Turn the Wheel of Falun”: *Qǐshǒu qīshíèr tiān shī jiāchí shì héping gòng zhuǎn fǎlún bǎo gào* 稽首七十二天師加持世和平共轉法輪寶誥 (2007)
- (10) “The Weixin Sutra of Tracing Chinese Soldiers Souls”: *Zhuīgēn sùyuán zhōnghuá jūn hún shōu yuán wéixīn bǎo gào* 追根溯源中華軍魂收圓唯心寶誥* (2009)
- (11) “The Sutra of Weixin Shengjiao Heart Calmness”: *Wéixīn shèngjiào ānxīn zhēn jīng* 唯心聖教安心真經 (2009)
- (12) “The Soul of Ancestors Returning Sutra”: *Zhōnghuá mínzú liè zǔ liè zōng wàn líng guīxīn bǎo gào* 中華民族列祖列宗萬靈歸心寶誥 (2011)
- (13) “The Immortal Guigu Chinese Three Ancestor's Mystery Sutra”: *Guǐ gǔ xiān shī*

¹⁹ The English translations differ sometimes e.g. “The Sutra of Gui Gu Immortal Master's Heaven Virtues” reads in the official Translation first published December 2021 “The Heavenly Virtue Scripture of Immortal Master Guigu”.

zhōnghuá sān zǔ xuánmiào jīng 鬼谷仙師中華三祖玄妙經 (2011)

(14) “The Sutra of Weixin Shengjiao 2013 Annual Ninety-Nine Puja²⁰”: *Wéixīn shèngjiào guīsì nián jiǔjiǔ fǎ huì yīnyuán bǎo gào* 唯心聖教癸巳年九九法會因緣寶告 (2013)

(15) “Plead Seventy-Two Immortals for Eighty-Eight Wishes”: *Qǐshǒu qīshí tiān shī bāshíbā yuàn bǎo gào* 稽首七十天師八十八願寶誥 (2013)

(16) “The Sutra of Gui Gu Immortal Master’s Five Road Fortune God” (No translation so far) (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 50; Chang 2014: 34).

3.3.1 The Functional Analysis of the Revelatory Classics

From a chronological perspective, it can be observed that approximately every one to three years, a new revelation or sacred decree emerges, indicating that the divine teachings of Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ are ongoing and frequent.

Overall, the revelatory scriptures of WXSJ serve four main functions: (1) imparting methods and principles of cultivation; (2) pacifying ancestral spirits and quelling the spirits of war; (3) declaring the lineage and legitimacy of the teaching; and (4) serving for contemplation, reflection, and worship. The vengeful spirits of wars also arise from the conflicts of the Three Ancestors. WXSJ has allegedly investigated a total of 3,762 recorded major and minor wars in Chinese history, as well as 816 wars from various countries around the world. It also considers the transformation of these war souls as one of the objectives of its ritual ceremonies. The tracing of ancestral spirits is full of ethical and moral consciousness. The *Yijīng* encompasses hexagrams and lines, incorporating six relational categories known as the “Six Relatives”: father, mother, older brother, younger brother, wife, wealth, and officials. These relatives are aligned with the Five Elements, demonstrating mutual growth, mutual restraint, and mutual punishment. The interplay between these relatives mirrors the ethical guidelines, and the emphasis on “ancestor worship” in the WXSJ underscores the *Yijīng*’s perspective on ethical order. When ancestral spirits are at peace, they generate harmonious relationships among descendants, ensuring a smooth and complete cycle. Conversely, restless ancestral spirits can restrict future generations, creating a chain reaction that leads to societal unrest.

From a Buddhist perspective of reincarnation employed by WXSJ, human lives perpetually cycle within the realm of karma. Actions sowed by ignorance in the past yield consequences in

²⁰ Puja (*fǎ gòng* 法供)

the future, with ancestral karma likewise impacting the harmony of generations yet to come. These intricate connections interweave people's lives, forming a complex tapestry of interdependence. If the unresolved spirits of those who perished in war remain un-transcended and unsettled, it becomes a catalyst for the resurgence of countless conflicts in the times ahead. As a result, a significant portion of the apocalyptic scriptures of WXSJ is dedicated to addressing war-related grievances and facilitating a process of catharsis and profound transformation. In general, the revelatory texts of WXSJ centre their content on the entirety of humankind and the wider scope of spiritual entities within the metaphysical realm. The initial stages involve personal growth and spiritual advancement, which establish the bedrock for maintaining moral values and guiding principles. At its core, the ultimate concern is world peace and the creation of a tranquil and harmonious pure land in the present life (Chang 2014: 35-37).

3.3.2 Excerpts from “The Heavenly Virtue Scripture of Immortal Master Guigu” 鬼谷仙師天德經

This text is the primary scripture of WXSJ. It is dedicated to eliminating natural disasters and calamities, leading to world peace and peaceful mind. According to WXSJ: “Grand Master Hun Yuan humbly recorded the sutra at the Heavenly altar on Hsien Fo temple. Heaven dropped sweet rain. And on the Chinese Lunar Year, 9 July 2003, around 3 to 5 pm it was finished, the glorious Nan-Tien Gate fill the void in the world. Saints, gods, and Buddha praise Guigu's mantra. The crowds are happy. [...] The Sutra of Gui Gu Immortal Master's Heavenly Virtue instructed that every rules are inseparable from Bagua. [...] Bagua is the truth, is invisible, incredible and contains intricate life. It is the driving force of life, the basic elements of survival for all creatures. It is the noble eightfold path. He said, ‘Gui Gu Immortal Master Wan Chan Lao Chu handed down the Sutra of Heavenly Virtues, which is based on the complex of Bagua. By *Yijing*, the wisdom of Bagua can be developed. It can be applied to everyday life, on the career, or self-cultivation. It leads to the state that knowing is acting, the highest realm of epiphany” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 46).

According to Fiona Chang in her postscript to the English translation of “The Heavenly Virtue Scripture of Immortal Master Guigu,” this scripture “is the manifestation of the heavenly might and righteous qi of all heavenly sages, deities, buddhas, and bodhisattvas, can indeed resolve injustices and grievances for Maras of Plague [*Wēnshén* 瘟神, God of plague] and safeguard the peace and of Taiwan and the harmony of the world and is gradually gaining international recognition” (HVS 2021: n/p). The positive influence of the scripture is backed up as follows:

“Since then, the Wonderful Dharma has come into the world and accomplished a series of meritorious deeds, that have resolved global disasters. Through transferring the merits of reciting scriptures, several disasters have been eliminated, including avian influenza outbreak in 2005, ozone depletion crisis in 2007, Mt. Fuji eruption crisis in Japan and Yellowstone active volcano eruption crisis in America in 2012, Ebola Virus outbreak in 2014 to 2015, world famine and war crisis in 2015 - 2016, the missile test crisis in North Korea in 2017, and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 and 2021. All these proved that the merit and virtue of the scripture, The Heavenly Virtue Scripture of Immortal Master Guigu, is authentic” (HVS 2021: n/p).

The Structure of the Sūtra

Below I give the introductory passages and an overview of the revelations which are cited from the official English translation of the scripture:

“The Heavenly Virtue Scripture of Immortal Master Guigu

Respectful Invitation

The Treasured Declaration to Immortal Master Guigu

Whole-heartedly, I take refuge. (Make this invocation three times)

Elder of the Dao of the Great Canopy Heaven! Ancient Immortal of the Upper Realms!

With supreme insight into mysterious practices, He controls the pivot point of yin and yang to grant good fortune. With His mastery in the study of the Dao, He understands the mysteries of the Nature and Destiny of divine beings and humanity. On the peak of Yunmeng [*Yúnmèng* 云夢] mountain, He refined the elixir and plucked medical herbs. In Shuilian cave [*Shuǐliándòng* 水簾洞], He purified His bone marrow and scraped away His hair. He attained an indestructible Diamond Body and refined the essence of the eternal light of the Jade Mirror. With miraculous foresight, He distinguished between the auspicious and inauspicious among humanity.

With subtle precision in His magical arts, He rid the world of calamities and kalpa disasters. Compassionately pitying the world, His merit is as high as Heaven, His name has been renowned since antiquity, His Dao has spread through the entire cosmos. Descending to this world of dust, He brings gales and storms. Opening the path of enlightenment for humanity, He bestows rain and dew. Pardoning transgressions and erasing faults, He cultivates all beings and leads them to a better life. Such great compassion! Such a great vow! Such great virtue! Such great benevolence!

I take refuge in:

Wang Chan Lao Zu of the Great Canopy of Heaven and the Profound Realm of the Amber Empyrean; He who helps humanity to cross over and who saves the world; The Celestial Worthy Propagating the Wondrous Dao. (Make this invocation three times)

Hymn to open the Scripture

In the Heavenly Realms of Miluo [*Míluó* 彌羅], the Golden Immortal of the Jade Bureau, participated in creation, emulating the “mystery upon a mystery”. His marvellous power spreads ever wider. His Dao has come to fruition; His cultivation is complete. His compassionate light illuminates the eight distant regions.

I take refuge in:

Wang Chan Lao Zu of the Great Canopy of Heaven and the Profound Realm of the Amber Empyrean; He who helps humanity to cross over and who saves the world; The Celestial Worthy Propagating the Wondrous Dao. (Make this invocation three times)

Gatha to Open the Scripture

On grassy mount Yunmeng, towering and majestic, the qi of the Dao rises high. Among the dust, He bestows great blessing. On the bitter sea, He calms the waves and breakers. Sending down good fortune, He bestows great favours. Eliminating calamities, He averts many disasters. Among immortals His name is ranked. Saving the world, He never shirks hardships.

The Heavenly Virtue Scripture of Immortal Master Guigu

Respectful Praise

Yin and yang, sun and moon, longest lived! So hard to fathom the Heavenly guides!

If true sage Guigu came here now, Great Peace would settle on the world!

I Solemnly Follow the Wise Sage

Immortal Master Guigu of great compassion and great mercy! Wang Chan Lao Zu, Celestial Worthy of Profound Edification and Eternal Salvation! On the ninth day of the seventh lunar month of the guiwei year in the heavenly cycle, in the Shrine of Heaven, He transmitted the Heart Dharma in the Empty Realm and revealed the Treasured Declaration of Heavenly Virtue of the 33 Heavens of the Southern Heaven: It says:

Among all the realms in the cosmos where the void is filled with limitless radiance, there is one called the “Realm of the Southern Heaven”. It is found on the Jambudivipa continent on this Sahā realm planet, which we call this mundane world. The “Heavenly Realm of Infinite Space” is located in the south of Taiwan, the Republic of China. It is also called the “Southern Heaven” [Nántiān 南天]. The Southern Heavenly Realm is made up of 33 individual heavenly realms which all have a heavenly king of unlimited virtue to protect its pure land. Each of them turns a dharma wheel to bless and protect divine beings and humanity.

[...] (Main text of the scripture) [...]

The Gatha for Closing the Scripture

This scripture, which descended as one chapter, is the boat that ferries people over the bitter sea. Forever awakening all living beings, it has been constantly taught, and reversed the wild current. Morning and evening, chant it sincerely and clearly, all your family will be protected and without worry.

Praise

The venerable leader of Weixin, instituted the Heart Dharma of the Changes. Nourishing and enriching the entire cosmos, his virtue is worthy of dissemination throughout the void. The radiance from the crown of his head, cultivates the heart and the true essential nature.

I take refuge in the Sage of Subtle Wisdom, the Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva.

Hymn for Closing the Scripture

The Immortal Master has passed down instructions. The obscure and wondrous Heavenly Virtue Scripture, calls out to waken people from their drunken dream, to cultivate and nourish their true spiritual nature, revolving the light to illuminate the Jade Emperor's court.

I take refuge in:

Wan Chan Lao Zu, Immortal Master Guigu, Celestial Worthy of Profound Edification and Eternal Salvation! (Make this invocation three times)

The Heavenly Virtue Scripture of Immortal Master Guig concludes here.

Transfer of Merit

I wish to use this merit, to adorn my Pure Land. All those who see or hear this scripture, will be saved completely by their essential natures. From now on, there will be no bitter misfortune. Those who hear it will gain wisdom. Those who believe in it will have confidence, that the world will soon see Great Peace.

Ninth day Seventh lunar month, guiwei year" (HVS 2021: 1–58).

In the following we learn about the importance of the Eight Trigrams which are related to heavenly mechanisms, transmitted by *Fúxī*. *Fúxī*'s arrangement of the trigrams is the basis, and the Qian (*tiān* 天) trigram is interpreted in great detail, the triple *yáng* lines are indicating good luck. Further we learn about the Jade Emperor, who dwells in the Qian Palace of the Southern Heavenly Realm, the thirty-three heavenly kings and palaces. The scripture reveals the location of all thirty-three heavenly palaces, the sacred names of the kings, and their characteristics.

I take three examples from the scripture:

“The seventh Heavenly Palace is above the north. The sacred name of the Heavenly King is the Water Dragon King. He sends down rain and dew to profit all living things. It is to his credit that everything grows and thrives. [...] The eighteenth Heavenly Palace is in the Heaven of the Four Treasuries. The sacred name of the Heavenly King is the Golden Heaven King. It has gold and silver, jewels and also lapislazuli. His virtue is like Heaven, and like the Jade Emperor. [...] The 33rd Heavenly Palace is the Heaven of Radiance. The sacred title of the Heaven King is the Jade Emperor. The three primes and the nine, which is purple, are the profound within the profound. The radiance from the crown of his head illuminates the entire cosmos” (HVS 2021: 32, 38, 54).

After these revelations we are informed, that GMHY reaching the age of sixty-one started the construction of the Southern Heaven Eight Trigrams City [*Nántiān Bāguà shì* 南天八卦市]. And from this point of time all the virtuous and knowledgeable, those who are virtuous and faithful in running their business, those who seek peace in their household, whoever rules the state, whoever suffers from illnesses to name a few are invited and encouraged to recite the one-chapter Heavenly Virtue Scripture each day. Human affairs will turn favourable, protection from calamities, healing illnesses will be the inevitable result of these recitations thanks to the power of heavenly kings, deities, bodhisattvas and buddhas (HVS 2021: 46-51).

