



## Remediation and Innovation in Taiwanese Religious Sites

### Lukang's Glass Temple

Drawing from the case of Taiwan Hu-sheng Temple, a temple to the Goddess Mazu in Lukang constructed nearly entirely from glass, I argue that multiplicity and remediation have become dominant tropes in Taiwanese ritual life. While both of these tropes rely upon the overall logic of Taiwanese ritual practices, they also foster innovative and entrepreneurial projects to market “local culture” in a variety of new media. Hu-sheng Temple is exceptional: it was constructed to showcase the ingenuity of Taiwanese glass manufacturers, makes connections to environmentalist movements, and represents Taiwanese landscapes as a sacred geography. However, mainstream temples share these features—reflexivity, entrepreneurship, and cosmic projection—in often less obvious forms. Lukang’s glass temple provides a lens through which we can better understand the role of remediation in ritual practices, particularly in their entanglements with variously situated attempts to reimagine (and market) Taiwan.

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The road to Taiwan Hu-sheng Temple (Taiwan Ho Seng Kiong) cuts across Changhua Coastal Industrial Park (Zhangbin Gongyequ, hereafter CCIP). Windswept lots alternate with factory and office buildings in this light industrial zone built on reclaimed coastal land, a line of windmills and an elevated highway breaking the horizon in the distance. CCIP's broad, rectilinear streets contrast with the confining alleyways of nearby Lukang, a historical town whose ancient temple dedicated to the goddess of the ocean, Mazu, draws tourists and pilgrims throughout the year. On holidays and at the height of the pilgrimage season surrounding Mazu's birthday, CCIP offers parking; a shuttle conveys tourists and pilgrims between the sites. Recently, a group of environmentalists concerned with protection of the White Dolphin, boosters of local culture, and Taiwanese glass artists and manufacturers opened another temple to the goddess beside the Taiwan Glass Museum inside CCIP. In the four years that it has been open, this temple, Hu-sheng Temple, has become a new landmark in Lukang's crowded religious landscape.

To approach Hu-sheng Temple in the late afternoon risks being overwhelmed by the temple's charm. The setting sun illuminates the green glass of the temple's reredos, bathing the space in reflections of sunlight and an image of Taiwan's highest mountain, Yushan. As the sun sets, multicolored LED lights begin to twinkle. The temple shimmers, mimicking the ocean in the distance. House of mirrors, jeweled pure land, fantastic celebration of *l'Ilha Formosa*, and temple to a beloved goddess, Taiwan Hu-sheng Temple refashions Taiwanese religious sites and practices in a new medium, glass. As we might expect, this remediation transforms religious practices and their associated projects of scale.

Albeit novel and certainly flamboyant, Hu-sheng Temple exemplifies a larger shift in Taiwanese religious practices. Bringing together conventional objects such as images and incense ash, abstractions such as local culture, economic sectors such as Taiwanese glass manufacturers, and even natural creatures such as endangered species and environments, the glass Mazu accompanies, if not abets, market circulation. The goddess Mazu lends her efficacy to Brand Taiwan. And why not? Mazu—an ocean goddess first brought to Taiwan in the seventeenth century by Fujianese settler colonists—has long aided merchant communities. Taiwanese pilgrimage to Mazu temples reflects both these networks and the goddess's aid to settlers when making the dangerous ocean crossing from China to Taiwan (Sangren

1987). Yet, Hu-sheng Temple, like cute god statues (Silvio 2007) or Mazu accompanying climbers on ascents of Everest (Lin 2013), situates Mazu in a more blatantly mediated, commodified, and pop-cultural realm. Indeed, ritual seems in this case to abet the transformations through which the value of these objects might be bundled and traded as futures on global markets. In this sense, contemporary Taiwanese religion resembles “ethnpreneurship” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009) in its aims and reflexivity. In effect, Hu-sheng Temple reworks iconography and architecture for a variety of religious, ethnic, and economic effects.

If it is impossible now to cordon Taiwanese ritual practices off from the market, we might also situate this shift to religious ethnpreneurship historically. Like many other elements of “translated modernity” (Liu 1995), “religion” (*zongjiao*) might never have had an autonomous existence. Rather, the religious realm had to be realized through legislation and other forms of social engineering. Although it is beyond the scope of this article to give a full account of *zongjiao*’s history, I will outline some of its features here. First, *zongjiao* contained a broader field of ritual practices, many of which fell under official disapproval from the time of the arrival of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) in 1945 until well after the end of martial law in 1987. In his description of KMT religion policy, Paul Katz (2003) describes three different phases of policy: beginning with a period of “negative control” from 1945 to 1960; management of religion under the broader outlines of the Movement for Chinese Cultural Renaissance (*zhonghua wenhua fuxing yundong*) from the late 1960s through the 1990s; and finally the embrace of local religious practices as cultural resources from the second Lee Teng-Hui administration (1996–2000) onward. These changes in policy reflect the entanglement of Taiwan’s democratization with an increasingly local focus of national identity (Friedman 2018; Lu 2002) and with what we might call “culture power”: a mode of governmentality that promotes increasingly diverse local cultural vitality rather than a monocultural disciplining of national publics.

In this understanding of Taiwan’s religious history, *zongjiao* might appear as a product of the Movement for Chinese Cultural Renaissance. During this period, KMT planners defined “religion” as a discrete domain aimed at the transcendent that provided emotional support and moral instruction—not a novel idea in Chinese discourses on religion but one that the KMT would employ in modern projects of cultural regeneration. KMT programs for managing *zongjiao* took aim at “superstition,” including local deities whose provenance was unknown. “Wasteful” practices such as rotating banquets, the use of paper spirit money, and multiple incense censers also came under official opprobrium, as did the practice of spirit mediumship. Writing in the context of this movement in 1971, Chen Ta-tung (1971, 266) blamed many of these vicious habits on national degeneration during the late Qing dynasty. However, apart from negative measures against superstition, Chen (1971, 267) argued that if shorn of their decadent accretions, popular religious practices would “broadcast the glory of our National Culture.” In keeping with this notion that the figures of popular devotion could serve as models of the Eight Virtues (Chen 1971; Li Yi-Yuan 1978), the KMT promoted pan-Chinese deities, such as Guandi, who could embody and symbolize ethnic virtues; advocated

simplified and elegant rituals based upon worship at the Confucian Temple in Taipei; and encouraged management of religious institutions as charitable trusts. The formation of public boards of trustees with annual reports and quadrennial elections, limits on ritual expenditures and incense censers, and temple-sponsored libraries and medical clinics define the modern “religious” domain as charitable and orderly, providing extra-institutional moral education. If *zongjiao* was entangled with local political factions—and of course it was—this feature did not, at least in the abstract, interfere with the real place of *zongjiao* as a public resource. Thus, by the late 1980s, Taiwanese Mazu pilgrimage sites could even figure in the hagiography of President Chiang Ching-Kuo, his visits to Peikang showing him to be a leader who was “close to the people” (*qinmin*; see Hatfield 2010).

Today some of these features—particularly concerns for cultural vitality—remain, but *zongjiao* seems no longer to exist, at least as a discrete domain. *Zongjiao* now seems a relic of KMT projects of national modernity in the late 1960s through the 1970s. In its place, one observes more highly articulated networks between local temple festivals and tourist promotion, popular culture, and a broader sensibility of Taiwanese belonging. In the central government, successive administrations have promoted culture from holding the status of a central government commission to that of a government ministry; during this process of administrative promotion, cultural planners began actively to promote local cultural forms in a comprehensive community development (*shezao*) model (Chen 2008; Huang, Guo, and Lin 2001; TWHC 1996). At the same time, devolution of cultural production to locally competing NGOs and commercial organizations has pushed temples to engage in practices of branding and promotion not unlike tech and manufacturing firms. This process began in the late 1980s and early 1990s in earnest. Not coincidentally, in this period Taiwanese temples engaged in spectacular pilgrimages to Fujian (Hatfield 2010). Now these pilgrimages do not have the same marketing or cultural effect. New promotions, like that of the glass temple, have replaced them.

