



Twenty-one Years of Animal Protection in Taiwan: A Case Study of LCA

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ABSTRACT:

Established in January, 1993, LCA (Life Conservationist Association) has served to protect animals in Taiwan for more than twenty one years. With its core belief that “all living beings are equal,” LCA aims to advocate for animal rights, to care for animal welfare, to conserve wild animals, and to maintain ecological balance. Philosophically, organizationally, and strategically, LCA can be treated as a “hybrid” NGO organization that strives to realize its founding vision and missions through the synergy of ethical dialogues with the society, effective social-civilian movement strategies, and comprehensive measures to promote its ideals while transforming public attitude toward animal welfare and ecological justice. Although its achievement may appear to be slow and slight, and its efforts may sometimes seem powerless due to the overwhelming dominance of its adversary in the social-political, economical, legal, cultural, and even institutional structures, LCA has demonstrated how a contemporary NGO can synthesize the power of modern civilian movement mechanism and ethical discourses (especially Engaged Buddhist theories and practices) so as to facilitate comprehensive social transformation to create a more animal friendly world with ecological justice and balance. This paper shall introduce the founding vision and missions of LCA, outline the four categories of its animal protection efforts, analyze its major projects and strategies, and finally reflect on its impact and significance as a “hybrid” NGO.

Keywords: LCA, animal protection, civilian movement, Engaged Buddhism

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二十一年來台灣的動保運動： 以關懷生命協會為例之探討

(初稿，請勿引用)

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摘要

中華民國關懷生命協會 (LCA) 成立於 1993 年，本著佛教「眾生平等」之創會理念與關懷生命之核心價值，跨越單一宗教之範疇，透過公民社會運動、策略合作、論述、教育、媒體宣傳、立法、行政監督等全方位組織運作，企圖照顧弱勢中之弱勢——「非人動物」。該協成立至今已 21 年，期間致力推廣動物權之理念與實踐、關懷動物福祉、保育野生動物，以及維護生態環境與環境正義，可謂一融合當代動保與入世佛教論述、多元公民運動策略、與非營利組織運作綜效之團體。其個案研究足以為台灣動保運動、當代入世佛教實踐、佛教倫理學與當代國際動保論述對話等重大議題提供相當豐富之省思題材。

協會透過動保法、野保法等立法、持續之社會運動與相關論述、教育推廣、以及

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近期之公民行政監督機制，實踐其創會宗旨與目標。21 年來，在協會持續與社會進行倫理對話，企圖移風易俗，轉化大眾對動物權、動物福利、動物保護與環境正義之態度與行為的同時，也積極提出一套評估其行動有效性與持續影響力之監督機制。因此，無論從哲理、論述、行動、組織策略與成效評估等面向，協會都可視為融合多元綜效之非政府組織。

雖然因為既得利益團體在社會、經濟、政治、法律、文化乃至於組織結構的強大優勢，以致協會的成效似乎非常緩慢且不顯明，甚至有些力道微弱，但是協會仍然是台灣社會非政府組織的典範，因為做為一個現代非政府組織，應當如何結合現代公民運動機制以及倫理論述（特別是入世佛教的義理與實踐），來使社會能更積極轉型成一個友善對待動物且具生態平衡與生態正義的世界，協會已從其過往的努力中，做了最佳示範。

本文將介紹關懷生命協會的成立宗旨與目標，分別略述其在保護野生動物、同伴動物、經濟動物以及實驗動物上努力的成績，並分析其重點工作與策略、檢視邇來的成果，最後藉以彰顯其作為一多元綜效非政府組織的深遠影響與地位。

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“To care for the animals is a starting point to care for life.”

Founding Vision of Life Conservationist Association

Established in January, 1993, LCA (Life Conservationist Association) has served to protect animals in Taiwan for more than twenty one years. With its core belief that “all living beings are equal,” LCA aims to advocate for animal rights, to care for animal welfare, to conserve wild animals, and to maintain ecological balance. Philosophically, organizationally, and strategically, LCA can be treated as a “hybrid” NGO organization that strives to realize its founding vision and missions through the synergy of ethical dialogues with the society, effective social-civilian movement strategies, and comprehensive measures to promote its ideals while transforming the public attitude toward animal welfare and ecological justice. Despite the hardship it has encountered, a case study of LCA’s discourses, projects, strategies, and movements may provide abundant materials for our studies on animal protection movements in Taiwan, contemporary practices of socially engaged Buddhism, and comparative studies and dialogues between Buddhist philosophy and international discourses on animal protection.