“The wondrous dharma that was passed down to the world, has now come again. All living beings with a predestined affinity should not doubt or be anxious! Simply uphold and recite this scripture regularly and single-mindedly and happiness and radiance will arrive at your gate. When Immortal Master Guigui revealed the Scripture of Heavenly Virtue of the Wondrous Dharma and transmitted it through the Pure Land of Taiwan, Hunyuan obeyed Heaven’s decree and respectfully recorded it at the Shrine of Heaven. The Dharma Realm was filled with fragrance and relieving rain descended” (HVS 2021: 52).

This text honours the “Elder of the Dao of the Great Canopy Heaven” (a respectful address for *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ*), an ancient Immortal celebrated for his profound wisdom. He possesses exceptional insight into mystical practices, maintaining balance in the forces of *yīn* and *yáng* to ensure good fortune. With a profound understanding of the *dào*, he reveals the mysteries of both divine and human existence. His remarkable foresight guides humanity through times both auspicious and inauspicious, using magical arts to dispel calamities and showcasing immense compassion and virtue. When descending to the earthly realm, he imparts enlightenment, bestows blessings, and leads beings toward a better life with extraordinary benevolence.

The revelations handed down describe the location of the Realm of the Southern Heaven in the south of Taiwan. It is explained in detail that the Southern Heaven encompasses thirty-three heavenly realms, each ruled by a heavenly king of unlimited virtue. The connection of the Eight Trigrams as heavenly mechanisms is clarified through the arrangement of *Fúxī*.

GMHY aspires to utilize this merit to embellish a Pure Land. Those who encounter or hear this scripture are promised salvation through their inherent essence, ensuring an end to bitter misfortunes. Listeners will gain wisdom, and believers can find assurance in the prospect of an era of Great Peace on the horizon. This sacred text, received in a single chapter, serves as the vessel guiding people across the tumultuous sea of suffering. Continuously imparted, it has the power to awaken all living beings and reverse the currents of turmoil. By sincerely and consistently chanting it every morning and evening, your entire family will be safeguarded and free from concerns.

3.4 The *Yijing* 易經

The *Yijing* 易經, (Classic of Changes) is an ancient Chinese divinatory text and ranges among the oldest classics in Chinese history. The oldest part is named *Zhōuyì* 周易 related to the *Zhōu* dynasty, which at the same time is another name for the *Yijing*. Originally it was used as divination manual. The practice of casting lots called cleromancy is a form of random decision similar to throwing dice. The *Yijing* practitioner uses this method to find numbers which s/he transforms into a hexagram, and which can be looked up in the text. The hexagrams are arranged in a special order. One is the King *Wén* sequence named after King *Wén* of *Zhōu*. “The Zhou yi was traditionally ascribed to the Zhou cultural heroes King Wen of Zhou and the Duke of Zhou and was also associated with the legendary Fu Xi. According to the canonical *Great Commentary*, Fu Xi observed the patterns of the world and created the eight trigrams (八卦 *bāguà*),” to achieve a profound understanding of the sacred and illuminating, and to categorize the countless phenomena. “The *Rites of Zhou*, however, also claim that the hexagrams of the Zhou yi were derived from an initial set of eight trigrams.”²¹

To consult the *Yijing* one has to build the hexagram one line at a time from bottom to top. Sixty-four hexagrams and the association of words and images are the basic content of the *Yijing*. A hexagram consists of broken or solid lines which are arranged in groups of six. To select one of these hexagrams one casts six lines randomly which build up the hexagram. Each

²¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Ching (accessed October 12, 2023)

hexagram has its special meaning concerning the movement of the energy (*qì* 氣), the circumstances of a situation and how to deal with it. The names of the hexagrams provide a simple and initial answers like Chinese examples. The sixty-four hexagrams represent situations in life on an archetypical basis.

3.4.1 Methods to Produce the Hexagrams

There are different methods to produce the lines of the hexagram by throwing coins. To give an impression how these methods work in principle here is an example: To get the lines of the Hexagram one throws three equal coins six times. The sides of the coins have different meaning, where head translates to *yáng* and *yīn* tail to. *Yīn* is given a value of two and *yáng* counts three. Every time you throw these three coins simultaneously, they produce a result with four different outcomes (only the quantity of *yīn* and *yáng* symbols is observed, not their sequence).

Coins	Values of Coins	Lines	Representing
<i>yīn yīn yīn</i>	2+2+2 = 6		changing <i>yīn</i>
<i>yīn yīn yáng</i>	2+2+3 = 7		pure <i>yáng</i>
<i>yáng yáng yīn</i>	3+3+2 =8		pure <i>yīn</i>
<i>yáng yáng yáng</i>	3+3+3 =9		changing <i>yáng</i>

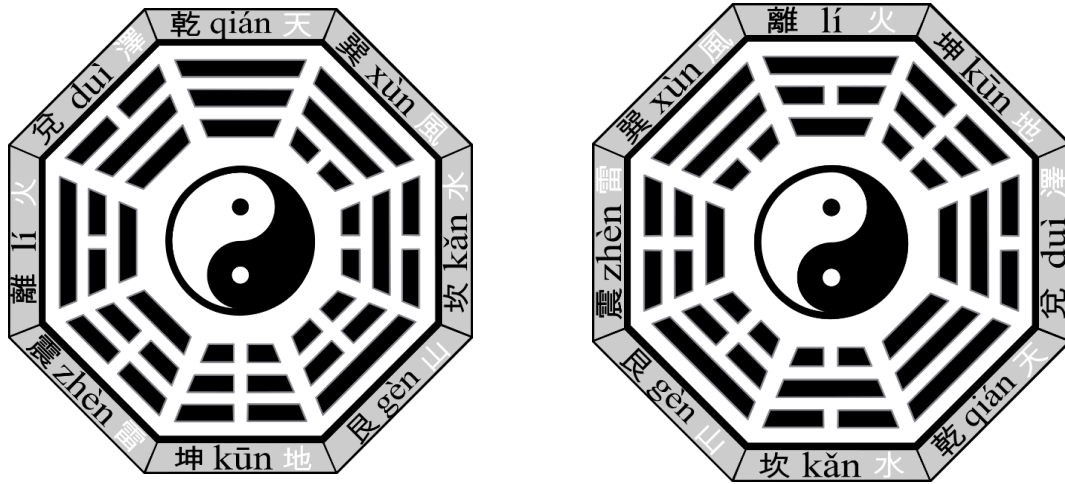
The situation which is characterized by the amount of *yīn* and *yáng* is described by the hexagram. A black broken line represents *yīn*, a solid black line *yáng*. The red *yīn* and *yáng* lines are so called changing lines, which transform to their polar opposite during the process. So, a broken red *yīn* line transforms to a *yáng* line, a red solid line transforms to a *yīn* line. Now the Trigrams come into play. A trigram is made up of any possible combination of three *yīn* and *yáng* lines. Two methods of interpretation are used.

The *Fúxī* arrangement of the Eight Trigrams²² is the so-called polar arrangement.

The King Wén²³ “Later Heaven” arrangement is cyclic.

²² Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository By Pakua_with_name.svg: 2006-09-23T21:16:47Z Ben-duKiwi 547x547 (101558 Bytes)derivative work: Machine Elf 1735 (talk) - Pakua_with_name.svg, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10843551>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bagua#Fu_Xi_'Earlier_Heaven'

²³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Wen_sequence



Hexagrams are made up of two trigrams, one on top of the other and the meaning of the hexagram is a consequence of its constituents, the presence of changing lines. The changing lines point the way to another transformed hexagram. The hexagram is read from bottom to top, that's why one constructs the hexagrams the same way. The interpretation of the outcome is a complicated process. The hexagram according to its number gives answers in a certain way that needs interpretation, to the question which was formulated before one casted the lines. The original hexagram is considered to answer part of the question, explains the past and actual situation one is now confronted with. The interpretation becomes more accurate if one applies the rules for the transformation of changing lines into their polar opposite. Some rules for changing lines in the hexagram consider the number of their occurrence. For example, if there is only one changing line one has to consult this line, if there are three changing lines consult the middle line etc. The transformed hexagram is now analysed and used as a description of the future situation. The final step is to interpret the two trigrams, which build the original cast hexagram. This description gives only a rough idea how the sixty-four hexagrams and the eight Trigrams are used to get answers to questions one hopes getting answered by casting the lines of a hexagram.

The *Yijing* has been translated in many languages and western historians and philosophers have studied this ancient source. With the advent of the internet the *Yijing* has become an omnipresent factor on the esoteric market and the first hits on a net search are commercial sites which provide the customer with algorithms to perform divination and forecasting the future (I GING - Das Buch der Wandlungen: n/a; Wing 1986: 12–25).

3.4.2 GMHY's *Yijing*

The importance of the *Yijing* as a primary spiritual resource is expressed by GMHY in the book *Chāo shēng de xíngzhě hùn yuán chánshī* “超升的行者 混元禪師” (Yang Ji Dong 2007: 14–

16). My translation of GMHY's perspective, as reflected in this excerpt, provides a nuanced impression:

“In the five thousand years of Chinese history, the most flourishing dynasties were the *Zhōu* Dynasty (周朝), the *Hàn* Dynasty (漢朝), the *Táng* Dynasty (唐朝), the *Qīng* Dynasty (清朝), etc., and these prosperous dynasties ruled the country with the “doctrine of the mean” and the righteous way of the *Yijing*.”²⁴

“Since the Republic of China (1912 - 49), the Chinese have actually abandoned the intrinsic cultural treasures of the *Yijing* in favour of pursuing Western philosophy or religion, and even more used science to governing the country, so China has been in unrest and turmoil for nearly a hundred years.”²⁵

“Some people regard the study of the *Yijing* as a profound one, and it is not easy for mortals to understand its meaning.”²⁶

“There are also ordinary people or self-opinionated people who regard the *Yijing* as superstitious and absolutely not worth to take into consideration at all.”²⁷

“All these thoughts and actions are the common (fate) karma of all Chinese people, that is, the shared “demonic obstacle” (*Mózhàng* 魔障, Mara the “demon of temptation”).”²⁸

“The so-called shared demonic obstacle is the prejudice of a small number of people who distort the correct path and the ingenious method into an evil path and attack them, causing doubts to arise in some ordinary people's state of mind and in the hearts of ignorant people that resonate with each other, and jointly obstruct them, and then cause all living creatures to produce the fruit of suffering, which is the demonic obstacle of all living creatures and not the karmic hindrance of the ancient sages.”²⁹

“In this regard, I hope that all beings bound by common destiny should quickly understand the meaning!”³⁰

²⁴ 中國歷史五千年來,最興盛之朝代,有周朝、漢朝、唐朝、清朝等,這些興旺之朝代皆以易經之中庸正道治國。

²⁵ 自民國以來,中國人竟將固有文化易經之寶典捨棄,改為追求西洋哲學或宗教,更以科學來治國,故中國近百年來皆處於動盪不安之中。

²⁶ 有些人將易經之學視為高深之學,凡人不易懂其意。

²⁷ 又有凡夫或自以為是者,將易經視為迷信之說,根本不值得一顧。

²⁸ 凡此種種思想與行為,皆是全體中國人之共業,亦即共同之魔障也。

²⁹ 所謂共同之魔障者,乃是少數人之偏見而將正道妙法扭曲為邪道而加以攻擊,使一些凡夫之心境與無知見者心生共鳴之疑念,共同加以阻擾,然後再使眾生產生苦惱之果,這就是眾生之魔障而非古聖先賢之業障也。

³⁰ 一點希望有緣眾生應速明了此中真義呀!

“The compassion of the Buddhists, the spirit of universal love of Christ, and the benevolent thought of the Daoist’s are all the basic conditions for governing the country, but the practice and implementation — the “method” — is a matter of profound scholarship and a big issue, that is, a matter of great wisdom.”³¹

“Therefore, we must seek stability amidst “change” and pursue development in stability.”³²

“Therefore, all “Dharma” are changing, that’s what we call change.”³³

“The end of change is the unchanging change. The unchanging is the equilibrium point of the doctrine of the mean.”³⁴

“The criterion of balance lies in the transcendent mind!”³⁵

“That is, compassionate heart of the Buddha, love of Jesus, the benevolence heart of the Daoism, and so on.”³⁶

“Therefore, the place of the mind can only be found in the middle way.”³⁷

“In the poles of polarization (between good and evil) it is impossible to find the origin of heart, hence the heart is immutable in essence, though subject change.”³⁸

“From the unchanging changes of the Yī, there must be a perfect method hidden within.”³⁹

“It is the movement of the lines of the Eight Trigrams, the reason for the results of the ten thousand predetermined relationships of the Dharma, leading to the manifestation of results.”⁴⁰

“It is the transition from the unchanging to the changing, and back to the unchanging.”⁴¹

“This is the Buddhist concept of emptiness, where emptiness is not separate from form, and form is not separate from emptiness. Emptiness is form, and form is emptiness.”⁴²

Dear all, when we encounter suffering, we seek the Lord, and then the Lord Jesus saves us, this back and forth is a sequence of changing (there is distress) - the unchangeable (the Lord) - changing (there is distress, and the Lord suffers on behalf of us).”⁴³

³¹ 佛家之慈悲為懷,基督之博愛精神,道家之仁慈思想都是治國之基本條件,但是這些條件的實踐與執行方針—「方法」才是一件大學問與大課題,亦即大智慧也。

³² 所以,必須於「變」中求安定,安定中求發展也。

³³ 所以一切「法」皆在變,故名變易。

³⁴ 變易之終點是不變之易。不變者即是中庸之道—平衡點。

³⁵ 平衡點的準則在於超越的心呀!