## REMEDICATION

Because of this historical shift and its overall context, the Glass Temple might show us much about the relationship between commodified culture, sovereignty, and recognition. Commodification, in the case of the glass temple, is a means for Taiwanese cultural practices to circulate; those engaged in the production of the temple find confirmation of Taiwanese culture in a reflexive awareness of this circulation. And so, ritual practices contribute to scale-making projects that situate Taiwan globally, even as they reproduce the nested territories and networks of shared incense with which observers of Taiwanese ritual practices are familiar. Remediation of ritual objects and practices serves as more than a novelty. The qualities of new media afford the shifts in scale or imaginative projections that the proponents of Hu-sheng Temple desire.

Investigation of these imaginative projections, emotional attachments, and frustrated ambitions that surface in Taiwanese popular culture would contribute to our understanding of how such scale-making projects work (or do not). What

causes some of these projects to cohere, while others languish among the bargain bins of kitsch, fakery, or demagoguery? The example of the glass temple highlights the material possibilities of different media for scale-making projects, showing how remediation functions within, and transforms, broader sociopolitical contexts.

Remediation refers to processes in which people create and adapt new media. Moving from one medium to the other, argue Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (2000), may be accompanied by promises that the new medium offers more direct and transparent communication; a new medium may be “immediate” either in terms of the way it offers a direct experience (is it real or is it Memorex?) or as an experience in real time (blazing-fast connectivity). Nonetheless, remediation also entails hypermediation, or the references a medium can make to its mediated quality, artificiality, and relationships to other media. Hypermediation relies upon a number of indexical and iconic features to resituate media—both old and new (witness references to the internet in television news layouts [Bolter and Grusin 2000, 9, 189–91])—within a larger media ecology.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the notion of immediacy is the product of media and not outside of mediation (Mazarella 2004). As such, hypermediation and immediation are entangled processes (Bolter and Grusin 2000; Eisenlohr 2011a; Meyer 2011).

However, much recent work in religious studies overplays both the role of and desires for immediacy (Eisenlohr 2011b, 2011c, 2009; Engelke 2007; Hirschkind 2011; Meyer 2011; Shultz 2006). In contrast with this stress on immediacy, Birgit Meyer (2011, 29; see also Meyer 2006) introduces the notion of “sensational form,” which she defines as “relatively fixed modes . . . offering structures of repetition to create and sustain links between believers in the context of particular religious regimes.” If we employ this notion more broadly, with an awareness that the disappearance or invisibility of media might reflect a relatively limited set of semiotic ideologies, beliefs about what media are, and rationalizations for their use (Keane 2007, 8), we may notice that sensational forms may actually create more durable links among practitioners when these forms engage in hypermediation. In other words, in many cases immediacy may not be either effective or desirable.

To take a relatively simple example, we could refer to weathervanes. When we look at a well-constructed and maintained weathervane, the weathervane mediates wind direction visually. By nature of their form, weathervanes are indexical signs. Nonetheless, the sensational form of the weathervane may exhibit a fanciful iconicity, taking the form of roosters, pigs, arrows, or lobsters. These forms, which reference folk painting and sculpture, have given weathervanes a place in museums and other venues as objects of art appreciation. The fanciful iconicity of weathervanes in this case might obviate their indexical function, even as that function is available—if the weathervane is still attached to the roof and oiled from time to time. Yet these elements of iconicity, which give weathervanes a hypermediated quality, are not parasitic upon the indexical function of the weathervane but a necessary component of the weathervane’s sensational form. They are what make the weathervane both recognizable as a weathervane and what makes the weathervane visible enough to mediate the wind’s direction to us. In effect, an iconic sign entangled with but distinct from its indexical function grounds the weathervane’s

indexicality. What we see when we see the weathervane is not immediacy, unless we overlook what makes the weathervane visible in the first place. Following Patrick Eisenlohr's description of Sufi praise poetry, we might say that media (here I refer to the weathervane but also recorded songs, images of Mazu, or glass temples) require a "dense web of presupposed indexicality" (2011c, 270) to achieve transparency. Nonetheless, we should not confuse this transparency with immediacy. The weathervane shows that the directness and transparency of indexical relations may depend upon hypermediation.

Because Taiwanese popular religious practice depends on the multiplication of images, possessed mediums, and other cross-referential objectifications and personifications of divine efficacy (Lin 2015), we would expect that neither the semiotic ideology of Taiwanese popular religious practice nor its normative sensational forms valorize immediacy. Arguments about glass as an inappropriate medium or whether cute god statues can really mediate divine efficacy reference a "dense web of indexicality" that never obviates a related and entangled density of iconicity with(in) other media. These arguments presuppose that images in their dense interrelationships with other media may channel divine efficacy at different scales and to different effects. In analogy to immediacy, we might use the term *hypermediacy* to refer to effects of making visible and efficacious this dense network of media.

To bring together the questions that I have outlined above, contemporary religious practices on Taiwan highlight the following conditions:

1. *Hypermediation*. Bolter and Grusin (2000) describe two sorts of remediation: one in which a new medium aspires to the condition of immediacy, the other in which a medium demonstrates its status as one medium connected with others. This second sort of remediation, hypermediation, is evident in contemporary Taiwanese ritual practice. Appearance of ritual objects across several fields of endeavor (environmentalism, youth culture, human rights, or performing arts) and in new materials, as well as the increased visibility if not celebration of the mediated quality, innovation, and artificiality of ritual objects all demonstrate hypermediation in contemporary Taiwanese ritual practice.
2. *Entanglements and problems of scale*. Contemporary Taiwanese ritual practice shows both an increased sense of intimacy and of multiplicity. Cute forms of deities and branding of specific manifestations of deities (such as Lukang's Second Mother or Tachia Foundation Mother) in forms resembling local mascots operate at both intimate and global scales (Silvio 2011); likewise, contemporary pilgrimages often engage in scale-making projects that project directly to global networks without reference to China or in contexts in which China is just one of many diverse traces. Moreover, through the kinds of remediation described above, practices denigrated in Taiwanese popular and high cultural discourses as "local" (yes, the English word is borrowed here) can appear not in opposition to cosmopolitan and more highly valued cultural forms, but as simultaneously most "local" and most cosmopolitan. In other words, remediation thus involutes dichotomies rather than simply engaging in what Susan Gal and Judith Irvine (1995; Gal 2016) have called "fractal recursivity." This involution of Taiwanese

dichotomies of the “local” and rustic in contrast to cosmopolitanism reworks what normally would appear as the most local qualities of popular religious practice, rendering them as global objects and actors.

3. *Controversies surrounding media.* The problem of new media is not simply a relationship to other media or to a fantasy of immediacy. Rather, new media create problems of articulation. Controversies surrounding a new medium, such as glass, often argue that the medium affords or unseats, or authorizes or diminishes, some warrant for religious acts or statements. In the case of the glass temple, arguments concerning ritual propriety and the character of the temple’s promoters focused on material qualities of glass as well as the challenges the temple made to Lukang Town’s system of neighborhood temples. And yet, these arguments for or against the temple traced out established modes of articulation proper to Taiwanese religious practice.

