Temple disruptions a matter of selfishness

Written by Jeremy Wang [] [] Tuesday, 15 December 2020 05:55

A temple festival held by the Monga Qingshan Temple ([] [] []) in Taipei's Wanhua District ([] []) this month went on for three days, with firecrackers being set off even in the middle of the night.

Noisy crowds, street pollution, bloody fights, a building set alight by fireworks and even an alleged kidnapping caused a great deal of resentment among locals who were not among the worshipers.

More than 200 complaints were lodged about the pollution and noise, while most people just put up with it or complained about it online.

Even Minister of the Interior Hsu Kuo-yung (□□□) and independent Legislator Freddy Lim (□□□), who is seen as a leading sponsor of the festival, felt compelled to make statements, while writers and historians also aired their views.

Problems concerning folk beliefs and religion have come to the fore all over Taiwan in the past few years.

They have become mixed up with gangsters, entertainment and politics.

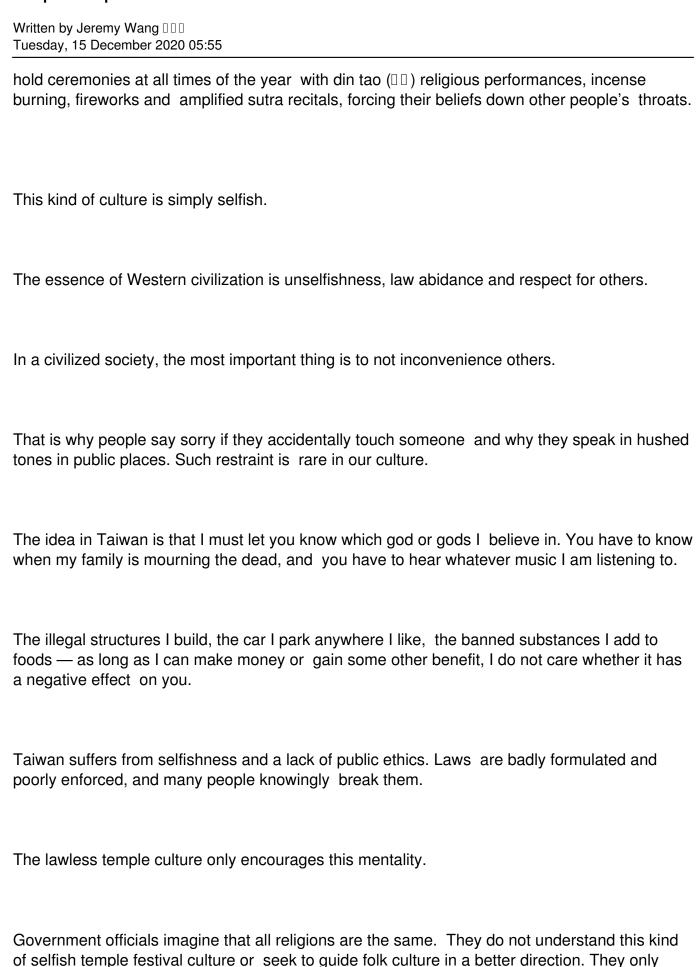
Temple festivals take up road space as marquees are set up. They hold up traffic, attract noisy crowds and cause pollution. Rival gangs often fight over who gets to carry the idols around on palanquins.

Religion is essentially about urging people to do good, so it is a matter of individual freedom, but it is also a private affair that should not affect other people.

However, it would be hard to find anywhere else like Taiwan, where temples great and small

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know how to curry favor with the masses.



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That would explain why President Tsai Ing-wen ([] [] []) on Dec. 6 went to the Monga Qingshan Temple to pray and help carry a palanquin, apparently unaware of the controversy.

A legislator performed songs in the procession, but later said that he did not set off any firecrackers.

It brings to mind how a Democratic Progressive Party legislator and a Cabinet minister voiced their support for migrant workers' Sunday Mass gatherings at Taipei Railway Station, apparently unaware that they are blocking Taiwan's progress toward civilization.

Jeremy Wang is a retired family physician.

Translated by Julian Clegg

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