³⁶ 亦即佛心、耶穌之愛心、道家之仁心等等。

³⁷ 以心的處所,只有在中道中才能找到。

³⁸ 兩極(善惡)化之極點是不可能找到心的元點,故心即是不變之易也。

³⁹ 從變不變之易中,必然有妙法夾在其中。

⁴⁰ 即是卦爻之動靜萬法之起因萬法之因緣發生一果。

⁴¹ 即是由不變到變,再到不變也。

⁴² 此即佛家之空不異色,色不異空,空即是色,色即是空也。

⁴³ 各位,當我們有苦難時就求主,然後主耶穌救度我們,這樣的一來一往即是變(有難)—不變(主)—變(有難,主代受難也)。

“In the process of all these evolutionary processes, there must be their invariant ingenious causes and effects (unchanging predestined relations)!”⁴⁴

“This is the great harmony of the Middle Way in the world.”⁴⁵

“It is the law of how to approach the world, the *Yi*.”⁴⁶

“Sentient beings often regard the principles of the world as conflicts of interest, and this is the thinking of ordinary people, of those who have not yet comprehended at all.”⁴⁷

“Therefore, enlightened people must inevitably view the way of change as a great harmony of refinement and a harmonious treatment of each other.”⁴⁸

“China’s *Yijing* has not been abandoned and denied in the 5,000 years since its origin, it must have its mysterious meaning that cannot be repudiated, and it is an indispensable dharma for human existence, but unfortunately, mankind has not explored and studied it in depth, which is why continuous catastrophes occur in the human world!”⁴⁹

“Comprehend from experience the essence of the Doctrine of the Mean and comprehend the ingenious methods of change and unchanging change.”⁵⁰

“This is the moment for China to change, and we pray for heaven's mercy, to take pity on all sentient beings keeping away catastrophes and pray collectively for mankind living in peace and without disaster.”⁵¹

“We hope even more that all of humanity can realize that human existence means to coexist peacefully and treat each other with compassion.”⁵²

“Recognizing the unchanging essence of humanity — only a compassionate heart is the true everlasting constancy.”⁵³

“Only if human beings continue to move forward amidst change and the unchangeable, and show the peaceful balance of everyone’s soul, will the great worldwide harmony and a state of peace throughout the world come about soon.”⁵⁴

⁴⁴ 以上凡此種種的演化過程中,必定有其不變的巧妙因緣呀!

⁴⁵ 這即是人世間的中道大調和。

⁴⁶ 即是對待法則一易也。

⁴⁷ 眾生往往把世間的法則看成利害對立,這就是凡夫之思想,根本未悟者。

⁴⁸ 所以開悟的人,必將易之道看成為精進的大調和且是相互對待圓融的。

⁴⁹ 中國之易經淵源五千年之久未被捨棄否定,必有其不可推翻的奧義,而且是人類生存不可或缺的正法,可惜人類未加以深入探討研究,才會有人間的浩劫不斷發生呀!

⁵⁰ 體悟中庸之本質,體悟變易與不變易之妙法。

⁵¹ 這是中國要改變的時刻,我們祈求上天慈悲,憐憫眾生之浩劫遠離,共同祈求人類和平無災。

⁵² 們更希望全體人類體悟人類的生存是要和平共存且愛心對待。

⁵³ 體認人類的不變之易一良心才是永遠不變不易的。

⁵⁴ 唯有人類在變與不變中繼續前進,將每一個人心靈的安祥平衡點發露出來,則世界大同,天下太平之境近矣!

“Today we realize that one of the ways to human peace is the way of the *Yijing*!”⁵⁵

“Today, to do our best within the scope of what is known to humans, we will open the door of the *Yijing*, and unlock the hearts of ourselves, others, and all humanity, so that everyone’s “heart” hidden in the depths will be exposed, and then we will jointly create a pure land on earth, a Buddha world, an ideal world.”⁵⁶

“This is our greatest wish.”⁵⁷

“Dear virtuous and devoted beings from all directions, the *Yijing* is our teacher in life. If you are interested and have the intention to study, you may as well bravely make up your mind to study it now!”⁵⁸

“The dharma of the *Yijing*, first of all, require us to understand that within the universe and within the secular world, there exist distinctions and interactions between *yīn* and *yáng*, good and evil, positive and negative, up and down, left and right, black and white, you and me, kings and subjects, father and son, mother and daughter, before and after, beauty and ugliness, sun and moon, likes and dislikes, big and small, wisdom and foolishness (ignorance), and so on.”⁵⁹

“The sun represents light, *yáng*, and the positive pole, while the moon represents darkness, *yīn*, and the negative pole. Therefore, the combination of the sun and moon into one entity.”⁶⁰

“The scriptures are the way, the karma, the passage, the flow of the Dhamma, the fate, the path, and the heart.”⁶¹

“Therefore, the *Yijing* bestows brilliant future prospects for human survival and life.”⁶²

“It does not have a veil of mystery, it has the power of compassion, it has the essence of encompassing all dharmas, it bestows a vibrant and delightful journey of life, all of which are represented the *Yijing*.”⁶³

“If you violate the *Yijing*’s rules of treatment, life will be filled with suffering, sorrow, hatred, struggle, robbery and killing.”⁶⁴

⁵⁵ 今天我們體悟到人類和平的一條途徑—即是易經之道呀！

⁵⁶ 今天我們為盡做人所知的一點心力，將易經之門開啟，將你我他乃至全人類的心鎖一併打開，讓每一個人藏在深處的「心」發露出來，然後來共同創造一片人間淨土—佛國世界，理想世界。

⁵⁷ 這是我們之最大心願也。

⁵⁸ 各位十方善信大德，易經是我們生活中的導師，如果各位有興趣且有心研究的話，現在不妨勇敢的下定決心研究吧！

⁵⁹ 易經的法則，首先要明白，宇宙間人世間都有陰陽、善惡、正負、上下、左右、黑白、你我、君臣、父子、母女、前後、美醜、日月、好惡、大小、智愚等等之分別與對待。

⁶⁰ 日為光、為陽、為正極、月為暗、為陰、為負極，故日與月之合成一體即易也。

⁶¹ 經者路也、緣也、經過也、法之流轉過程也、緣也、道也、心也。

⁶² 所以易經者，即是人類生存與生活的一條康莊大道。

⁶³ 它不具有神秘面紗、它有慈悲心力、它有包容萬法的本質、它有活潑可愛的人生旅程，凡此種種皆是易經也。

⁶⁴ 若是違背易經的對待法則，則人生處處充滿著苦惱、悲哀、憎恨、鬥爭、劫殺。

“Therefore, if you first understand the basic conditions of the above laws, to learn the Way of the Book of Changes will be easy with no effort at all.”⁶⁵

“Today, I pray to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Ten Realms of Divine Immortals for good weather, for peace and prosperity of the people, and the peace of the whole world, and even more pray for the profound teachings of the *Yijing* to spread far and wide, jointly build a solemn pure land of Buddha on earth, may blessings and wisdom increase for those who are destined, and may they attain the supreme path of enlightenment.”⁶⁶

“I also state clearly that if there are sentient beings from the Ten Directions who hear this virtuous and profound teaching, they shall all attain the supreme pure Dharmakaya in future lives, benefiting countless beings, and possessing wisdom as vast as the ocean.”⁶⁷

“Solemnly written by Hun Yuan Oct. 31, 1985 11pm – 1 am (hour of the rat)⁶⁸.”⁶⁹

GMHY reflects upon historically prosperous dynasties that governed the nation based on the "doctrine of the mean" and adherence to the principles of the *Yijing*. From his perspective, it is underscored that interpreting the *Yijing* as mere superstition is, in his view, indicative of succumbing to demonic temptation. The term “shared demonic obstacle” refers to the bias of a few individuals who twist the right path and effective methods into a malevolent course, creating uncertainty in the minds of some ordinary people and resonating with the ignorance of others. This joint obstruction results in suffering for all living beings, constituting a demonic obstacle. The *Yijing*, however, is an indispensable tool for navigating the vicissitudes of existence and finding a path to harmonious coexistence. It guides us to comprehend the interplay of *yīn* and *yáng* in the universe and the secular world. Those individuals who understand these fundamental laws and adhere to them will have magnificent prospects in the future. GMHY not only prays to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas for peace and prosperity but also for the dissemination of the precious teachings of the *Yijing* and the collaborative establishment of the "Pure Land of Buddha" on earth.

3.4.3 A More Concise Interpretation by Fiona Chang

Fiona Chang gives a more detailed explanation why for WXSJ the *Yijing* is central to the doctrine and interpreted according to the revelations of GMHY.

⁶⁵ 因此各位首先明白以上法則之基本條件，則學易之道易如反掌也。

⁶⁶ 今天在此向十方法界聖神仙佛菩薩祈求，風調雨順、國泰民安、天下太平，更祈求易道妙法能夠廣傳天下，共同建設莊嚴人間佛淨土，並祝福有緣人福慧增長，成就無上菩提道。

⁶⁷ 更在此明言，若有十方眾生聞此善妙之法時，於未來生皆得無上清淨法身、廣利眾生、智慧如海。

⁶⁸ 子時 (*zǐshí*) 11pm – 1 am (hour of the rat) in the system of two hour divisions used in former times

⁶⁹ 1985 年 10 月 31 日子時 混元謹撰

According to her, WXSJ places great significance on the *Yijing* as a central doctrine, interpreting it based on the revelations of GMHY. The main ancestor revered by WXSJ is *Guīgǔzi*, praised for “returning to drive the boat of compassion” and teaching the so called *Yijing* Heart Method (*Yijing xīnfǎ* 易經心法) in contemporary times. As a result, the *Yijing xīnfǎ* of WXSJ has a distant connection to the eras of *Fúxī*, King *Wén*, the Duke of *Zhōu*, and Confucius, carrying the essence of “sacred orthodoxy”. Moreover, in order to align with modern requirements, WXSJ incorporates divination that emphasizes practical applications, going beyond the concerns of sentient beings. Hence, WXSJ centres its teachings on the *Yijing* and *fēngshuǐ* geomancy, utilizing recitation as the method of practice. With a profound sense of harmony, GMHY frequently expounds upon the classics of the Three Teachings, disseminates the Dharma, and conducts religious rituals. He has also established *Yijing xīnfǎ* research classes in various locations to impart the wisdom of *Yijing* and *fēngshuǐ*, thereby promoting the essence of Chinese cultural orthodoxy in recent times. The *Yijing* integrates diverse perspectives to construct the orthodox religious system within Chinese culture. For instance, it offers explanations of Confucian ethics and culture in the contemporary context, as well as incorporates popular faith in folk gods and Daoist practices of disaster prevention and alleviating malevolence.

The teachings of the WXSJ embrace both unwavering faith and the practice of *shùshù* 數術 geomancy.⁷⁰ It views the combination of *shùshù* and *Yijing* not only as a means to achieve peace in the world but also as a path to spiritual growth and transcendence, leading ultimately to the state of nirvana through a deep understanding and experiential knowledge of the *Yijing*.

The practice of divination is believed to be connected to the spiritual realm, and its accuracy in predictions is seen as involving interactions with the sacred world. However, it is not considered the sole path for spiritual development in religious practice. In contrast to other practitioners, the WXSJ firmly associates the *Yijing* with devotion as the ultimate goal for its followers (Chang 2014: 3).

Based on Fiona Chang’s observations, the majority of participants in the WXSJ are individuals from the business sector, specifically those working in industrial and commercial enterprises. They utilize divination to forecast their career fortunes and interpret hexagrams from the *Yijing* to guide them in avoiding misfortune and seeking auspicious locations such as dragon veins

⁷⁰ *Shùshù* 數術 geomancy is a complex system of geomancy also called the art of numbers which uses the elements of *yīn* and *yáng*, the five elements, the Eight Trigrams the ten stems and twelve branches, season, hour, calendar (year, month, day, solar terms), constellations of stars (e.g. the nine stars of the big dipper), the twelve zodiac signs, animals and other elements to form a set of theoretical systems and skills to predict fortunes and personnel fortunes.

and *fēngshuǐ* treasures for factors like factory sites or ancestral graves. They also actively participate in religious gatherings, chant religious texts to avert disasters, and seek blessings.

WXSJ teachings emphasize that the purpose of divination is not for mere speculation but to gain self-knowledge, understand one's abilities, and comprehend the dynamics with the surrounding environment and others. It aims to empower individuals to make the most of their potential and address challenges and obstacles in a balanced and contented manner. Learning *Yijing* fortune-telling is a means of self-awareness and harnessing one's capacities, rather than merely predicting the future (Chang 2014: 3–5).

Indeed, the emphasis lies in the understanding of one's own abilities rather than indulging in speculation. The *Yijing* serves as a tool to comprehend the dynamics between individuals and their environment, enabling them to tap into their innate potential and qualities. It goes beyond the conventional use of predicting personal future prospects.

The use of divination and geomancy to address the world's current challenges is deemed especially significant for engaging with secular society. Divination inevitably involves tackling both conventional and unconventional matters, showcasing the religious group's remarkable accuracy of prediction and spirituality, which naturally attracts a large number of believers.

However, aside from the Preface *Guà Zhuàn* 卦傳, the original texts of the *Yijing*, such as the book of *Zhōuyì* 周易 first part of the *Yijing* and other chapters, are seldom studied or recited and are not included in the “Thirty Classics of the Heart.” Instead, “The Preface to the Divination Biography” has been canonized and became the “Yi Jing Dafalun Zhenjing” (*Yijing dà fǎlún zhēnjīng* 易經大法輪真經). It serves as a tool for believers to memorize the sixty-four hexagrams and as a philosophical teaching material to understand the principles of the universe's cycle of life.

Combination of Three Teachings

Fiona Chang explains: Regarding the specific practice of spiritual cultivation, the Idealist Sage inherits concepts from Buddhism and folk beliefs and integrates them with the concepts of the Eight Trigrams and Five Elements. It includes practices such as reflection, confession, compassion, the six paramitas, precepts, sacred wisdom, and virtue, along with a new interpretation of the concept of *yīn-yáng* and Five Elements from the *Yijing*.