To get at how these features of the glass temple have broader relevance for our understanding of religious media and ethnopreneurship, I provide a close analysis of the construction of the glass temple below, paying particular attention to temple architecture, as well as the Taiwan Benevolent Compassion Mother (*Taiwan Renci Ma*) image. Remediation of Mazu in glass maintained the logic of Taiwanese religious practices while challenging hierarchical relationships within Lukang’s neighborhood temple system and Mazu pilgrimage networks.

#### A BIOGRAPHY

Because the glass temple is connected to a unique entrepreneur’s career and vision, it might be useful to give a sense of that entrepreneur’s biography here.

When I met Jackson Lin in 1990, he was in his mid-thirties and just beginning a term of service on the management committee of Lugang Tianhou Temple (Lugang Tianhou Gong, hereafter THK), a major Mazu pilgrimage site in Lugang. Like many in the town, he was devoted to Mazu, the goddess of the ocean often known in other Sinophone communities as Tin Hao or Tian Hou, the Empress of Heaven, one of the goddess’s Qing Imperial titles. He was also a follower of Hu-an Temple’s (Ho An Kiong) King Wu (Wu Fu Qianshui; also Ngo Ong-ia), the local deity of his neighborhood. Rumor held that his contributions to Lukang’s most prestigious temple presaged a move into electoral politics; however, he left the temple committee not for a mayorship but to pursue more active work with environmental and educational NGOs, one of which he founded. As the third generation of Timing Glass (TMG), a family business specializing in mirror and furniture glass, he oversaw expansion and adoption of modern marketing techniques. One of a group of local commercial elites committed to the development of the town’s cultural industries and community development, Lin sees no contradiction between commerce and culture. Indeed, he gives the following litany for the strengthening of Brand Taiwan:

- indigenization of products (*chanpin bentubua*)
- internationalization of marketing (*xingxiao guojihua*)

- culturo-fication of commodities (*shangpin wenhuahua*)
- commoditization of culture (*wenhua shangpinhua*). (TTG 2012a)

While on the board of THK, Lin encountered resistance to his agenda. Disappointed with the conservative stance of much of the temple committee, he left THK in the mid-1990s. Both Lin and another temple commissioner at Hu-an Temple told me that the origin of the glass Mazu temple was an unrealized idea that Lin had around twenty years ago, after he returned from THK's 1992 pilgrimage to nodal Mazu sites in China. The pilgrimage visited the birthplace of the goddess, Meizhou, and traced the migration of Quanzhou people, aided by the goddess, to Lukang. During the early 1990s, Lin had raised the possibility that THK be moved and rebuilt in a larger location. An impossibility, certainly; but Lin often felt constricted by the lack of space for THK hold large events. His suggestion was meant to provoke some sense of how to create a related ritual space and cultural center with greater access. The THK board discouraged Lin in this pursuit as well as from employing THK's resources to promote environmental causes. As for adapting marketing techniques to celebrations of the goddess's birthday and apotheosis, they provided little support. When Lin acquired the land in the Changhua Coastal Industrial Park, he thought of building a temple there. Eventually, the goddess confirmed his vision and aided him through the work of her lieutenant, King Wu of Hu-an Temple. Yet the resistance of THK's board to his ideas and his work on a graduate degree led Lin to resign from THK's board in 1996.

Meanwhile, the movement of Taiwanese manufacturing to China challenged Lin's family business. In the early 2000s, Lin gathered his competitors in Taiwan's glass industry and encouraged the creation of an alliance, eventually convincing many of them to maintain factories on Taiwan and to create a unified brand image for Team Taiwan Glass (TTG). He drew additional investment, in the form of a new glass foundry at CCIP, from Taiwan Glass Company, which manufactures his raw material. Lin also opened TMG's large facility at CCIP, which can store twelve thousand metric tons of raw materials and three thousand metric tons of finished products, to members of TTG. As part of the TTG branding, Lin established a glass museum in which a wide variety of applications and forms of glass, ranging from artisanal and industrial to religious forms, are on display. The work of Lin and his allies attracted the attention of Ikea in the early 2000s, securing, at least for the short term, the future of Taiwan's glass industries. TTG combines elements of petty capitalism in Lukang (what my friends, who produce in a network of small family-run factories in Changhua County, call a "conquering army of ants"), environmental engagement, and postmodern branding. TTG markets a wide variety of products that affirm and celebrate Brand Taiwan: t-shirts and glass tiles printed or engraved with calligraphy in the shape of the island country; green paperweights and rulers with an image of Taiwan within the glass; and glass pieces incorporating a *mélange* of Indigenous, Hoklo, and Hakka motifs to index Taiwan's multicultural heritage. Taiwan is, indeed, part of the value of Team Taiwan Glass. As TTG sells its products, it is also circulating an image of Taiwanese national identity.

Lin's promotion of religious events did not cease during his creation of TTG. During the late 1990s and through the 2000s, I frequently met him at his neigh-



borhood temple to King Wu or ran into him as I participated in events that this temple, Hu-an Temple, sponsored. These events became larger under his direction and more explicitly marketed Lukang's folk culture. Moreover, when Lin left the management of THK, Mazu appeared to him personally in a dream, instructing him to build her a temple at the Changhua Coastal Industrial Park. The success of the museum and Lin's desire to create something even more beautiful with his colleagues in TTG prompted him to envision a temple built entirely of glass, including the structure, the image, votive offerings, and even incense and spirit money. Guiding him in the process were TTG's engineers, an audacious architect who had built a hall of mirrors for the glass museum, and King Wu.

I am tempted to conflate the biographical and ritual elements in my account of the glass temple. The story of Hu-sheng Temple is in many ways a set of intersections between the ongoing life of Taiwanese popular religious practices and the life and projects (both in business and charitable work) of a local entrepreneur. I would like to leave more room for the agency of the goddess or at least the logic of her materialization, which led, through the guidance of King Wu, to a remediation of the goddess in glass. Nonetheless, the inspiration for the temple does depend upon Lin's vision and organizational skill. Perhaps the failure of Hu-sheng Temple in relationship to the neighborhood temple system (whether it succeeds as an island-wide pilgrimage site is still to be seen) is that Lin appears too notably as an innovator, that the glass temple leaves visible too many of his fingerprints, too many traces of the crossing of his biography with the reproduction of ritual practices. To say, as do detractors of the glass Mazu, that Lin lacks *yiqi*, a sense of reciprocity or righteousness, points out a failure—it could be his or a problem of the medium—to balance these two series under the sign of the goddess's efficacy.

#### THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF EFFICACY

Clearly, the temple entangles religion with commercial promotion. Taiwan Hu-sheng Temple carves out a sacred site in the midst of an industrial park and advertises the ingenuity of Taiwanese glass artisans and industries. The temple also creates what we might call the industrial sublime, awe in the face of technical feats (see similarity to Gell 1999 and Gell 1998 on art). Promotional material for the temple adds to the industrial sublime through quantification: 66 different producers working in several different types of glass contributed to the structure, more than 70,000 pieces of glass were used in the entire construction completed without the use of nails, 1,400 slabs of glass each 10 mm thick went into the altarpiece (TTG 2012b; THSK 2012). Through seven years of construction, the group of architects, engineers, artisans, and manufacturers overcame questions of materials science, structural engineering, aesthetics, and theology to bring the project to completion. Not only is the structure constructed nearly entirely of glass, it is built to withstand typhoons, earthquakes to magnitude 8, and Lukang's fierce winter winds, not to mention Taiwan's torrid summer climate. The structure's charm derives not only from the prismatic beauty of the temple lights and their kaleidoscopic reflections but an awareness of the technical expertise required for its

construction. Thus, while the temple's "highest ideal" was to "restore the people's livelihood" (*fuzhen minsheng jingji*), a goal not at all foreign to the work of Taiwanese deities (or governments for that matter), it proposed to bring about this result by creating "a new, world-class tourist highlight that would make evident Taiwan's beauty and promote [Taiwan] internationally" (TTG 2012a).<sup>2</sup>

Rather than attenuate the agency of Team Taiwan Glass, the temple amplifies their work in partnership with the goddess, both underscoring their economic goals and highlighting the temple's novelty. This quality of the temple stands out when we contrast it with votive carvings and inscriptions at other Taiwanese temples. Temples never shy from giving names of donors, complete to the New Taiwan Dollar amount. Yet, the formula for nearly every element within a temple structure (donor name + *kou xie*, prostrates in thanksgiving) simultaneously attenuates the agency of communal or individual donors by detailing features of the temple as thanksgiving for divine aid, encompassing them within a narrative of the deity's efficacious response. At Hu-sheng Temple, the TTG members' specific contributions do not appear marked with company or personal names. The overall effect is the temple standing as the product of cooperative ingenuity and vision. As Jackson Lin described it, the team of people who built Hu-sheng Temple "collected their ideas and thought broadly; they remained constantly diligent as they overcome obstacles to give birth to the temple" (*jisi guangyi, buduande kefu kunnan de nulixia danshengle*; TTG 2012b). There is scope for Mazu's efficacy in this conception; but in its stress on cooperation and overcoming obstacles, the temple seems to echo narratives of the Taiwan economic miracle, as does the reference of promotional materials to the "people's livelihood" (*minsheng*), one of the pillars of Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People. Hence the temple's amplification of its novelty situates it within broader frameworks of seemingly opposed political discourses, some from the martial law period and others that have emerged in the wake of democratization.

As I've noted, Hu-sheng Temple amplifies a sense of its artificiality and networks with other media. To get a sense of how this happens within the space of the temple, we could look closely at the temple's reredos. Not only is the reredos constructed of 1,400 10-mm slabs of carefully cut glass stacked upon each other to produce a bas relief sculpture, it also depicts Jade Mountain, Taiwan's highest peak and symbol of the island nation. Lower panels of the altarpiece continue this theme in the realm of culture, with another bas relief sculpture of tall clay pots, which alludes either to the role of such pots in the ritual practices of plains indigenous people or the wine pot walls of Lukang in its eighteenth-century heyday as Taiwan's largest commercial port. Thus, the reredos brings the industrial sublime into contact with national histories, folding both into a cosmic geography in which Yushan becomes a sacred mountain.

Yet this altarpiece is more than just a nationalist gesture. The massive cedar seat for the Taiwan Benevolent Compassion Mother hid in the sylvan fastness of the island's interior until Hu-an Temple's King Wu uncovered it. King Wu disclosed its location in a divination session at the temple. Later, an entranced palanquin led Lin and others through the forest, where they found the giant cedar stump.

Combined with this naturally formed container of cosmic efficacy, the shimmering glass reredos carving of Jade Mountain gives the glass Mazu a space that is filled with vitality. Adding to this effect are the temple decorations, which, in reference to environmentalism, represent wild birds and endangered fauna. Most Taiwanese temples decorate interior and exterior spaces with heroic images from vernacular fiction, such as scenes from *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, or with depictions of the One Hundred Exemplars of filial piety. At Hu-sheng Temple, the art, all executed in glass, bids us reverence Taiwan's ecology.<sup>3</sup> Vitality, nature, and sustainability thus intersect with ingenuity and technology in Hu-sheng Temple's hyper-mediated space.

And yet, it is at this moment of intersection that Lin and others employ a technique of complicity (Hatfield 2010) to attenuate their agency. They did not avoid the industrial sublime but amplified it to project an image of Taiwanese ingenuity and tenacity. However, divine intervention brought the cedar stump to the temple. Having absorbed the efficacious energy of nature, the tree connects with the representation of Taiwan's highest peak to project Hu-sheng Temple across industrial, ecological, and spiritual domains. It is as if the Benevolent Compassion Mother, communicating through King Wu, directed the temple's movement toward environmental sustainability and protection, grounding a Taiwanese version of these international concerns, while broadcasting these concerns outward as ethnic qualities whose traces, like those of multiculturalism, just needed to be reclaimed.

At Taiwan Hu-sheng Temple endangered fauna replace typical scenes from the *Journey to the West* or representations of paragons of filial piety, remediating environmentalism into the terms of popular religious space. In the process, the temple reevaluates both. Environmentalism issues from a divine directive. And this stance has effects on the materiality of ritual practice: in keeping with environmentalism, the temple rejects the use of multiple incense pots and also of spirit money. Planning for the site initially envisioned environmentally sustainable glass incense, which would release fragrance through either heat or electric current. Because fears of breakage and liability deterred TTG, this idea could not be realized. The site now offers "real" incense in one- or three-stick quantities, but it offers only glass spirit money, which does not generate pollution. Still, a vexing problem faces practitioners or observers of Taiwanese popular ritual: how can one transform or translate (*hua*) this kind of spirit money? Similarly, how can a glass image be an efficacious image?

#### QUESTIONING THE MEDIUM

Although the temple provoked the industrial sublime, promotion of Team Taiwan Glass at the temple was couched in religious terms. Hence rather than simply mediating among domains, Hu-sheng Temple breaks open the religious domain as generally perceived. We cannot understand Hu-sheng Temple as either temple, commercial promotion, or tourist site. Nonetheless, if the temple coheres as a religious site there must be something in its mode of articulation that remains in a religious idiom. We can get a feel for this mode of articulation if we think

about Hu-Sheng Temple's Benevolent Compassion Mother and arguments about the felicity of this image around Lukang Town. As it turns out, as the image articulates and objectifies relationships among places in the townscape, it also personifies some of the questions concerning the felicity of the image, most notably in terms of the sincerity of the temple's principal spokesperson. The questions about the image, then, are simultaneously problems touching upon the material qualities of glass and the possibilities that this medium could change relationships in the neighborhood temple system.

This question of medium in relationship to place extends a set of questions long explored in studies of religious practices among Sinophone communities. Scholarship on religious practices on Taiwan has provided many examples of the mutual construction of space and subjectivity in rituals ranging from daily household offerings of incense to periodic festivals and pilgrimage. Much of this work has stressed metaphorical relationships between religious ideology and political organization (Ahern 1981; Feuchtwang 1992; Wolf 1974). Other scholars have explored how ritual builds on but remains distinct from market organization (Sangren 1987), creates social space and communal identity (Jordan 1972; Deglopper 1995; Sangren 2000), or provides a language for thinking about economic change (Weller 1994). Writing specifically on Lukang in the late 1960s, Donald Deglopper (1995, 160) argued that the system of neighborhood temples (*kak thao*, M: *jiao tou*) is "dynamic" and "does not simply reflect in a directly isomorphic manner an enduring structure of discrete urban neighborhoods." Neighborhoods, personified in images, served as figures in what Deglopper referred to as "structural poses" (1995, 161) that created Lukang Town and Lukang people through both cooperative and agonistic festivity.<sup>4</sup> Below, I will explore the role of glass as a medium for such structural poses, some of which include scale-making projects that extend beyond the space of Lukang, imagining the goddess's circulation in global networks.