LCA’s achievements may appear to be slow and slight, and its efforts may sometimes seem powerless due to the overwhelming dominance of its adversary in the social-political, economical, legal, cultural, and even institutional structures. In 2006, LCA founding chair Ven. Chao-hwei wrote about her observation on Taiwan’s animal protection movements, their achievements, obstacles and prospects. She outlined two major legal obstacles in animal protections in Taiwan and two major conceptual problems that obstruct the animal protection efforts of related activists. It has remained true that despite all efforts made so far, it is still a long and hard battle to fight for animal rights and animal welfare here in Taiwan. The fact that the authority concerned are not reinforcing the Animal Protection Acts and Wild Animal Protection Acts, as well as the internal flaw of the two animal protection acts and related laws pose major obstacles and deter more effective animal protection efforts. Also, the public eating and cooking habits and dominant discrimination against animals, animal hunting culture by aboriginal tribes, and even folk practice to sacrifice animals in traditional worship and festivals have all counter-acted against the

efforts made by animal protection groups, to the extent that “animal protection efforts got stuck and stand still.”¹

Despite difficult challenges and the dominant power of its adversary, LCA has demonstrated how a contemporary NGO can synthesize the power of modern civilian movement mechanism and ethical discourses (especially Engaged Buddhist theories and practices) so as to facilitate comprehensive social transformation to create a more animal friendly world with ecological justice and balance. This paper shall introduce the founding vision and missions of LCA, outline the four categories of its animal protection efforts, analyze its major projects and strategies, and finally reflect on its impact and significance as a “hybrid” NGO.

I. LCA Founding Story: Vision, Missions, and Long-term Commitment

In 1992, “fish-hooking,” a way of fishing without hooks and baits to capture fish in local fishing ponds, was introduced to the public in Taiwan as a popular form of entertainment. Many fishing ponds were established to provide such entertainment and it was about to flourish more before Venerable Chao-hwei and all animal lovers in Taiwan launched an “Anti Fish-hooking Movement” to stop such practices. One of the major reasons that the movement was initiated is the animal cruelty involved: the fish could be so abused, poked, harmed, and killed when players tried all approaches to catch the fish without any baits. As more religious leaders, celebrities, animal lovers joined Ven.

¹ 台灣動保運動之兩大法律瓶頸：一、相關單位對現有法規執行不力，二、相關法律與政策未臻完善。台灣動保運動之兩大觀念瓶頸：一、普世性動保難題（飼養場、屠宰場、實驗室之動物虐殺、非人折磨與不人道對待）；二、本土性動保難題：民眾飲食方式造成動物極大痛苦（例：嗜食溫體肉、生煎活煮之烹調方式等），原民狩獵文化、客族神豬祭文化等（釋昭慧，2006：頁 450-465）。「台灣的動物保護運動雖然早已起步，但在資本主義市場機制的運作下，在人類沙文主義的狂流中，動物處境日形艱困，動保運動往往在進三步之後，還被迫再退兩步，有時甚至原地踏步。今後的動保運動，如何以其薄弱的人力與財力，發揮最大效能來突破觀念與制度的重圍？這是台灣動物保護運動的難題。」（頁 467，原稿寫於 2006 年 10 月 22 日）詳見釋昭慧，〈台灣的動物保護運動—觀念與實務的推展與瓶頸〉，《佛教後設倫理學》（台北市：法界出版社，2008 年），頁 439-468。

Chaohwei and expressed concerns and public criticism against such practices, the “Anti Fish-hooking Movement” became supported by all walks of lives in Taiwan society. Specifically, Mr. Hao Po-chun, the Premier of the Executive Yuan at that time, reacted to this public opinion and instructed the government at various levels to clamp down the fish hooking businesses. It was because of the social pressure from every public voice that the fish hooking unrest was eventually suppressed.

However, “fish-hooking” is not a single case of animal abuse and animal cruelty. There have been all other forms of animal cruelty and abuse. The “fish-hooking” event only demonstrated the long-lasting discrimination people have held toward the non-human animals and the complex and inter-twined business interests within the society. Being aware that animal protection has to be a long-term commitment, LCA (Life Conservationist Association) was founded in 1993 as an NGO to carry on and promote all animal protection efforts. Its founding members recognized the needs to establish an official organization and to “train, promote, and supervise systematically over an extended period of time,” with a goal to implant in the public mind its core idea to encourage everyone to “protect the animals and care for life” (“About LCA”). This has been the mission for LCA during the past twenty-one years.