The characteristic of Daoist culture, “prolonging one's life, evolving, and becoming immortal”, is also present in the main sūtra of WXSJ, the “Wang Chan Patriarch Xuanmiao Zhenjing.” The sūtra describes many five-element cosmology and the golden principle of cultivating the chain of *yīn* and *yáng*. It emphasizes the cultivation of the “spirit” the most. According to the sūtra,

“Dao” is like a mansion, and to cultivate Daoism, one must first have a strong body. The interpretation of “Golden Core” in the sūtra refers to a form of “mindness,” where “cultivation” means cultivating both mind and nature (Chang 2014: 23).

3.4.4 *Fēngshuǐ*

Fēngshuǐ is a traditional practice rooted in ancient China more than 3000 years ago. It goes back to the dynasty. The term “*fēngshuǐ*” literally translates to “wind-water”, “wind” also referring to scenery, landscape (*fēngjǐng* 風景) and “water” referring to liquid.

Practitioners claim to use invisible energy forces known as *qì* (氣, 气), to harmonize individuals with the surrounding environment. One Definition of the online dictionary (Dict.cn⁷¹) states: “Rules in Chinese philosophy that govern spatial arrangement and orientation in relation to patterns of yin and yang and the flow of energy (*qi*); the favourable or unfavourable effects are taken into consideration in designing and siting buildings and graves and furniture”. Ole Bruun cites the Chinese Encyclopedia *Cíhǎi* 辞海: “A superstition of the old China. Considers wind directions, water streams and other topographical features in the surroundings of a house or a grave site in order to indicate the inhabitants’ disaster or good fortune. Also, a way of directing residences and graves. The term *fēngshuǐ*, apart from its specific meaning, has entered everyday Chinese to mean the general impression of the qualities of an environment. For instance, when viewing beautiful scenery with tree-clad mountains and streams of running water, someone may find an outlet for his feelings by saying that its ‘fengshui is very good’ [*Fēngshuǐ hěn hǎo* [风水很好]]” (Bruun 2011: xiii). Searching the internet yields numerous entries most of them linked to enterprises and institutions exploiting the method for architecture, garden and home design, personal prospects in work and everyday life etc. In East Asia *fēngshuǐ* has developed into a billion Dollar business. Michel W. Matthews writes: “Hongkong is the pulsing centre of fengshui industry [...] No real estate, from humblest apartment to grandest residence is sold without fengshui advice or certification. [...] Nearly all Hongkong businesses, big and small, and government departments consult experts to determine auspicious dates for deals and programme launches, to create interiors and environments that will bring good fortune for a business and to guide against creating bad feng shui for others that might result in costly legal battles and compensation claims” (Matthews 2019: 72). It is not surprising, that thousands of *fēngshuǐ* practitioners cannot be always right. The Taipei Times (October 17, 2004) estimated the

⁷¹ <https://dict.cn> Dict.cn (*Hǎicí cídiǎn* 海词词典) (accessed December 15, 2022)

number of *fēngshuǐ* practitioners in Taiwan with 30,000. “As with elsewhere in Asia, feng shui matters regularly end up in Taiwanese courts that determine culpability for bad feng shui advice or for engaging in practices that negatively impact the feng shui of both the living and the dead” (Matthews 2019: 75). “Today, the vast majority of building projects in southern and central China will consult geomancers before constructions starts, regardless of the nature of the investment, and a good deal of projects in northern China will do the same” (Bruun 2011: xvii). *Fēngshuǐ* is still considered a superstition within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) but “The Chinese state officially deplores fengshui masters yet admits that fengshui has become a booming industry. one might say that the instrumental approach of the Chinese party state has lead it to give in to pressures where it suits its own interests, such as promoting Confucian values at home and abroad to nurture its own image. [...] As opposed to the rural revival of fengshui in the 1980s to 1990s, the urban revival of the 2000s has caused considerably more debate, not only between popular and regime opinions but as much between various viewpoints in the public domain. [...] The conventional position of the Communist party is that it is an evil superstition, corrupting people’s minds. Other critics claim that fengshui is nothing more than pseudoscience, that it wastes valuable resources and hinders development, merely filling the wallets of charlatans” (Bruun, 2011: xx–xxi).

3.4.5 GMHY and *fēngshuǐ*

In WXSJ *fēngshuǐ* is considered part of the *Yìjīng*. They just appear as the different sides of the same coin. The system of *Yìjīng* is inextricably linked with the teaching of *yīn* and *yáng*. GMHY emphasizes that the theory and practice of *Yìjīng* are not to be considered separately, only together is it possible to cultivate one’s mind with its help, enjoy a long life, and achieve happiness and peace. In this way, WXSJ becomes a movement that transmits mythological and popular religious teachings in an idiosyncratic combination (Chang 2014: 6).

GMHY has conducted many *fēngshuǐ* lectures, their numerous video recordings are catalogued in the WXSJ archives and are also available online. *Fēngshuǐ* studies are an integral part of the educational system. In the social education programme, we find “I Ching Feng Shui Studies Courses for the World Chinese” and the “International I Ching Feng Shui Cloud Classroom” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 131). “Yang House Feng Shui” is a webpage which provides elaborate instructions and application descriptions providing a comprehensive understanding of the method devised by GMHY. Information is given beginning with the position of the house, entrances, front and back yard, rooms in the house, office arrangements, family shrines even for the location of statues, antiquities, and scrolls. The last chapter “Feng Shui Cures” and

“Blessings for Yang House” were allegedly handed down by *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ* to GMHY. The concepts are based on the interaction between still water and qí flow to balance one’s living environment. Through the application, people are able to minimize the adversity resulted from the misplacement in their living surroundings. Hence, a life with wellbeing and harmony can be achieved (*Yang House Feng Shui*, n/a).

3.4.6 The Emblem of *Wéixīn Shèngjiào*



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The emblem of WXSJ embodies the synergy of traditional teachings, representing the pillars of the NRM founded by GMHY. It features two nested *yīn-yáng* symbols (i.e., *tàijí* 太極), emphasizing the interconnectedness of the world, particularly with nature. These two symbols denote complementary forces or principles. The different colours correspond to the cosmic principle, where *yáng* represents the bright half with a dark dot, signifying the positive, masculine, in-motion, and bright aspects, while *yīn*, the dark half, represents contrasts, negativity, femininity, passivity, and darkness.

At the centre, there’s a smaller *yīn-yáng* symbol, and in an inverted form, an outer *yīn-yáng* symbol. Instead of dots, the outer *yīn-yáng* symbol features two trigrams, also representing complements. The eight points of the enclosing circle refer to the Eight Trigrams, necessary for divination using the *Yìjīng*. The upper trigram with three solid lines symbolizes heaven (*qián* 乾), while the lower trigram with three broken lines symbolizes the counterpart, earth (*kūn* 坤). The surrounding circle could be interpreted as the Dharma Wheel, kept in motion by WXSJ through continuous prayer and sacrificial activities. From my understanding of WXSJ teachings, these associations seem to align almost inevitably with GMHY’s teachings. An original interpretation reads as follows:

⁷² https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Weixinism_symbol.svg

“Yīn revolves from the left, (*yīn cóng yòu tuántuánzhuàn* 陰從右團團轉)

Yáng rotates from the right, (*yáng cóng zuǒ tuántuánzhuàn* 陽從左團團轉)

If you understand the secrets of (*yīn* and *yáng*, (*ruò rén shí dé yīnyáng jué* 若人識得陰陽訣)

Why be anxious that you will never encounter the august place? (*hé chóu dàdì xiāngféng* 何愁大地相逢)” (HVS 2021: front page).

3.5 *Wéixīn Shèngjiào's Wéixīn Dàozáng* 唯心道藏

The extensive collection of revelations, writings, and media products by GMHY is compiled in the *Dàozáng* of WXSJ. Originally *Dàozáng* refers to the Daoist Canon. In WXSJ *Dàozáng* stands for the complete collection of publications of the teachings of GMHY. “[...] this religion has set up Yi Yao Press, Nantian Culture Yuan, and Taiwan Guiguzi Academy” as Institutions to preserve the teachings passed down by *Guīgūzi* in books, texts, video recordings of GMHY’s elucidations on religious topics. “The Weixin Daozang can be divided into four categories, including Yi Jing, and the teaching of Feng Shui with 38 sub-categories, the television preaching of Yi Jing Feng Shui with six sub-categories, and Dharma preaching with a total of 17 sub-categories. And prayers for blessing articles with total nine sub-categories. Currently the Weixin Daozang includes 15615 collections” (NRW 2016a: 81–82). The tireless efforts of GMHY result in a continuous expansion of his teachings. All temple visits, ceremonies, and regularly conducted ancestral worship rituals are captured in video reports, which are made available on online platforms such as YouTube.

3.5.1 *Ānxīn zhēnjīng* 安心真經

The *Ānxīn zhēnjīng* (Peaceful mind dharma) originated in 2009. It firstly defines the sacredness of the *Yījīng* as the basic source of WXSJ. The *Yījīng* is not regarded merely as an ancient classic, but as the essence that aligns with the Dao. Additionally, the main focus of the *Ānxīn zhēnjīng* is the concept of “All phenomena originate from the mind”, emphasizing the cultivation and function of the mind. Consequently, the effectiveness of divination is determined by the devotion and merits focused on the mind, imbuing divination with a sense of sacredness and legitimacy through the logic of the connecting heaven and humanity. Moreover, the *Ānxīn zhēnjīng* provides a more comprehensive and elaborate explanation of the doctrines and religious concerns of the religious group, redefining the religious status and hierarchy of the five arts. These are (1) “mountain” (*shān* 山), which stands for activities related to the interaction

of nature and humanity; (2) “medicine” (*yī* 医), dealing with health and healing where major organs of the human body are represented by the theory of five elements; “life” (*mìng* 命), which stands for the study of one’s destiny by interpreting the influences of stars and planets on human life by different forms of astrology; “divination” (*pū* 卜), which describes systems of prediction based on numerology, analysis of dates, which is represented by the *Yījīng*; and (5) “physiognomy” (*xiāng* 相), described as the study of appearances by observing and analysing forms. Categories mentioned are palmistry (*shǒuxiāng* 手相), face reading (*miànxiàng* 面相) and most important to WXSJ, *fēngshuǐ*. Another essential aspect is the power of religious healing as was experienced by the founder himself. The *Ānxīn zhēnjīng* reaffirms the supreme divine status of *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ* as the deity who transmits the essence of the *Yījīng* and holds the highest sacred position. Of great importance is the exclusiveness of the scripture, which is announced by WXSJ only (Chang 2014: 14).

4 Ritual

4.1 Chanting Sūtras - Chanting for World Peace

Chanting sūtras is one of the ritual pillars of WXSJ. These sūtras are revelations to GMHY, who recorded the sūtras on several dates and locations.

As an example: the “patriarch” of WXSJ, Sage *Guīgǔ* Immortal Master *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ* gave on his birthday, that is, March 26, 2009 according to Chinese lunar calendar, the instructions to GMHY who received them on the heavenly Altar on Hsien Fo Temple, Chan-Chi Mountain as the rules of WXSJ.

The Sutra of Weixin Shengjiao Heart Calmness

The instructions of *Guīgǔ* were: “The main temple of Weixin, dedicating to Amitabha, honours humanitarian truth. On the left of the temple is Sage Wang Chan Lao Chu, on the right is Bodhisattva. They have their own truth. Gui Gu Immortal Master Wang Chan Lao Chu is the sage of Chinese, is proficient in five arts, divination, physiognomy and mystery.” Therefore, his knowledge has become the essence of WXSJ. He continued to say: “To understand the secret of I Ching is difficult. Millions catastrophes represent modern time. Many praise the Immortal Guigu’s mercy. He descended to save numerous spirits. His methods are in favour of the people and help achieve world peace” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 45). GMHY infers that this sūtra is the practice guide for WXSJ’s disciples.

The instructions from *Guīgǔzi* may appear somewhat confusing. The main temple referred to is the Hsien Fo Temple, and the desired positioning of the statues within the temple is specified. *Guīgǔzi*'s abilities are emphasized, and the grace of his descent is acknowledged for the salvation of many souls. Although challenging to apply, the *Yijing* will help attain world peace in the modern era plagued by disasters. The descriptions of other revealed sūtras, both in their original and translated texts, are crafted in a cryptic language. Their central message perpetuates the significance of the *Yijing* and *fēngshuǐ* in resolving earthly problems.

4.2 Ceremonies

Ceremonies are an essential part of religions around the world. Especially in the Chinese historical context ceremonies have been considered as crucial to the wellbeing of the state and the harmony between heaven and the world. As a classical example, therefore we can take the *Book of Rites* (*Lǐjì* 禮記) one of the Confucian Classics. The correct observance and performance of rites was considered as essential to keep the state in harmony with heaven. In WXSJ we find different ceremonies related to ancestor commemoration, worshipping Buddha, praying for the nation and people, disaster relief ceremonies and as a central concern ceremonies for world peace chanting the name of Buddha. One of the central missions of WXSJ is to “practice religion for the country and world, prayers for mankind” with GMHY encouraging all practitioners to practice and eat vegetarian, chant scriptures, respect the religious ceremonies, and to turn the wheel of avoiding disasters.