Images, like Lukang Tian-hou Temple's Meizhou Second Mother or Hu-sheng Temple's Taiwan Benevolent Compassion Mother, mediate divine efficacy but also objectify a set of relationships among localities and with the cosmos (Lin 2015). In this role as interlocating agents, images establish and transform nested territories governed by neighborhood, town, regional, pan-island, and global manifestations of the goddess. Work on and with images transforms ethical relationships among places. This work, particularly if it involves remediation, connects with the politics of scale inasmuch as transformations of the image's composition change the network of places and the hierarchical relationships within this network. Given the connections between temples and political factions, not to mention the model of sovereignty built into popular religious practices, images serve as indices of political relationships among people. Place and community are built into the image at every step in its construction.

Image specialists generally make images from wood, clay, or paper. Fragrant, durable woods are most popular. Yet the process of transforming these porous, organic materials into images requires more than just skillful carving. In addition to aesthetic qualities of the image (such as the shape of their eyes, details created through coiled strands of resin, stability and balance), image specialists invite dei-

ties to enter statues. Three elements of the ritual to awaken or enlighten images stand out. First, creation of viscera, which also concentrate cosmic powers within the body of the deity; second, formation of the image's connection with the person sponsoring its construction; third, animation of the image's senses and faculties.

As materializations of divine efficacy, images have viscera that correspond to the five viscera of human bodies. Moreover, in the correlative Taoist philosophy that informs Taiwanese popular religious practice, these viscera also form an icon of the five phases and five directions. Their presence within the image transforms it into the deity's "golden body." In Lukang, image specialists collect five types of grains, five minerals or metals, five strands of string in five colors, and a living creature (usually a yellowjacket). After binding these materials into a packet, specialists then insert them into a small hole drilled into the back of the wooden body. Sometimes the packet is contained within a piece of spirit money onto which a talisman has been written; otherwise, just the elements suffice. These differences depend upon the practice of individual specialists. In all cases, however, insertion of the packet of fives and the living creature gives the image its power to objectify the deity, both in its iconic reference to human bodies with organs and the further indexicality of the five colored strings to the spirit camps whom the deity will command. These powerful viscera are invisible from the surface of the image. Good image specialists plug the cavity, sand it, and cover its location with resin, paint, and gold leaf. Like a human body, the viscera are there but covered in skin. Generally, image specialists complete this work with the image before their clients come to complete the final processes of enlightening the image. After creating the viscera, the image is partially awakened, however, and its eyes must be shaded with a red cloth.

When those who sponsor construction of an image come to the image specialist to invite the deity home, the image specialist completes a ritual requiring sunlight, a mirror, cock's comb blood, spirit money, and a brush. Cock's comb blood and sunlight reflected from a mirror, both "bright" (*yang*) substances, enlighten the image, infusing it with bright energy. Nonetheless, the ritual is incomplete without two gestures that bind the image with its sponsor. Sponsors of the image usually hold the image during much of the ritual to animate the image's senses and, if the ceremony occurs at or near a temple to the deity whom they intend to invite, they will pass the image over the censer of the deity. Moreover, and more importantly, one of the sponsoring clients breathes on the brush dipped in cock's comb blood before the image specialist uses the brush to mark places on the image's body. The breath—here containing the qi of the sponsor—thus combines with the cosmic energy of sun and yang essence of cock's comb blood in the application of the substance that animates the image's faculties. In other words, a well-constructed image contains part of the qi, or energetic substance, of its sponsor. In this fashion, the deity's objectification in the image becomes entangled with the sponsor and by extension his family and community. Similarly, during ceremonies to open the doors of a newly constructed or renovated temple, young men cradle the images, standing barefoot, and then pass them hand to hand over the temple censer and into the prepared seats for the images at the altar. Acts of objectifying the deity

also personify relationships of the deity with the community, mediated through the image.

Finally, the image specialist animates the senses of the image. For this work, open doors and swept floors maintain a clear path between the interior space where the work happens and the outside whence the deity will enter, yet the space must be shaded from direct sun. The specialist reflects sunbeams onto the image through a mirror; the relationship between solar energy and the image is mediated. Moreover, the mirror reflects the face of the image back at itself, so that the newly opened eyes of the deity will see and recognize the image as its body. Image specialists also write the name of the deity, along with a divine command instructing that deity to enter the image, on the mirror. Chanting a set of commands to the image, the ritual specialist then dots the feet, knees, hands, arms, back, shoulders, head, eyes, nose, ears, and mouth of the image with the brush dipped in cock's comb blood, all the while holding the mirror to beam sunlight and the image's reflection into the image's eyes. The rhyming chant tells the deity who will now reside in the image that once he has dotted the eyes, the eyes will become bright and all seeing. It also describes the other faculties of the image as an animated, agentive body.

Because most images are constructed of wood, the porous, organic qualities of the medium permit both the opening of the cavity for the organs, the secreting of the organs within the body, and this transfer and absorption of breath and other essences, including of course, incense smoke. Similarly, rituals to settle images and open the doors of newly constructed or renovated temples can be called "entering fire and settling the seat." Fire in many combinations animates the temple and ties it to the community. Smoking oil and plumes of fired liquor purify the temple space behind closed doors. Burning spirit money protects the space and safely opens the doors. Spirit money and incense burned continually communicate and transfer value across the human, bright, and shadowy worlds. These rituals all employ flammable and fume-able substances to mediate divine efficacy. For this reason, media of popular religious practice include wood, paper, cloth, resin, ash, food, smoke, blood, liquor, and water.

Metal and stone are infrequently used for carriers of divine efficacy (in Lukang, in fact, images are never made of either). Glass, a non-porous, inflammable, and not very fume-able industrially produced substance, presents several difficulties as a medium. If not fume-able, how will incense smoke or other substances infuse the image? If one cannot create an invisible cavity in the image, how will the image have viscera? These material questions concern the appropriateness of glass as a medium. While these problems are not insuperable, remediation of popular religious practices in glass requires not *immediacy* but a *referential chain* (Latour 1996, 24; 2013), a set of iconic and indexical relations that articulate the new medium with qualities of old media and with the logic of popular religious practices in general. Thus the possibilities of a new medium, like glass, to operate at a different scale and to create networks across domains not always traversed by the old media are balanced by a set of liabilities that inhere to the medium, qualities that render it difficult to articulate within the particular means of popular religious

practice. Notably, these liabilities appear and disappear in arguments not just about the appropriateness of a given medium but also in discussions of the ethical failures of those who promote the new medium.

In other words, the materiality of glass as a medium lends itself to the industrial sublime and discourses of sustainability but fails to afford some of the constitutive gestures of popular religious practice, in particular transformation through fire. Those who cannot accept that light can replace fire dismiss Hu-sheng Temple as a fabrication. This argument concerns the Benevolent Compassion Mother image as well as the temple structure. Composed entirely of glass, the Benevolent Compassion Mother lacks the invisible interior space of wooden, clay, or paper images into which the packets of five things can be inserted to become the five viscera of the image and the components that make the image, like a human body, a microcosm.

In response to such problems, Hu-sheng Temple's remediation of popular ritual practice in glass and light works through analogy to wood and fire. Combined with a narrative of King Wu directing the work, this analogy creates a referential chain that points back to old media even as it engages in projects only possible in the new. The analogy creates a warrant for the image.

For the enlightening (*kai guang*) ceremony that awakens an image, five colored lasers replaced the five elements and fire. These five colored lasers intersected within the image and reflected outward into the surrounding space, literally illuminating the image and its environs. Intensely focused, powerful light replaced fire; but this use of light remediates rather than repudiates the logic of Taiwanese ritual practice. If wood can be transformed by fire, then it is possible to locate glass as an element that can be transformed by laser. Here, technology provides a way to render a glass image thinkable within a preexisting scheme. However, it also makes both that scheme and the technical innovation visible (again, features of what Bolter and Grusin [2000] have called hypermediation). Conventional images made their mediation visible, too, albeit in the indexical blackness of incense-stained faces. The glass image refers to this logic of shared incense but also revels in a new form of technical mediation necessary for the Benevolent Compassion Mother's existence and efficacious action.

In keeping with the Benevolent Compassion Mother's remediation of ritual objects, the material obviates networks of separated or shared incense (*fen xiang*) that situate Mazu images within territorial hierarchies. Most images are marked by place of awakening and, during pilgrimages, as images shared from a specific nodal site. For example, Lukang Tian-hou Temple's Second Mother is the arguably the second founding image of the Mazu cult and a Meizhou Foundation Mother from the founding site of the Mazu cult in Fujian, China. An image at the rival Mazu pilgrimage center Peikang Chao-tian Temple, Peikang Mazu, was shared from Chao-tian Palace of the Meizhou temple and is known as the Taiwan Foundation Mother. Lesser temples may have images shared from Lukang, Peikang, Meizhou, or any number of nodal and semi-nodal sites. These relationships of shared incense determine an image's place in theoretically nested, but in practice tangled, temple hierarchies, in which temples compete for position. In contrast, Hu-sheng Temple's Benevolent Compassion Mother, in keeping with her full title, Taiwan Benev-

olent Compassion Mother, has no simple location in the hierarchy. Her golden body is made of glass and was awakened by lasers. It was not passed over the censer of a nodal temple. Thus, she is no image's daughter. Yet, she is not placeless, either. We might be advised to call the image nodal, but nodal in a different sort from Foundation Mothers, with their thick networks of shared bodies and separated incense. Remember that five colored lasers concentrated cosmic powers within the image. This powerful light served as a spiritual medium for gathering the essence of several Sacred Mothers without the need for pilgrimage and separated incense. The lasers conducted what amounts to a virtual pilgrimage to all nodal Mazu sites:

The Benevolent Compassion Mother who Brings Universal Salvation to All Living Beings received the Jade Rescript of the Heavenly Emperor, to gather together the essence of the Sacred Mother at the Ancestral Shrine, the Birthplace where she took on flesh, and the Site of her Apotheosis in Putian; at the Places where she first received Incense from Officials; at the Sites of her Crossing to Taiwan and Establishing Foundations; and at all places on the Two Sides of the Strait and in the Five Directions. She was formed through an Evolutionary Process that Gathered of all these Efficacious Essences into a Single Body.

(THSK 2012)

The glass Mazu's promoters celebrate the possibilities afforded by glass. The new medium could concentrate the *ling*, or efficacious essence, of several manifestations of Mazu into one body. However, arguing that the medium represents an evolutionary advance rather than a mere technical one, temple promoters displace the image's technical innovation onto the Jade Emperor's rescript. The Benevolent Compassion Mother is a new species of Mazu, one with a very different territorial composition. She does not need to locate herself within hierarchies but absorbs them, in the process skirting ritual authentication and obviating pilgrimage to China.

The glass image concentrates a sacred geography in itself. Those who employ the image make this geography visible and thus attenuate their own agency in its construction. Yet as we have seen, the temple's remediation of Taiwanese ritual practice constantly foregrounds the temple's novelty and artifice. What we see in this example is thus a constant shifting between positions that amplify the agency and values of its principals, planners, and producers and other positions that attenuate these values. For example, the image is the product of a celestial command realized through Taiwanese ingenuity. It is in this shift that the politics of the temple's reterritorialization of ritual practice can be bracketed out as disinterested. This technique of complicity, moreover, makes this politics more compelling and grounded.

For example, a member of Hu-an Temple's management committee ascribed the construction of the glass temple, including the image, to the guidance of King Wu. As he related to me soon after the opening of the temple, Hu-sheng Temple's Benevolent Compassion Mother combines the efficacious essence of at least five manifestations of Mazu into one body, thus embodying pilgrimage. In the early 1990s, I had visited each of the five temples, some of them with Lin: the founding site of the Mazu cult, Meizhou; the shrine of Mazu's birthplace in Xian-



liang Harbor; the official temple to the goddess in Putian, dating to the late Song Dynasty; Tian-fei Temple of Quanzhou, from where Lukang's majority population emigrated around four hundred years ago; and Lukang Tian-hou Temple. The sites in China were part of Lukang Tian-hou Temple's established pilgrimage circuit. According to Hu-an Temple's commissioner, five spirits entered into the image simultaneously, perhaps allowing a division of labor. Aware, perhaps, that laser light might need to be supplemented with more tangible material, King Wu directed that the efficacious essence be carried to the image in the "dragon robes" worn by images at each of the sites. These dragon robes are now all stored in the altar cabinet. The dragon robes thus form another chain of references, recognizable within the logic of popular religious practice, to articulate the new medium, glass, with existing religious media. In this sense they repeat the work of the five colored lasers in another medium, tightening the articulation of the glass image with the Mazu cult.

At the same time, arguments about the temple often focused on glass as a medium. "Don't be fooled," an image carver and temple opening specialist in a neighborhood near Lukang Tian-hou Temple told me when he heard that I had gone to visit Hu-sheng Temple, "Deities cannot enter glass." He argued that there was only one real image at Hu-sheng Temple, a wooden image that he knew had been enlightened in the correct way. The others, he added, were "hopeless" or "impossible" (*bo kholeng*), because glass cannot have deities enter. When I asked why, he replied that it was impossible in principle. Real images can be made in earth (clay), wood, or paper and occasionally in stone. Asking me if I had ever heard of a glass image before, he said if it could be done, someone would have done it before. In his estimation, the glass image "had efficacious power (*ling*) only to earn tourist money." The specter of *yiqi* and its lack enters here. Hu-Sheng Temple's utility to its organizers, Team Taiwan Glass, shows too transparently in the glass image. The image specialist rejects out of hand that the glass image could materialize ethical relationships among people and neighborhoods in Lukang. Only tourists will gape and donate.

Wanting to understand more about problems with glass as a medium, I mentioned the laser light and clothing, through which the Benevolent Compassion Mother collected the efficacious essence of manifestations of Mazu globally. The image specialist's response was instructive. Rejecting the reference to traditional religious logic embedded in the five colored lasers shining into the heart of the image, he told me that the laser enlightenment was only a device or conceit of novelty, creativity for its own sake. "Can such a novelty really invite the deity to enter the image?" Concerned that I might be convinced by the arguments about the glass image as authentic, he added that one should not trust or allow oneself to be advised by those who told me that lasers could replace fire.

Other people around Lukang remained curious about the image but wondered about Hu-sheng Temple's effect on the neighborhood temple system. One complaint that surrounded the glass temple was an *ad hominem* against Lin, its most visible patron: "He has no sense of righteousness/reciprocity" (*meiyon yiqi* or *bo*

*gikhi*). This description gives us some sense of the mode through which some of the innovations of the temple might be considered valid and others unfaithful.

Yet faith here refers not to a fidelity to truths known or revealed. Rather, it concerns reciprocity. For temples in Lukang and Taiwan more generally, questions of reciprocity enter into the relationships between temples and neighborhoods, in which neighborhood worshippers take responsibility for the care and feeding of spirit soldiers in return for the deity's protection; into relationships among worshippers with rotating duties in the temple community; and among temples, who have both vertical relationships of fealty and protection and horizontal relationships of cooperation and competition. To say that someone lacks *yiqi* comments upon a breach of these relationships or damage to them. Hu-sheng Temple's detractors argued that the temple promoters taxed the town's neighborhood temple system. Situating the temple's most visible promoter, Lin, as a businessman who brought modern methods of management and promotion to temple administration, these detractors would say that he confused business and religious practice (an odd claim, given the historical connections between commercial guilds and temples in Lukang and elsewhere on Taiwan). They also felt that his promotion of both the glass temple and a closely associated district temple to Great King Wu upset the balance of district temples in town.