4.2.1 Ancestor Commemoration Ceremonies

The concept of filial piety in China is an evolving and developing process. During the *Xià*, *Shāng* 商, and *Zhōu* dynasties, ancestral commemoration played a role in maintaining clan unity and harmonizing interpersonal relationships. In this light, the teachings of GMHY expand the functions of ancestral commemoration rites, encompassing the grand goal of “world peace”. Expanding into different facets, the idea is that “worldly matters should be peaceful through filial piety; careers should be smooth through filial piety; families should be harmonious through filial piety; bodies should be healthy through filial piety; learning should be successful through filial piety...” The manifestation of filial piety serves as the cornerstone for all these aspects. In addition, in religious practice, a large-scale “ancestral worship” ritual has been developed. Within this ritual, the concept of the “Three Ancestors of China” is explicitly presented. It asserts that the Chinese people should not merely identify themselves as descendants of “*Yán*

and *Huáng*” and thereby erase the historical significance of Emperor *Chīyóu*. Instead, there should be a rectification of *Chīyóu*’s reputation, elevating him to the same status as Emperor *Yán* and Emperor *Huáng*, collectively commemorating and worshipping them as the founding ancestors of China.

He also holds the belief that ancestors bestow extensive blessings, and future generations should not harbour resentment for past misfortunes. He thinks that the souls of ancestors should not hold grudges against future generations but should have an equal and forgiving attitude. This will influence the descendants’ perception and attitude towards life and whether they will live harmoniously and peacefully. The grievances of ancestors can also lead to unrest in modern individuals’ hearts, fostering a mindset of resentment and injustice, which in turn can impact the nation and global affairs. The redemption from unfair treatment and humiliations is therefore essential.

The filial piety advocated by WXSJ has two levels: filial devotion to parents and ancestral worship. The latter is particularly emphasized in religious practice. The underlying logic is that the souls of ancestors can influence the character and harmony of future generations, hence the transformation of ancestral spirits becomes a focal point in religious rituals.

Moreover, from the perspective of “ancestral virtue” and receiving “ancestral blessings,” folk beliefs assert that individuals’ prosperity and blessings in this world are the result of ancestral virtue’s protection. Therefore, one must also perform good deeds and accumulate virtue in this lifetime, ensuring that future generations can enjoy the blessings resulting from the accumulation of virtuous conduct. GMHY believes that the best offering in ancestral worship is “morality,” where the outcomes of one’s own virtuous actions are dedicated back to the ancestors — this is the true essence of filial piety.

“The Twenty-First Century Chinese Joint Assembly Worship Ceremony” is considered a starting point for world peace, harmony and the beginning of Chinese consolidation and respect. The goal is to establish a Pure Land together including all Chinese people with emphasis on Taiwan and Mainland China.

The ceremonial commemoration of ancestors is an essential religious task, according to GMHY on November 15, 2003: “Chinese [people] have the same root, so worshipping ancestors is the beginning of Chinese culture. Chinese people have to observe history and put aside polemic criticism. Then society will be more peaceful” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 68).

4.2.2 Disaster Relief Ceremonies

In “Weixinism The Documentary of Disaster Relief – Magical power of religious practice” (Grand Master Huen–Yuan 2015). GMHY explains the role of religious practice to eliminate disasters and to prevent harms. Natural disasters, plagues and other calamities simply happen and let people feel helpless. Because there are no ways to prevent these occurrences the best and only method GMHY considers “true and without doubt” is based on religious practice. Religious ceremonies are ways to communicate with Gods, the Jade Emperor, Jesus, Buddha, and Bodhisattvas, who use their merciful light to eliminate disasters, bless and pray for human’s wellbeing (Grand Master Huen–Yuan 2015: 2). GMHY makes a clear distinction between man-made disasters and such which humans cannot overcome. Man-made disasters are a consequence of human misdeeds; therefore, they are unavoidable because humans have sinned. These are mainly wars, the development and use of the atomic bomb, the development of mass destruction weapons etc. Disasters that humans cannot overcome are pandemics and epidemics like SARS, Avian flu, Ebola, at the time of writing this M.A. thesis the COVID-19 pandemic, earthquakes, volcano eruption, sinkholes etc. We can sum this up to natural catastrophes and highly infectious diseases against which medicine has no cure so far. The documentary gives an overview of the achievements related to the disasters which have according to GMHY be influenced and finally overcome through intense prayer — “Crisis Praying to Undo Calamities”. A short description of the Crisis, statistical data of victims and casualties, the quantity of chanted sūtras (e.g., the “Medicine Buddha Sūtra” in the case of the Sars Virus) and the text of the sūtra (only in Chinese) testifies the efforts of the adherents. There are activities like “Weixinism followers chanted sutras at home to pray for public health safety” or “world Peace Eliminate Plagues and Undo Calamities Praying Dharma Service (1) – (3)” or “Eliminate plagues Homa Ritual Praying Dharma Service (1)”, with pictures of Dharma Service Announcements. For every case we find an overview what the “Crisis Praying to Udo Calamities Dharma Service had Accomplished” for the different occasions.

The following reports demonstrate a deep religious conviction that the intensity and frequency of private and collective praying services have a positive impact on their efficacy.

So far, the following efforts and their achievements are documented:

- “SARS elimination
 - Chanted “*Sutra of Medicine Buddha*” 36,000 times
 - Eliminated between 21st April 2003 to 5th May 2003
- Avian flu elimination

- Chanted “*the Sutra of Gui Gu Immortal Master’s Heaven virtues*” 360,000 times
- Eliminated 21st November 2005 to 28th November 2005
- Closing the Ozone hole
 - Chanted “*the Sutra of Gui Gu Immortal Master’s Heaven virtues*” 640,000 times
 - From 5th May to 24th July 2007, the Swiss International Weather Organization announced the ozone hole closed up to 30%.
- Closing up earth holes
 - Chanted “*De Mu Zen sutra*” 1.22 million times
 - Warning lifted from 18th October 2000 to 17th November 2000
- Japan Mount Fuji live volcano eruption
 - Chanted “*the Sutra of Gui Gu Immortal Master’s Heaven virtues*” 480.000 times
 - Chanted “The Souls Of Chinese Ancestors Returning Sutra” 35.000 times
 - From 1st May 2012 to 5th May 2012 pronounced warning lifted
- American Yellowstone Park live volcano disaster
 - Chanted “*the Sutra of Gui Gu Immortal Master’s Heaven virtues*” 360.000 times
 - Warning lifted from 19th September 2012 to 17th November 2012
- Ebola Virus
 - Script chanting 11.29 million times
 - Warning lifted from 20th February 2014 to 22nd March 2015”

(Grand Master Huen–Yuan 2015: 2; Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 151–153).⁷³

For 2016, GMHY predicted a closely to war related food crisis and requests pupils of the *Yijing* University “to complete 12 million times “the Sutra of Gui Gu Immortal Master’s Heaven Virtues,” to be returned chanting merits at the puja in 2016 to pray for full harvest and resolve the conflicts” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 151–153).

⁷³ If one compares the list of eliminated calamities, there are some differences between the book (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 151–153) and the lists in the pdf-version (Grand Master Huen–Yuan 2015). The differences are in the translation of some sūtra names and the dates, which are related to the moon calendar e.g., SARS Virus 2003-05-21 (04/21) viz. 2003-06-04 (05/05) in the pdf-version.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

According to the WHO reports the COVID-19 pandemic broke out on December 12, 2019 in *Wúhàn*, since February 11, 2020 the pandemic is officially called COVID-19 Pandemic and was declared a worldwide pandemic on March 11, 2020.

Since February 10, 2020 WXSJ News reports disaster relief activities to overcome the COVID-19 Pandemic. “While the countries worldwide are taking action to prevent the outbreak of Novel Coronavirus, WXSJ GMHY follow the holy instruction to launch “Gengzi Year WXSJ Ritual for the Elimination of Disasters and Epidemics” to resolve this global epidemic crisis. The ritual started at the Heavenly Altar in Headquarters Hsienfosi Temple from the 13th day of the 1st lunar month with 10.000 candles of longevity lighted up in front of the altar till the end of the ritual which will be completed on the 19th day of the 2nd lunar month. Announcement of the Merit Foundation to all fellow believers to recite 4.8 million times “The Heavenly Virtue Scripture of Immortal Master Guigu” to complete the Dharma mission” (WXTV Episode 80 2020: 1:39). A special report on the arrangement of the 10.000 candles as a symbol of light, the positioning of chanting masters and virtuous fellows to perform the ritual, and GMHY’s explanations for coping with the crisis culminates in GMHY’s conviction: “After thirty-six days passed, on the 19th day of the 2nd lunar month on Guan-Yin Bodhisattvas Birthday. We the severity of epidemic crisis will slow down when the ritual completed. We will be stable and safe day to day” (WXTV Episode 80 2020: 5:56).

“[...] an epidemic has broken out in China. This epidemic arising in Wuhan is similar to SARS, an avian influenza, which is caused by Ebola virus. The pneumonia emerging in Wuhan has spread the world over, as the Heaven admonishes all sentient beings for their greed, anger and ignorance” (WXTV Episode 80 2020: 15:24-16:00).

Two weeks later on February 24, 2020 the WXTV Episode 82 again reports from the “Gengzi Year⁷⁴ Ritual for the Elimination of Disasters.” “Wang Chan Lao Zu reveals different orders according to daily changes of the epidemic. The orders are accomplished by Grand Master Hunyuan Chanshi at the Heavenly Altar. All the branch temples and WXSJ Merit Foundation are leading virtuous fellows to recite the scriptures. Believers of folk beliefs are also invited to join the scripture recitation event which aims to accumulate 4.8 million times of recitation of the Heavenly Virtue Scripture of Immortal Master Gui Gu. By doing so, we wish the Jade Emperor, Wang Chan Lao Zu and all the deities bless the world with safety” (WXTV Episode 82

⁷⁴ *Gēngzǐ* 庚子 year (25.01.2020 - 11.02.2021) sexagenary calendar

2020: 1:03-1:42). Reports from different branch temples show the activists performing the ritual, new cases in Taiwan are addressed. On one hand, not only is hope expressed that the crisis will soon come to an end, but also a causal connection with the poor behaviour of people and a warning from celestial powers is established. On the other hand, predictions are ventured for an imminent subsiding of the epidemic. This reflects a deep belief in the influence of celestial powers on world events.

First Mention of Ukraine War

WXSJ's first mention of the Ukraine War which started on February 24, 2022, was as follows: "March 3rd to 5th Chanshishan WXSJ launched the Renyin⁷⁵ year 2022 benediction ritual of Taiwan's Safety on Dragon-head-raising Festival. Following Wang Chan Lao Zu's holy revelation, participants prayed for peace and elimination of disasters by reciting WXSJ scriptures. Compassion and love are lost among human beings, inflicting conflicts between countries. The world is in chaos and turmoil due to Russian invasion of Ukraine. This is tragedy for all mankind" (WXTV Episode 178 2022).

In the subsequent report, GMHY offers a poignant reflection on the prevailing military conflicts that plague our world. He attributes these conflicts to a lamentable combination of human ignorance and irrationality, which he views as a significant hindrance to global harmony. GMHY fervently calls for a rekindling of mutual love and empathy among individuals, emphasizing the urgent need for these values in our turbulent times. Moreover, GMHY takes a moment to express his deep sorrow regarding the current state of affairs. He is particularly troubled by the conflicts and tensions between Taiwan and the PRC, as well as the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia. These conflicts, he believes, are causing immense suffering and division among people.

"To pray for peace and harmony in Taiwan, China the East Asia and the whole world, Chanchishan Weixin Shengjiao has never stopped turning the Dharma Wheel of disaster elimination. By following the revelation of Wang Chan Lao Zu and the instruction of Grand Master Hunyuan Chanshi, "WXSJ's Offerings to 500 Arhats to Turn the Dharma Wheel of World Peace Ritual" was launched from July 5th to August the 29th. By relying of the heavenly power of Wang Chan Lao Zu we sincerely hope that the disasters would be eliminated in both the underworld and the mundane world, the grievances would be resolved and the peace would be

⁷⁵ Rényín 壬寅 year (01.02.2022 - 21.01.2023) sexagenary calendar

secured in Taiwan, on both sides of the strait and in the world” (WXTV Episode 202 2022: 0:43).

Despite the bleak circumstances, GMHY is deemed to remain a beacon of hope. He believes that through the invocation of 500 Arhats and the observance of respectful ceremonies, we have the potential to contribute significantly to the cause of world peace. He fervently advocates for the cessation of these destructive conflicts, stressing that they must never happen again. In his view, such wars are not only detrimental to humanity but also run counter to the divine will that seeks unity, compassion, and harmony among all living beings. “Show appreciation to all the Heavenly sages, deities, buddhas and bodhisattvas. The dharma-protection deities of the Dragon Heaven will protect the common people. They will transform and resolve grievances to prevent battles. We further pray that humanity achieves mutual love and concern for each other and pray moreover for everlasting world peace” (WXTV Episode 202 2022: 2:42-09:44).

5 Organisational Structures

5.1 Temples and Religious Buildings

Since the establishment of WXSJ, GMHY has been striving to create a spiritual foundation in Taiwan and temples for the commemoration of ancestors. The main temple on *Chánjī* Mountain, called “Chan Chi Mountain Hsien Fo Temple,” is located in *Guóxìng* Township, *Nántóu* County, and was built in 1989. All temples are constructed according to the principles of *fēngshuǐ*. Statues of revered ancestors, primarily *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ*, are worshipped there, and regular worship ceremonies are held.

Also located in *Nántóu* County, on the left flank of the *Bāguà* Mountains, is the “Weixin Shengjiao Bagua Shencheng I Ching University.” It is referred to as a beacon of salvation and the future centre of the orthodoxy of Chinese culture. According to GMHY, the construction of “Weixin Shengjiao Bagua Shencheng” adheres to the principles of “I Ching Feng Shui Studies,” serving both environmental protection and the conceptualization of the facility as an art project. In addition to the main building, there is the Southern Heaven Gate (*Nán Tiān* Gate), altars like the “Saint Welcoming Altar,” the Nine Dragons Wall (*Jiǔlóngbì* 九龍壁), the *Wéixīn* Garden, and the headquarters. Nearby, you can also find the WXSJ College.