Lukang Town divides into several wards, each with one or two recognized neighborhood temples. These neighborhood temples fit into three larger districts, each with a district temple. Traditionally, three district temples presided over Upper, Lower, and Middle Lukang; today (and as discovered by Deglopper [1995] in 1968) the neighborhood temple system tends not to the formal symmetry of three groups of twelve neighborhoods but a congeries of interlocking neighborhood temples, some with district status. Moreover, unlike many Taiwanese villages or towns, locality deity temple (*tudigong miao*) territories do not define neighborhoods. Rather, locality deities were contiguous with district temples. Today, the town's two locality deities (the third no longer stands) sit at opposite ends of the town, one at Fong-tian Temple in Pakthao, the other at Hu-an Temple on the eastern edge of Lukang. In these temples reside two of the town's most notable *Ong-Ia* (*Wang-Ye*), both with district god status.

The Glass Temple's name gives clues to its situation within this network. Hu-sheng Temple shares its first character with Hu-an Temple, the temple to King Wu. Indeed, King Wu resided at CCIP during the construction of Hu-sheng Temple and advised TTG on technical and theological matters. Moreover, the Benevolent Compassion Mother's relationship with King Wu mirrors the relationship of Lukang's most revered manifestation of Mazu, Tian-hou Temple's Second Mother, with Fong-tian Kong's Great King Su.

Lukang Tian-hou Temple, otherwise known as Lukang Mazu Temple, is one of a few pan-township temples with ritual responsibilities to the entire town. An image at the site, the Meizhou Second Mother, is said to have been brought to Lukang by the nephew of Shi Lang, the Qing admiral who conquered Taiwan in 1683. Although the temple is not the oldest Mazu temple in Lukang, the image, reputed to be the second image in the Mazu cult, is the focus of a global pilgrim-

age network. Moreover, Second Mother has a special relationship with King Su of Fong-tian Temple in Pakthao. Because Mazu is too great a deity to enter into a medium spirit, she can never be personified in ritual contexts. Thus, she can only give her instructions through King Su. Likewise, when she goes on processions through the town, she must defer to the king. She must acquire a command pennant from the king, who rules the neighborhood in which her palace is located. These practices underscore the ethics of the Second Mother's relationship to the town. She is powerful but also a guest. People in Lukang mark this status by calling the Second Mother *A-Ko*, Father's Sister.

Hu-sheng Temple's Benevolent Compassion Mother maintained an analogous relationship with King Wu of Hu-an Temple. Hu-sheng Temple's Benevolent Compassion Mother relies upon King Wu as her assisting palanquin and even manifested herself in glass through King Wu's intervention. This formal resemblance between the Benevolent Compassion Mother and the Second Mother led to conflict concerning the ambitions of TTG's chairman and others associated with Hu-sheng Temple. Hu-sheng Temple's Benevolent Compassion Mother appeared fully formed, in glass. The power of this new medium let her exist outside of temple hierarchies. Her relationship with Hu-an Temple's King Wu thus served to underscore the Benevolent Compassion Mother's status as a new Foundation Mother, with a relationship resembling that of the Second Mother with another powerful *Ong-Ia*, Fong-tian Temple's Great King Su. Like the name of the temple, Taiwan Hu-sheng Temple (and not Zhangbin Hu-sheng Temple), the Benevolent Compassion Mother's relationship with King Wu placed her both within and outside the neighborhood temple system.

The iconicity of Second Mother / King Su and Benevolent Compassion Mother / King Wu in neighborhood space could articulate the glass Mazu within the town's neighborhood temple system, but it also intensified existing rivalries between Fong-tian and Hu-an Temples, each with its own district locality deity, and now its own associated Mazu. When representatives of Hu-sheng Temple asked Tian-hou Temple for an embroidered robe worn by the Second Mother in order to carry some of the Second Mother's efficacious power (*ling*) into the Benevolent Compassion Mother image, Tian-hou Temple rebuffed Hu-sheng Temple's entreaties. On a later procession through town after an appearance at the Hsinchu Technology Park's Lantern Festival celebration in early 2013, the Benevolent Compassion Mother's planned visit to the Second Mother was met by temple commissioners at Tian-hou Temple's gates who said, "No! Don't bother to come in!" (*m-mian la! buyong la!*).

The temple seems at best ambivalent in its neighborhood commitments. For example, in its 2013 Lantern Festival procession, Hu-sheng Temple lacked the resources of a neighborhood, not surprising given its location in a non-residential periphery of the town, the Changhua Coastal Industrial Park. The temple could not muster a troupe of resident youth to carry the goddess's palanquin and thus had to rely on young men who worked for Lin's firm, Taiwan Mirror Glass. With embarrassment, indifference, or pride these men added palanquin-bearer to their job description. Although participation was voluntary, it was, as a friend who

worked at TMG told me, difficult to refuse. Personnel, not residents, became the unit for temple activities.

Typically, palanquin-bearing and other processional troupes come from the temple neighborhood and maintain a variety of thick relationships with each other and the surrounding community. Some of the palanquin-bearers may even owe their services to the deity through adoption; as adopted sons (*chhi kaN*) of the deity, they must assist. Others maintain relations of debt and obligation, what Taiwanese people call “human sentiment” (*renqing*), that compel participation. As in the case of divine adoption, these relationships may be understood as commitments that resemble family ties (Lin 2015). *Renqing* thickens in practices like bimonthly obligations to feast the temple’s spirit soldiers, participation at divination sessions, and informal socializing in the temple courtyard. Men who participate in Lukang’s temple system deride those who misrecognize, deny, or abuse these thick relationships of human sentiment as “boring” (*boliao*), “senseless” (*bo yisu*), or lacking in *yiqi*. The obligation to participate thus depends upon *renqing*. In the case of Hu-sheng Temple, however, the lack of a residential neighborhood thins these relationships. Although TMG is a family-run business in which the workers often banquet and socialize together, *renqing* grows only sparsely within professional relationships defined by wage labor. The men that I asked about the procession seemed a bit embarrassed by their participation. After all, office workers do not fit the common image of palanquin-bearers around Lukang or Taiwan in general.<sup>5</sup>

When on the Lantern Festival Procession, palanquin-bearers for Hu-sheng Temple were also on alert for violent confrontations with partisans of Pakthao’s Great King Su. Instead, the Great King remained in his temple, and his partisans in the courtyard ignored the glass Mazu’s procession. The refusal of thick relationships of reciprocity (including reciprocal violence) between the temple pairs reflects not just the possible rivalries but also a refusal to accept Hu-sheng Temple as appropriate or bound within the ethical ties of ritual practice in the town.

#### REMEDICATION AND THE HORIZONS OF RECOGNITION

For many people around Lukang Town, the glass temple provoked anxiety and controversy surrounding a new medium for popular religious practice and its possibilities rather than settled answers. Those who applauded the glass temple discovered that glass could mediate the terms of popular religious practices, commercial promotion, and environmental awareness in ways that they found felicitous. They also discovered that a position within inter-temple networks could attenuate their own agency in the temple’s construction, even as they amplified the technical prowess required to build Hu-sheng Temple. Critics pointed at the infelicity of glass and the transparent interests of the temple’s promoters. These critics tended to amplify TTG’s motives in their arguments that the chair of TTG lacked *yiqi*. Many people in town appreciated both arguments and adopted a pragmatic approach: if the glass Mazu is efficacious, worshippers will come. Perhaps glass could remediate popular religious practice after all. Besides, the temple is beautiful at sunset.