“Weixin Shengjiao Yun Meng Mountain Bagua Cheng” was established in 2014. It serves as a platform for cultural exchange between businesspeople from China and Taiwan. During a pilgrimage in 2000, with the intention of expressing gratitude and seeking the benevolence of

ancestors, GMHY made a vow to build “Yun Meng Mountain Bagua Cheng” as a site of Chinese culture and a melting pot of world cultures. Chinese businesspeople took charge of its construction. It also functions as a base for exchanges with institutions in *Hénán*, PRC. In addition to several temples and halls, there is also the “Guiguzi Academic Research Institute” and a cultural research centre established there.

In addition to these large-scale facilities, there are forty branch temples, whose locations were personally selected by GMHY based on the principles of *Yijing* divination and *fēngshuǐ*. Lecturers in these temples have the duty to teach and preach, conduct ceremonies, and provide services for the followers.



(Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 89–108)

5.2 Educational Institutions, Colleges, and *Yijīng* University

The Origin of the Yijīng University.

Founded in 1994 by GMHY, the purpose of establishing the university is GMHY's firm belief that *Yijīng* practice and *fēngshuǐ* combined with essential elements of the Three Teachings represent the wisdom of Chinese sages. "Grand Master Hun Yuan taught, "I Ching University is "god's University", not just a university in the world. The university of the world is limited in knowledge but the "god's university" is no boundary for external world and no delimiting for the inner world. [...] The supreme wisdom is what I Ching university pursues. Everyone has that wisdom, but it is not developed. Therefore, this university is to inspire it. The wisdom this university endows is no religions distinction. It is to complete the wisdom that all religions Dharmas need." The aims of the foundation of the I Ching University are formulated by slogans such as "Raise and cultivate talented people," and "Revitalize and cultivate people's morals," and "Refine ambitions" and "Create universal harmony" (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 123, 124). GMHY introduces the idea of lifelong learning for his university education programme referring to a concept already propagated by UNESCO in the 1970s and subsequent decades. Therefore, he defines his university programme as a lifelong education programme. This is his constantly recurring mantra of propagating the study of the *Yijīng* in eight pleas:

"Everyone study the I Ching, behave and feel at ease;

Everyone study the I Ching, be healthy and carefree;

Everyone study the I Ching, do your work with satisfaction;

Everyone study the I Ching, every adult and child will be intelligent;

Everyone study the I Ching, every company and every customer will feel secure;

Everyone study the I Ching, the family will be satisfied and of one mind;

Everyone study the I Ching, practice what you have learned and you will see the way;

Everyone study the I Ching, the country's society will see peace" (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a:122,125).

This is a rather free translation compared to the Chinese original from the 2007 Book "The Extraordinary Practitioner: Grand Master Hun Yuan Chanshi" (*Chāofán de xíngzhě hùn yuán chánshī* 超凡的行者 混元禪師):

"大家學易經,做人處事可安心。[*Dàjiā xué yìjīng, zuòrén chǔshì kě ānxīn.*]

大家學易經,身體健康心安寧。[*Dàjiā xué yìjīng, shēntǐ jiànkāng xīn ānníng.*]

大家學易經,做事工作可順心。[*Dàjiā xué yìjīng, zuòshì gōngzuò kě shùnxīn.*]

大家學易經,大人小孩皆聰明。[Dàjiā xué yìjīng, dàrén xiǎohái jiē cōngmíng.]

大家學易經,公司客戶無欺心。[Dàjiā xué yìjīng, gōngsī kèhù wú qī xīn.]

大家學易經,修行道上可見性。[Dàjiā xué yìjīng, xiūxíng dàoshàng kějiàn xìng.]

大家學易經,家庭圓滿一條心。[Dàjiā xué yìjīng, jiāting yuánmǎn yītiáoxīn.]

大家學易經,國家社會見太平。[Dàjiā xué yìjīng, guójiā shèhuì jiàn tàipíng]” (Yang and Jiang 2007: 13).

“The Education System of I Ching University – Five Dimensions of Lifelong Education”

The course structure according to GMHY is divided in five dimensions.

Social education Lifelong Learning

- Primary Class
- Standard Class
- Teacher Counselling Program
- Overseas Chinese Studying the I Ching
- I Ching Feng Shui Courses for the World Chinese
- The Cloud Classroom

Faculty Education Sage Cultivating

- Faculty Training Programme
- Weixin Master Programme
- Weixin Doctoral Programme
- Research Development

Enterprise Education Sustainable Developing

- Enterprise Education – Multinational business of Sage Business Program
- Global I Ching Feng shui Lectures
- The Cloud Classroom

Student Education Younger Generation Cultivating

- Children Studying the I Ching
- I Ching Summer Course for University Student
- Architectural Design and Feng Shui Course for University Student
- Chinese Youth Studying the I Ching
- The Cloud Classroom

Religious Practice

- Puja
- Group Practice
- National Recite Buddha

In social education primary and standard class students are educated to cultivate their minds, practice, and gain knowledge, develop virtues, elevate their aspirations and bring peace and stability to the world. Because those who know, and practice well are sages. The goal is to become a sage, which is the degree offered in I Ching University. To achieve this goal, one has to go through eight classes or stages: Sages of Loyalty, Filiality, Benevolence, Love, Honesty, Righteousness, Harmony and Peace. Each of these stages takes three years and grants different Buddhist status. A successful study takes all included twenty-four years. “The Sage with eight virtues is permitted by Emperor Jade. When life is complete, he will be able to return to heaven, the Pure Land. In the world, people who have Sage Buddhist status will have a status in the heavenly pure land. The current school programs are the same as Buddhist status, named as “Yi-Xin Tathagata⁷⁶” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 126–127).

From this perspective the term lifelong education becomes obvious. Students who enrol in this study programme are going step by step from one stage to another ameliorating their self-cultivation, virtues, and knowledge to become finally a sage and find a place in the pure land which is the desired place in the wheel of rebirth.

“Teacher Counselling Programme”

This is a teacher training programme to propagate *fēngshuǐ*, the *Yìjīng* Heart Method and life *bāguà*. It is promoted to help understanding the rules of *fēngshuǐ* and its relation to environment, housing, and living, and to apply this knowledge to the right execution in practice and daily life.

“I Ching Feng shui courses for the World Chinese”

GMHY’s mission in propagating *Yìjīng* and *fēngshuǐ* teachings is to reach not only Chinese people but the whole world to achieve his ultimate aim of world peace. To merge the knowledge of Chinese culture into modern life to help solve a plethora of acute and menacing problems of humankind is deemed indispensable. In September 2004, a class was set up which lasted some

⁷⁶ The Tathāgata Buddha (*rúláifó* 如來佛) another term for Avalokiteśvara (*Guānshìyīn* 觀世音), better known as *Guānyīn* Bodhisattva (*Guānyīn púsà* 觀音菩薩) or simply *Guānyīn*. Tathāgata primarily refers to the historical Buddha. By extension, it refers to all Buddhas.

four months in Xiānfó Temple on Chánjī Mountain. “After graduation, the title of “Royalty Sage” will be awarded” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 131).

“International I Ching Feng Shui Cloud Classroom ”

This is an online education programme taught by GMHY to promote Chinese culture and the teachings of WXSJ.

“Architectural Space and Aesthetic Design ”

A special course for vocational high school teachers to become acquainted with the application of *Yijīng* and *fēngshuǐ* was held in February 2015. It was organized by WXSJ Charity Foundation co-hosted with the Ministry of Education and a national vocational high school.

“Faculty Training Programme ”

A preacher training programme lead by GMHY on the basis of the “Wang Chan Lao Chu Profound Sutra” with the aim of “[...] nurture the lofty wisdom and professionalism to service the community with “self accomplishment, self respect, and self fulfilment” for each pupil, and head towards preaching internationally” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 131-133).

“Weixin Doctoral Programme ”

A special programme personally taught by GMHY, who offers his thirty years of experience as a religious leader and he “[...] enlightens the truth of “mountain, medicine, life, fortune telling, and appearance” are favourable to human and heavens” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 134).

“Weixin Master Program ”

This is aimed at students of I Ching University and lecturers to educate future preachers in three stages: core courses, religious thinking, and *Yijīng* and *fēngshuǐ* practical classes.

Student Education

“Children Studying the I Ching ”

2008 was the starting point for the “Children’s Promotion Centre for the study of the I Ching” with the aim to aid in children’s education. In Kindergarten and primary school one should start to make pupils acquainted with concepts of tolerance, filial piety, mutual respect, and the idea of a harmonious society on the basis of GMHY’s teachings. As of 2016, WXSJ claimed that 2.1 million children have benefited from those studies.

“I Ching Summer Course for University Student”

Since 2001 the “Da An” Temple has offered one-month summer courses for the young generation. Through morning and evening chant classes, pujas, and lectures students are acquainted with the *Yijing fengshui* heart method with the intention to better understanding oneself, benefit for self-development, avoid harm, and be helpful to fellow humans. As of 2016 the participation of 3500 students was claimed.

“Architectural Design and Fengshui Course for University Students”

In August 2011 GMHY started the first course for students of architecture and interior design to observe the rules of *fengshui* in their professional work. Besides morning chants and learning the *Yijing fengshui* heart method lectures involved instructions on the use of the compass, ceremonies for construction safety, integration of architecture into nature, protect nature, the environment and the living earth. WXSJ has not yet indicated numbers of course participants. Apparently the course is offered annually (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 138-142).

“Overseas Youth Studying the I Ching”

“Short term classes use a step-wise method to introduce the Chinese culture *I Ching Feng Shui heart method* to Chinese students of overseas universities” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 143).

Religious Practice

All Chant Classics

The last day of every month is defined by WXSJ as a day of holy chanting for the ancestors to help them on their path toward the pure land of the western paradise. “The goal of this day is to pray for world peace, we are an altruistic religion, and we gather everyone’s power to chant Amitabha, once you are enlightened you are Amitabha” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 143).

Religious Group Practice

Since 1997 GMHY initiated once a month the “One-day Zen practice of thousand Buddhas” officiated at the “Main Temple Thousand Buddha Zen Hall”. The purpose entails to help participants to develop their inner self, to help all enter their mindset of the sage, and emulate their saintly deeds to achieve social stability and peace.

Group Ancestor Worshipping

As of 2016, this ceremony was held on the first day of the years 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 at the *Línkǒu* Gymnasium. It is dedicated to the remembrance of the Three Ancestors which are central to the teachings of WXSJ. Chinese from all over the world were invited to take part. The “Taiwan Weixin Shengjiao Chinese Jointed Ancestor Worship Association” registered in 2000, focuses on filial piety, humanity, and contributing to harmony and world peace.

Various Puja

A puja is a worship ritual to pay devotional homage and prayer to the ancestors, to honour the memories of the deceased, or host spiritual guests (e.g., the invited ancestors). The chanting of scripts is led by chanting masters whenever there is disaster and ancestors are invited. “All kinds of lotus seats will be placed and all spirits invited. Particularly pious with flowers and fruits for all saintly Buddhas of the universe to descend upon the city and accept the giving, as well as empowerment ceremonies to turn around the disastrous situation for all to be fulfilled” (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 143–145).

Chanting classic scriptures at home

Followers of WXSJ are obliged to practice every day and evening by “[...] chanting the Buddha’s name, incantations, holy scripts, scripts of regret and be compassionate and kind, do kind deeds. Praise Buddha, Gods, Amen, Allah, Amitabha and have merits and wisdom applied to daily living to accumulate limitless merits and compassion.” Applying this method of chanting classical scriptures is an important belief, —that is, the Dharma acts through the humanitarian spirit of the worshipping and daily chanting of believers with the perspective of avoiding and ending calamities, the effect increasing with the number of verses recited. The eradication of the Ebola virus in 2014 is recorded as a success because of the scripts were reportedly chanted 11.2 million times. “In 2015 we hope to end world hunger and war by chanting 12.5 million times. “A hope that, not surprisingly, has not been fulfilled to this day (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 146).

Wéixīn Shèngjiào College

The approval of this form of college education by the Ministry of Education is dated November 6, 2013. According to GMHY “The religious college set up today is different to normal

universities, it is a university established with the will of the heavens and with a final goal of benefiting all living with our principles. [...] In encompassing academia in religion and academia establishing religion, Taiwan WXSJ College and I Ching University mutually benefits each other, training talents of academic research and administration, with a mission of implementing nurturing the virtuous and talents, to strengthen education and improve one's goals and realize world peace" (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 147).

What we learn from this explanation is only the approval of the college, and not the *Yijīng* University, the latter being still a private educational enterprise of WXSJ. The research activities of the *Yijīng* University are concerned with a wide range of topics especially with, *Guǐgǔzi*, *Chīyóu*, the ancestors, Chinese ancient history, the *bāguà*, *Yijīng*, and *fēngshuǐ* in connection with the teachings of WXSJ propagated by GMHY.

The I Ching University International College

The International College Cloud Classroom went online on September 19, 2013. All classes were taught personally by GMHY. To take part, there are no so called "degree requirements." It is open for everyone and specifically for overseas Chinese with the goal to spread the *Yijīng fēngshuǐ* studies to all corners of the world. As introductory information one reads: "Founder of I Ching University Grand Master Hun Yuan was nominated for the 2012 Nobel peace prize, which is symbolic of the importance and acknowledgement of the Chinese culture and traditions for promoting world peace" (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 147, 148).

5.3 Publications and Media

WXSJ started their media presence in the mid-1990s using the technological development to spread the teachings of GMHY. The group is now present not only on TV but also on YouTube, and various social media, such as Facebook.

Since 1995, WXSJ broadcasted "I-Ching Feng-Shui Dharma" shows on television and radio. From 1998 until 2011, the Taiwan Television Company televised the show "I-Ching Feng-Shui of All Appearances" in 4424 episodes. From 2004 until 2009, 1548 episodes of "Feng-Shui of My House" were broadcasted at midnight via TTV digital station.

Weixin TV station, WXTV (*wéixīn diànshìtái* 唯心電視台), started 2003 as an "I-Ching Feng Shui Professional TV channel," broadcasting twenty four hours a day. WXTV serves as the main channel to promote the teachings of the new religion, with eighty percent airtime dedicated to the instructions of GMHY. During the other periods messages from corresponding journalists from Asia, America, Australia, and New Zealand concerning religious experiences,

testimonials from virtuous followers and practitioners in general, and religious matters related to WXSJ are reported. GMHY's ambition is "[...] to make the scriptures spread without borders, to achieve pure lands at all households, he organized the Weixin TV station and started broadcasting in 2010. This allows the public regardless where they are and what field they are in to be associated, in turn achieving world peace" (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 186-188).

"Back to the 9th day of the 1st lunar month of 2015, GMHY led the Weixin disciples to complete the "Unfolding ceremony of Weixin Canon" stored collection of total 15615 volumes in Weixin Museum. This year we held the latest "Unfolding Ceremony of Weixin Canon" which was completed on the 9th day of the 1st lunar month of 2020 at the Headquarters Hsienfosi Temple. According to the calculation data the total volume of Weixin Canon is now 22,590 volumes" (WXTV Episode 80 2020: 10:59-11:28).

"Archives of videos tapes for the 30th anniversary of Opening Southern Heaven by Grand Master Hun Yuan Chan Shi". This is a collection of an enormous number of video tapes which is located in Taichung branch temple. The unveiling ceremony on August 21 was a major event with GMHY at the centre. Masters, lecturers, and guests from different institutions were invited. Since his first recordings of videos comprising teaching affairs, *Yijing*, *fengshui* and teaching the Dharma there are 30.000 records on education and 24678 records constituting the Weixin Canon referred to as "Weixin Canon Treasure collection". This part of the program shows the archive with rows of video tapes, a collection of the recording equipment applied in the 40 years since. The ceremony starts with a drumming performance and a speech of GMHY relating his achievements to *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ*, his personal development and the importance of the "Weixin Canon Treasure Collection" (WXTV Episode 202 2022: 13:26).

The "Weixin Canon Treasure Collection" represents the historical archive of all writings, video recordings, and teachings produced by GMHY. With this, WXSJ possesses the complete spiritual legacy of GMHY, considered the earthly representative of *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ*. Hence, it is regarded as a unique collection within the religious treasure of WXSJ.

Since August 6, 2018, WXTV broadcasts a weekly report in English, Weixin English News (*wéixīn yīngyǔ xīnwén* 唯心英语新闻). This weekly news report is exclusively for the propagation of WXSJ's teachings, reports on events to mark important religious events, dharma rituals, reports from branch temples in the rich religious calendar of WXSJ's worshipping, ancestor commemoration, chanting and so-called dharma rituals.

The duration of these videos is approximately twenty-five minutes. They start with the introduction of the moderator and a welcome message which varies slightly each episode:

“I am Fiona Chang Hsin-Fang. As the wisdom of I Ching transcends the borderlines, true world peace will come. Welcome to the professional I Ching Feng Shui TV station, Weixin TV station. I am Fiona sharing with you the Weixin Report at 11:30 P.M. Monday, August 6th, 2018” (WXTV Episode 1, 2018) or “Good day to the audience around the world! Today is Monday 14th, 2022 and is now 11:30 p.m. in Taiwan. I’m Fiona Chang Hsin-Fang. Welcome to the weekly report of the World New Religion, Taiwan Weixin Shengjiao, the Sagely Teachings of the Heart, at Weixin TV Station” (WXTV Episode 175 2022).

A constantly recurring part of the programme is “Grand Master Hunyuan Chanshi’s Footprint.” These reports cover the whole spectrum of public and religious activities at which GMHY takes part, such as visiting branch temples, *Yijing* summer camps, conducting religious ceremonies, giving lectures, seminars, etc.

Feature stories, another programme point, are concerned with *fēngshuǐ*, the *Yijing* and religious instructions of GMHY. Stories from successful experiences of testimonials covering all problems of life from health to financial, personal, and spiritual issues and their overcoming are the proof for the effectiveness of the doctrine.

Some examples from different episodes will give an impression and a rough idea of the reported news:

“The New Religion of the World Taiwan WXSJ integrates I Ching, Feng shui and religion to make WXSJ novel and unique among the new religions of the world. [...] Ladies and Gentlemen, Amitabha! Welcome to WXSJ Feature Story. Today we will continue to share GMHYCS’s Fengshui principle on bed position. [...] Weixin Religious activities Ritual of Birthday of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva by Branch Temples of WXSJ - the Benediction Ritual for the Birthday of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva is annually held at each branch temple on 19th day of the 6th lunar month. All virtuous fellows and believers could show their appreciation to Kuan Yin Bodhisattva for the benevolent blessing when attending this ritual. In the meantime they could also understand more about WXSJs theology as they learn the dharma relationship between Kuan Yin Bodhisattva and Wang Chan Lao Zu for promoting the World peace. [...] Each WXSJ’s Branch temple has its own unique destiny. Therefore the religious activities and rituals would be different among WXSJ’s Branch temples according to their own destiny. Regarding the ritual activities in Tainan Branch Temple, every year, after the annual “Ritual of Compassionate Samadhi Water Repentance Ceremony”, is successfully completed three times, WXSJ Tainan Branch Temple carefully followed Wang Chan Lao Zu’s instructions to hold the “Anniversary Disaster Elimination Benediction Ritual”. Lets take a look at the “Anniversary

Disaster Elimination Benediction Ritual” held at Tainan Branch Temple on July the 27th” (WXTV Episode 1 2018).

“Taiwanese and all the Chinese people are welcoming the New Lunar Year in the end of January. In Chinese cultural tradition 2022 marks the year of the Tiger. GMHY instructed us that both the 4th day and the 8th day of the first lunar month are the days when the Deity of Joy descends to the world. Therefore, they are good days for the commencement of commercial activities. GMHY bestowed the calligraphy “Longevity a Buddhas” to virtuous cultivators as he encouraged believers and cultivators under or over the age of eighty to keep their spiritual practice. May everyone happy and healthy. May prosperity spring among different industries” (WXTV Episode 171, 2022: 0:42).

The subsequent report shows GMHY signing calligraphies with his handprint bestowed to virtuous cultivators. In his speech he talks about his old age and explains the calligraphy: “At this moment at my age of seventy-nine I wrote down the calligraphy with “Buddha’s longevity exists forever vividly” I in person wrote this calligraphy “[*Fú shòu cháng qīng* 佛壽長青]” I in person print my handprint and bestow it to WX Fellows as memory. [...] I offered Wang Chan Lao Zu in my hand, I offered Amitabha Buddha in my hand, I offered Heavenly sages, deities, buddhas and bodhisattvas in my hand, then print my handprint on the calligraphy with “Buddha’s longevity exists forever vividly”. [...] “Research and Development Centre for religious affair of WXSJ is happy to pronounce the completion of the English translation of the Heavenly Virtue Scripture of Immortal Master Guigu. After two years of endeavour, the English version of the Heavenly Virtue Scripture of Immortal Master Guigu is finally published on January 1st” (WXTV Episode 171, 2022: 5:27, 14:31).

The selected examples and excerpts from the weekly broadcasts offer a comprehensive glimpse into the diverse array of activities undertaken throughout the year within the WXSJ community. Each branch temple, in accordance with its unique purpose, undertakes specific religious responsibilities and fulfils ritual obligations. While the particulars may differ, commonalities surface in the observance of ancestor worship rituals and responses to contemporary events such as disasters and conflicts. These events often trigger immediate actions aimed at influencing these situations positively through corresponding ceremonial practices. One of the fascinating aspects highlighted in these broadcasts is the unwavering commitment of the followers, who actively engage in the design and preparation of offerings. This involvement provides valuable insights into the intricate and meaningful ritual practices inherent in WXSJ.

These reports extend beyond the local sphere, encompassing international conferences, visits from scholars, and reciprocal visits from representatives of other religious communities. The

purpose is to facilitate an exchange of ideas and collaborative efforts geared towards the collective pursuit of world peace. The central figure in these activities is GMHY, whose active participation in various events and interpretations of the revealed texts serves as a cornerstone of the mission.

It is worth noting that this broadcasting format stands as a significant pillar of WXSJ's missionary endeavours. Unlike the majority of publications, which are predominantly available in Chinese, these broadcasts bridge the linguistic gap and make the rich tapestry of WXSJ's activities accessible to a broad, non-Chinese-speaking audience. This inclusivity enhances the visibility and understanding of WXSJ's practices and values on a global scale.

6 Relations with the PRC and International Operations

Primarily, WXSJ cultivates international relationships through its overseas branches. As of 2016, there were fourteen overseas units. "In Asia: China Beijing Office, Henan, China Yun Meng Bagua Town, China Hebei Zhuolu Chiyou Emperor Temple, China Zhuolu Yan Emperor Temple, China Hebei Zhuolu Yellow Emperor Temple, Suzhou Office, Japan Osaka site, Vietnam Ho Chi Minh City office. In North America: New York, Los Angeles, Toronto and Vancouver Offices, a total of four. In Australia: Melbourne Office, a total of one. In Europa: Spain Office, a total of one. It is an international promotion by meeting local Chinese, and local residents and stabilizing human mind, learning I Ching and the philosophy of life. It is to create a Pure Land, to reach the world peace" (Grand Master Hun Yuan 2016a: 113).

Furthermore, continuous relationships are maintained with scholars of religion in Europe, the USA, Australia, and Asia. Through participation in and organization of international "academic" conferences, gatherings of religious organizations dedicated to promoting world peace like WXSJ, joint prayer events, online conferences, invitations of scholars and religious representatives to WXSJ events in Taiwan, WXSJ has established extensive networking with a variety of NRMs in the Asian context, all focused on peace advocacy. WXTV extensively covers these activities in its weekly broadcasts. Selected examples from recent years that are significant for WXSJ and the involved stakeholders are elaborated in the following.

2018

The 2018 International Conference "Tradition and Innovation in Religious Movements East Asia, The West, and Beyond" co-organized by the Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR); Weixin College, Nántóu County, Taiwan; Taiwan Weixin World Peace Promotion Association, Nántóu County, Taiwan; International Society for the Study of New Religions (ISSNR). As co-organizer, WXSJ presented its community and its goals.

2019

Leading representatives of the Japanese NRM Ōmoto 大本 participated in events and gave lectures for virtuous believers. South Korean leaders from the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) attended ceremonies, and the Director of the International Department the Vietnamese NRM Cao Đài discussed matters of East Asian NRMs during the 2019 International Religious and Cultural Exchanges.

IRUHA 3 International Conference on July 18, 2019, held at Taipei Hero House. Approximately 120 people from nine countries participated. At the third IRUHA Meeting the “Taipei Declaration” was adopted. The theme was why is Esperanto necessary for the realization of lasting world peace through “One God, One World, One Language.”

It was confirmed that Esperanto can be the tool to help us do this across religions and cultures. It should be noted that all participating organizations in these conferences are religious communities that claim to advocate world peace, and that all religions can be traced back to a single God. The dissemination and use of Esperanto is especially characteristic of Ōmoto and its associated groups. A unified world language is seen as one of the prerequisites for world peace.

In August 2019, a delegation from WXSJ handed over a selection of 192 texts to the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Vienna for their specialized library. The majority of these publications were authored by GMHY and focus on the central teachings of *Yijing* and *fēngshuǐ*. The provided original literature is predominantly in Chinese (WXTV Episode 78 2019).

2022

On February 17, 2022, the Director of WXSJ Religious Affair Center Master Yuán Xīn (Fiona Chang) took part in an international online meeting, where she made extensive exchanges with international religious scholars regarding, education, cultural activities, branch temples, and representative religious architecture. On this occasion, Bernadette Rigal-Cellard, a professor of the University of Bordeaux, France, presented her book “Une grande religion de Taiwan (Avec la participation de Fiona Chang fille de Grand Maître Hunyuan Chanshi).”

Further participants were the founder of CESNUR Massimo Introvigne, Eileen Barker, a retired professor from the London School of Economics, Sébastien Billioud from the Université Paris Cité (WXTV Episode 177 2022).

Participation in “Bordeaux Conference of Religion, War and Peace” at Maison des Sciences del’Homme d’Aquitaine MSHA in France on October 13 and 14, 2022:

As the title of the event in Bordeaux suggests, the contributions revolved around the backdrop of the Ukraine War, discussing the involvement and exploitation of religious communities in war and violence. The suppression of religious movements, especially in China, with participants from Taiwan and South Korea, was under debate. Participants performed rituals developed by various religious communities to preserve or bring about peace. Fiona Chang presented her paper “Revelation, Ritual and the Ethnic Interaction: The Religious practices of WXSJ in Taiwan for Cross Strait Peace and World Peace”. On this occasion she also invited the attending scholars to join in the “2026 Weixin Shengjiao’s Global Religious Leaders Congress” in October 2026 in Taiwan.

4th IRUHA⁷⁷ International Meetings – Online Prayer Assembly October 14, 2022:

This online meeting was held with the theme of prayers for realization of “one peaceful world.” The participants delivered messages of peace and performed specific peace rituals of their movements.

The peace prayer of WXSJ (*Wéixīn Shèngjiào qífú wén* 唯心聖教祈福文) was performed by Fiona Chang and a cleric in a dialogue manner in front of the delegation. In addition to the participation of WXSJ, representatives from Cao Đài, Wŏn Buddhism, various Ōmoto branches from Brazil and Mongolia, representatives from Taesunjillihoe 대순진리회/大巡眞理會 (South Korea), different Jinrui Aizenkai 人類愛善會 branches from India, and ULBA Universal Love and Brotherhood Association (Sri Lanka) were also present, to name just a few.