Hu-sheng Temple's remediation of Taiwanese ritual practices engaged in a hopeful project to imagine a Taiwan that is innovative, resilient, multicultural, and environmentally sustainable. As such, the glass Mazu crystallizes desires for a post-Chinese popular culture, meaning not a denial of connection to China but a popular culture that operates on scales more locally entangled and internationally embedded, in which China is no longer present or always relevant, and in which Taiwan no longer represents China. Perhaps counter intuitively, post-Chinese popular culture operates not only on the local scale (*bentu*) but imagines a globally circulating Taiwan. As argued by Wang Horng-Luen (2000, III), "globalization has provided new ground upon which the nation can be (re)formulated." Remediation is one way that this reformulation becomes widely experienced and deeply felt. Recall that the goddess's remediation in glass did not displace the authenticating logics of popular religious practice but obviated physical pilgrimages to China. Moreover, temple architecture connected popular devotion for Mazu not with Confucian ethics of filial piety or vernacular accounts of heroism but with globally circulating environmental discourses, articulated through images of Taiwan's endangered fauna. In keeping with the need to disclose traces of diverse Taiwanese histories, Hu-sheng Temple's reredos depicted clay pots that could reference both Lukang's Quanzhou heritage or the heritage of Plains Indigenous Peoples (*pingpuzu*) who lived on the outskirts of Lukang Town, peoples who pointed to Taiwan's Austronesian links across the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Nonetheless, nostalgia for Taiwan-as-China informs the way in which projects like the glass temple respond to a sense of local or national marginality with bids for some sort of centrality. The glass temple engages in this nostalgia through references in promotional materials to the People's Livelihood and in some of its iconography. However, Hu-sheng Temple's representation of cultural diversity and biodiversity gestures to multiple traces of Taiwan's global interconnections, reducing China to just one source of a Taiwanese history. At stake for the temple is the way that each of these traces disclosed local histories but also served as tracks toward a hopeful future.

The promoters of the glass temple, rather than eliding their ends or their agency, seem content to foreground the role of Taiwanese technical ingenuity, dogged persistence, and natural beauty in its construction and inspiration. Moreover, the circulation of the glass Mazu as a tourist site and curiosity at the 2013 Lantern Festival, hosted by the Hsinchu Scientific Park, served further to authenticate and make durable the image of Taiwanese culture (innovative, resilient, and spiritual) that the glass temple and image reify. It also projected this image into an imagined global space of circulation, in which Taiwanese worshippers could create affective connections.

What makes the case of the glass temple notable, then, is its reflexivity. Its hypermediation makes us aware of the way our lives might be articulated to each other through interlocking networks of media. Like other cases of "ethnopreneurship" the glass temple displays Taiwanese culture as "the product, at once, of shared essence and self-fashioning" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009, 20). However, projects like Hu-sheng Temple demonstrate not just desires to confirm a communal identity through processes of market circulation. They also indicate qualities of

contemporary cultural projects obscured when we attribute ethnopreneurship simply to the branding of personal and communal identity prevalent under neoliberalism. In particular, desires for market circulation can be correlated with the palpable sense of limitation that communities face as they attempt to realize a globally embedded self-consciousness, limits felt to impinge on the internal composition of communal imagination even as they may derive from a lack of external recognition (Weiss 2008).

Although Taiwan is a notable example of this relationship between political-economic limitation and desires for cultural circulation, the Taiwanese case can shed light on these limitations and desires elsewhere. Social groups on the ground, whether they operate at the scale of neighborhoods, cities, or regions, can no longer seek recognition solely within the sphere of what we might call the political. In fact, such pursuits open such groups to accusations of interest. As in Taiwan, charges of politics have become a way of dismissing claims for recognition. Thus, these claims have often shifted to legal and cultural arenas, particularly that of intellectual property and heritage protection law, and to the market, where brand and ethnic “identities” can be mutually constituted. In Taiwan, these projects began in earnest with the Lee Teng-hui administration’s championing of the notion of Taiwan as a “community of shared fate” (*shengming gongtongti*) and the promotion of comprehensive community development. However, one can see the early development of these projects in late martial law programs for the renaissance of Chinese culture in Taiwan, which actively encouraged cultural display for the purposes of external recognition and internal cultural coherence. It is only a short move from these projects to “one town, one product” and the marketing of Taipei and Kaohsiung as world cities. Taiwan’s case demonstrates how the market, although a realm of instrumental relations, can serve as an escape from politics, necessary if the realm of politics is that of limited sovereignty.

Reworking scale, Hu-sheng Temple amplifies Mazu’s local associations while making the goddess an icon of Taiwan in global circulation. The desires that animate Mazu’s circulation in this context—the desires for which the glass Mazu is the reification—are not exactly for recognition in a national context, not only for recognition of a national culture (but that is there, too). Rather, the glass Mazu reflects desires to see oneself circulating under one’s control and not mis-recognized in global spaces. And while Charles Taylor’s (1994) account of recognition suggests that recognition is the product of public negotiation rather than procedural rationality, here recognition will happen as an outcome of intellectual property (IP) law, branding and, curiously enough, the magical power (*ling*) of the goddess.

In other words, at Hu-sheng Temple market circulation articulates with religious scale-making projects, which attempt to transcend limitations. Yet market circulation not only serves as a surrogate for sovereignty; it also provides an alternate model of sovereignty, articulated with a network of consumer and environmental protections, network protocols, and international IP law regimes. And it might also be that the model of sovereignty embedded in ritual practices—the territories of deities and the diplomatic relations among them—actually points to

an elaboration of this alternate model in practice. An investigation of glass temples and other contemporary Taiwanese religious phenomena might thus reveal a new means to theorize relationships between cultural circulation and horizons of recognition in Taiwan and elsewhere.

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D. J. Hatfield is a sociocultural anthropologist and sound installation artist. His work focuses on sound, indigenous responses to colonialism, and the ethics of locality: the ways that place becomes an ethical substance and the kinds of claims that place might make upon us. More simply put, in a life marked by displacement, Hatfield asks questions about how we know when we are in place, at home.

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#### NOTES

1. Sometimes, these references ironically gesture to a medium thought to be more immediate than the gesturing medium, trying through hypermediation to bolster a sense of immediacy (Bolter and Grusin 2000, 9).
2. Currently, there is at least one other religious structure created entirely in glass that has also become a major tourist draw: the Glass High Heel Wedding Chapel in Chiayi. However, a government agency constructed this chapel, which is a non-sectarian space. For this reason, it differs greatly from Hu-sheng Temple's remediation of popular religious practices.
3. I should point out, however, that this kind of inventiveness is not entirely unique, even in a self-consciously "traditional" town like Lukang. A temple in Lukang's Historic Preservation District, Nanjing Temple, includes humorous depictions of Sponge Bob Square Pants and Mutant Ninja Turtles amid its paintings on temple rafters and doors.
4. See Rubenstein 2003 and Sangren 2003 for descriptions of religious practices that resonate with this description of temples as engaging in structural poses.
5. Palanquin-bearers could be for hire, but often hired troupes or palanquin-bearers, because professional, are thought of as not as virtuous as "troupes of local sons and little brothers" (*zidi tuan*).

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