The list of events could easily be expanded. However, here we are only demonstrating the diverse international networking efforts. Looking at the relationships of WXSJ within NRMs in (East) Asia and their overseas branches, one can appreciate the diversity of movements that share their efforts for world peace. These connections span various continents and cultures, bringing together religious groups with a common goal of promoting harmony and understanding among nations. The collaborations and interactions between WXSJ and other NRMs reflect

⁷⁷ IRUHA “Internacia Reto de Universala Homama Asocio” (International Network of Universal Love in Esperanto) also International Network of Jinrui Aizenkai directly connected with Ōmoto wants to widen the links among general and overseas headquarters, branches and centres, like minded religious organisations, NGOs, and NPOs. Founded on May 19, 2016 at the first IRUHA international Meeting in Thailand. The so called the Bangkok Declaration, was issued and all participants pledged to spread the spirit of “universal love and brotherhood” in order to promote world peace. Approximately 200 participants participated. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aj6NpCKVskQ> (accessed: July 27, 2023).

a global network of organizations committed to fostering a more peaceful and compassionate world.

7 Members

In the publications used, the estimated number of members varies significantly. Drawing on official estimates and self-reported figures, WXSJ membership ranges from 300,000 to over a million. According to recent reports, WXSJ stated its membership at approximately 300,000 during the conference in Lithuania 2003. In the field of Chinese religions, providing precise follower numbers is challenging. It is difficult to distinguish between active members, passive followers, occasional visitors, and merely interested individuals. Additionally, identifying exclusive adherence to a specific religious group is challenging. Participation in religious events and temple visits may not necessarily indicate full membership.

The reasons for interest and engagement in WXSJ are investigated in Liu's M.A. thesis (Liu H. Y. 2018). Liu derives her findings from twenty-one in-depth interviews with WXSJ believers.

The interviews with WXSJ believers reveal four reasons for initially joining:

Category 1 Problem-solving: Seekers turn to WXSJ for effective solutions to address negative impacts in their personal lives. They seek advice to cope with occupational, familial, or everyday stress and gain clarity on uncertainties about the future to make informed decisions with significant impacts on their lives.

Category 2 Doctrine: Learners in WXSJ seek to explore similarities between its concepts and their original faith, aiming to enrich and advance their overall spiritual beliefs.

Category 3 Social network: Participants in WXSJ often establish contact and join the faith through pre-existing ties, family, and professional relationships. They may form emotional connections with some followers or have close contact with existing adherents of WXSJ. These individuals are open to new experiences, trust their friends' recommendations, and are interested in expanding their social circles by making new connections within the faith.

Category 4 Religious experience: Seekers in WXSJ are individuals with a natural inclination towards spirituality or those who have had previous religious experiences with deities or charismatic leaders like GMHY. They believe in the supernatural power and find following the will of these higher powers beneficial for their lives. Many followers are drawn to WXSJ due to their conviction in the healing abilities of the charismatic leader, GMHY, and they feel a sense of gratitude and wish to support him by remaining in the group.

The charisma of GMHY and the social network within WXSJ are not the main reasons for followers to join, but they play crucial roles. The religion offers practical and effective solutions

through *Yijing* and *fengshui*, positively impacting their followers' lives. Besides these, WXSJ also includes other Chinese religious elements to meet the believers' needs. Therefore, some followers stay and deeply commit to WXSJ for reasons unrelated to *Yijing* and *fengshui*. However, these teachings are unique among other religious groups, allowing WXSJ to carve a niche in the Chinese folk religious market. It not only provides traditional Chinese religious practices but also offers systematic courses on *Yijing* and *fengshui*. This niche strategy attracts people interested in Chinese folk religion and these practices, are contributing to the sustained development of WXSJ in the Taiwanese religious market.

In Chinese religious traditions, religion and society are intricately linked together. The most common type of conversion is "conversion to," where individuals adopt a new faith without abandoning their previous religiosity. This is different from Pauline conversion in the Western social context, where a complete change of a belief system occurs, like converting from one Christian denomination to another (e.g., from Catholicism to Buddhism, or Islam). Chinese popular religion is characterized by polytheism and non-exclusivity, allowing believers to incorporate a new faith while still retaining aspects of their previous beliefs. Belief in a certain creed can be a one-time event or a lifelong process of reforming one's beliefs, devotion, and worship practices.

Liu conducted in-depth interviews with a small and diverse sample of twenty-one believers, including both ordinary believers and clergy, to explore the intentions and experiences of adherents in WXSJ. Liu notes that most interviewees became acquainted with the religious group through the courses offered and identified themselves as group members after learning its doctrines. While the study provides a good introduction to WXSJ, the limited sample size and the mix of different groups of believers (ordinary believers and clergy) raise questions about the reliability of the results. From a statistical point of view the selection of subjects is much too biased and the sample size is definitely too small to give anything but glimpses of reality, rather than full representation of all WXSJ followers.

8 Concluding Remarks

Alleged revelations received by chosen individuals are found in various religions and NRMs. In the case of the WXSJ history, it distinguishes itself through a unique foundation in Chinese mythology and its mythical figures. It represents a sino-centric doctrine with the religious focal point in Taiwan, intended to be disseminated globally. WXSJ, founded by GMHY in 1982, is primarily a revelation religion with a high aspiration for the salvation and redemption of the world. Its contents consist of mystical revelations that emerged from the mystical union of

GMHY with *Guǐgǔzi* or *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ*. Before transforming into GMHY and connecting with the mystical *Guǐgǔzi*, *Zhāng Yìruì* suffered from a severe kidney disease that conventional medical treatment could not heal. A spiritual healer at Dragon Phoenix Palace in *Xīnyíng*, *Tàinán*, advised him that healing could only be achieved through his unique life path and spiritual practice. Consequently, he focused on invoking upon Buddha and meditating, leading to a union with the spiritual realm that cured his illness and initiated his practice of Daoism. The teachings he developed with the help of spiritual masters are deeply rooted in Chinese mythological history and trace back to the emergence of human civilization.

Hóngjūn Lǎozǔ is considered the ancestor of human civilization, who brought life to the world from the primordial chaos about 14,500 years ago. He is regarded as the first ancestor of the *Kūnlún* civilization, from which various peoples allegedly originated and spread throughout the world. While *Hóngjūn Lǎozǔ* is mentioned as a historical figure, he is not included in the genealogy that begins with *Fúxī* in the hierarchy of ancestors. *Fúxī* and *Nǚwā* are the creator deities in Chinese mythology, and, like the mythical emperors *Huángdì*, *Yándì*, and *Chīyóu*, they are attributed with numerous inventions for humanity.

The historical wars of these mythical rulers also play a significant role. Combined with the belief in the influence of ancestors and deceased spirits from the afterlife on the real world, there arises the necessity to reconcile unresolved conflicts and injustices of past generations. This is to dissolve the existing grudges and grievances of the ancestors, which hinder the desired world peace due to their negative influence on world events. A central figure in this process is *Chīyóu*, with whom GMHY established a connection, restoring his standing as one of the ancestors of Chinese ethnic groups and thus averting his negative influence on us. The intermediary figure is *Guǐgǔzi*, revered as the reincarnation of *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ*, who, through a mystical union with GMHY, facilitates direct contact with the sages of Chinese history and imparts helpful advice for humanity. The emergence of sūtras is attributed to this mystical communication, which GMHY progressively received during his development. *Guǐgǔzi*'s great wisdom thus becomes a key source of guidance, be it in political, diplomatic, or practical life matters. Hence, ancestor commemoration is an essential part of religious practice, enabling harmony between the world of the deceased and our present world. Not only the essential rehabilitation of *Chīyóu*, but also the victims and the sacrifices of the reportedly altogether 917 wars fought in the past, are acknowledged through these ceremonies. By preventing the negative influences of different parties in former military conflicts, all deceased must be appeased through respectful rituals to facilitate harmonious and peaceful coexistence. The influence of ancestors is also relevant to avoid disasters and misfortune. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic

eruptions, floods, and pandemics, not to mention wars, are not solely viewed as events exclusively caused by earthly conditions. The occurrence of calamities is directly linked to the impact of beings from the afterlife, who must be appeased through suitable rituals. Sacrificial rituals are held in temples dedicated to various deities in the hope that spirits will descend, enjoy the offerings, and have a positive impact on world events, thus aiding in achieving the desired world peace as soon as possible. Reports on the phenomenon of the occurrence of small yet perceptible earthquakes in connection with the reception of teachings from the spiritual world or the successful conduct of rituals in temples are highly unusual. These earthquakes are interpreted as positive signs from the ancestral world, indicating their acceptance of the offerings and their satisfaction. They serve as confirmation, even evidence, of the factuality of the communication. The religious scriptures are based on Buddhist, Daoist, Confucian, and folk religious beliefs and are summarized in GMHY's thirty Classics and Collected Writings. In his interpretation of the scriptures, GMHY also draws on the concepts of *yīn* and *yáng*, the Five Elements theory, and establishes connections to the *Yijing*.

The sūtras that are constantly applied in rituals through recitation are those received by GMHY through spiritual union with *Wáng Chán Lǎozǔ*. The teachings transmitted to GMHY by spiritual masters during his development are found in a series of scriptures such as “Immortal Master Wang Zhang Lao Zu,” “The Heavenly Virtue Scripture of Immortal Master Guigu” and others. They represent the actual revelations from the heavens through GMHY's connection. The twelve causes and conditions of Buddhism, determining the cycle of life, have been restructured by GMHY in connection with the *Yijing* and *fēngshuǐ*.

The central teaching is that, with the help of the *Yijing* and *fēngshuǐ*, it is possible to develop oneself, assist others, promote positive transformation in both the world and the human spirit, prevent or mitigate calamities and disasters, and fundamentally bring world peace to pass. In addition to these scriptures, Christian teachings are also integrated, and openness to other religious teachings is repeatedly emphasized.

During the forty-year development, WXSJ primarily revolved around the *Yijing*. Through proper application and understanding of cause and effect, one may recognize past mistakes and personal weaknesses, allowing for correction and the avoidance of evil. The combination of the *Yijing* with *fēngshuǐ* forms WXSJ's central doctrine, which requires intensive study. Divination methods are used to solve problems in all aspects of life, not just on a personal level, but also in economics and management.

The frequency of reciting sūtras is considered necessary for an effective communication with the spiritual world. During rituals to end disasters or pandemics, the number of sūtras recited in communal events is mentioned, suggesting their effectiveness, with figures in the millions.

Ancestor worship and the recitation of sūtras are integral parts of daily religious practice for members. Dedicated believers enter the number of repetitions of their recitations in special lists, and upon completing the designated quota, these lists are incinerated as a message and proof to the gods.

The conflicts around the Taiwan Strait and their peaceful solution, are a long lasting unsolved political situation that reached a threatening climax again at the time of writing this work. WXSJ is deeply involved in addressing the conflicts around the Taiwan Strait, seeking peaceful resolutions through establishing harmonious relations with the PRC. With reference to the mythological roots, one wants to construct the consciousness of a common Chinese history and a relation of the whole world to China. Reference is made to the *Kūnlún* civilization and the hypothetical possibility that all people worldwide are related. This idea is based on the doctrine of reincarnation and the associated uncertainty of the future place of reincarnation, which does not necessarily have to be in China, but can take place anywhere in the world. Thus, for GMHY, there is a possibility that all of humanity has common Chinese roots.

World peace is the ultimate goal of WXSJ, as stated in the heavenly revelations of the “Wang Chan Lao Zu Profound Sutra” by *Guīgūzi*, the highest authority of the heavenly realms in WXSJ’s pantheon. Through weekly TV programmes in English, the aspiration for world peace is constantly emphasized. As early as 2012, GHMY was nominated and selected as a finalist candidate for the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize.

WXSJ uses various media platforms, including books, regular TV broadcasts, social media channels like Facebook groups, and countless online videos on its websites and YouTube. With the availability of English-language videos on WXTV since August 2018, WXSJ aims to reach out for an international audience.

As a self-styled religion for world peace, WXSJ also endeavours to act beyond Taiwan and the PRC. Holding conferences jointly with Chinese guests for peace between the PRC and Taiwan, participating in religious studies conferences, and international conferences all over the world, demonstrates its international engagement. An intense exchange with representatives of other new religious movements like Cao Đài (Vietnam), various Buddhist, Korean and, Japanese

NRMs, world leaders like the Dalai Lama, to name just a few examples, highlights the efforts to seek cooperation for world peace with other religious groups.

The dissemination of teachings also extends to religious studies departments, where WXSJ keeps providing original literature to support research. In this respect, “The Heavenly Virtue Scripture of Immortal Master Guigu” was published in December 2021. The translation of GMHY’s central scripture into English was carried out by a renowned scholar of Chinese Studies, Benjamin Penny (The Australian National University). It was distributed free of charge to all institutions and researchers in contact with WXSJ.

In the four decades since its inception, WXSJ has engaged in extensive construction projects, establishing “Cities of the Eight Trigrams” in Taiwan and *Hénán*, creating more than forty branch temples all over Taiwan, and erecting colossal statues of *Guīgǔzi* in the *Yúnmèng* Mountains in *Hénán*, as well as in Taichung branch temple and *Nántóu* City in Taiwan. All these constructions adhere to the principles of *fēngshuǐ* for appropriate location selection and planning.

Whether WXSJ has the potential to achieve significant influence for world peace in Taiwan, the PRC and worldwide appears extremely doubtful under the current political constellations. Although there is also a large market for spiritual alternatives in Western countries due to the departure from established religious communities, the teachings centred on Chinese history and mythology seem too exclusive. The available English-language publications of GMHY, the founder, do not offer a comprehensive understanding of the teachings. They primarily emphasize the significance of *Yijing* in conjunction with *fēngshuǐ*. According to WXSJ, the number of members, or better, the number of engaged individuals, is around 300,000 and, even by Taiwanese standards, is rather small compared to other local religious groups and NRMs in the context of traditional Chinese teachings.

The constant presence of the central leadership figure GMHY at countless events makes him appear irreplaceable. If one considers his age, eighty years at the time of writing, the question of succession arises. Who will maintain the connection with *Guīgǔzi* and the world of the ancestors once the “master” has passed? The future will tell.

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