In order to achieve its goal, LCA presents a clear vision that embodies its core belief, “To care for the animals is a starting point to care for life.” Ethically and strategically, LCA addresses a public that cares for life by persuading it to begin by caring for the animals, to look after the weakest group in the society who could not even speak up or rise up and go on strikes for themselves: the non-human animals. With so many problems to tackle with but with such limited manpower and resources, LCA has also chosen to invest in key areas of animal protection: “to advocate for animal rights, to care for animal welfare, to conserve wild animals, and to maintain sound ecological balance” (“About LCA”). With a core belief that “all living beings are equal,” LCA’s founding vision is deeply rooted in the non-dualistic wisdom and compassion of Buddhism, yet it goes beyond religious boundaries to connect widely with universal value and invite the public to join its efforts to treat all living beings equally.

II. Major Projects and Strategies

In terms of practice, LCA can be treated as a “hybrid” NGO organization that strives to realize its founding vision and missions through the synergy of ethical dialogues with the society, effective social-civilian movement strategies, and comprehensive measures to promote its ideals while transforming public attitude toward animal welfare and ecological justice. Throughout the years, LCA has engaged in five major projects and actions: 1) Legislation and enforcement of animal protection laws, 2) comprehensive educational projects from elementary school all the way through to college student training and social training programs, 3) promotion of public awareness about animal protection, 4) formulation and promotion of movements, conferences, public hearings to influence and shape public opinions about animal-protection related matters, and 5) facilitation of joint animal/environmental protection efforts, international networking, and updated information sharing.

In terms of legalization, LCA’s efforts range from pushing the government to pass and reinforce the Animal Protection Acts, Wild Animal Protection Acts and related revisions of the acts. Not only has it tried to back animal protection efforts with concrete laws and teeth, but it has also tried to ensure the reinforcement of these laws with continual civilian monitoring mechanism. The Civilian Watchdog Alliance (動保監督聯盟) established during the recent years has designed concrete KPI measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the government’s reinforcement of the two animal protection acts. Its recent “zero-death in Animal shelter” project has already brought about concrete result of decreased casualty of the number of death in animal shelters. In terms of publication and promotion, LCA has published the quarterly *Animals’ Voice of Taiwan* since 1993 and kept the public well-informed about related matters. Besides, it keeps publishing books, video tapes, cards, manuals in print and on line so that interested animal lovers, advocates, or anyone interested in animal protection can get access to the information they require. Moreover, its website has served to provide updated information about its current projects, related networks, and latest news. Throughout the years, LCA has organized various conferences, social movements, press conferences to actively engage in dialogues with the society so as to shape public opinions and facilitate a favorable climate to support more animal protection actions. In critical moments when the society witnesses massive animal abuse,

such as the time when farm animals, dogs and even wild animals are killed in large number due to human fear for epidemic, LCA spokespersons will share their insights and concerns for such massacre of animals. As for education, it has been engaged in four major areas: 1) public speeches at schools and seminars for teachers and trainers, 2) assistance programs to help teachers and their students to establish animal protection communities, 3) focused seminars and training camps for interested partners and staffs, and most actively, CAPN, Campus Animal Protection Network, organized by enthusiastic and active college students.

LCA has focused on protection strategies and movement for the following five categories of animals: wild animals, economic animals, animal companions, animal used for testing and experiments, and animals for entertainment. For different categories of animals, LCA comes up with different protective measures. For wild animals, it applies three strategies: 1) to supervise the implementation of wild animal conservation laws, 2) to endeavor for the preservation and protection of wild animal habitats, 3) to conduct educational and promotional activities—it has tried to persuade the public to put its two wild animal protection slogans into practice: “No Business Transaction, no killing,” “Refuse to eat, refuse to buy, and refuse to adopt.” With public support to stop eating, buying, adopting, and all wild animal business transactions, it aims to curb wild animal trading and abuse. To protect economic animals, LCA focuses on three methods, 1) to supervise the implementation of Animal Protection Act and related laws, 2) to intensify the improvement on farm animal welfare, and 3) to appeal to the consumers to change their dietary habits such as consuming less meat or adopting vegetarian diets. To bring about more humane treatment for animal companions, LCA adopts three means: 1) to promote the “Three No” policies—“no abandonment, no torture, and no killing of the companion animals, 2) to stop animal suffering from euthanasia and to promote the “Three Breeding Policies” for strayed animals—“adopting, hospice, and appropriate care for strayed animals.” To counter animal testing and related abuse, LCA uses three strategies: 1) to encourage digital dissection programs in order to replace live animal experiments, 2) to lobby for proper legislation to ban insignificant and brutal animal experiments, and 3), to press the experimental animal ethics committee to leverage their supervisory duties. Finally, it keeps publicizing and criticizing cases of animal abuse so as to stop people from abusing animals for entertainment.

Philosophically, organizationally, and strategically, LCA has created synergy with all civilian measures, available resources and partnerships. It introduces leading international discourses on animal rights, animal welfare, and animal protection by translating and publishing Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* and holding conferences, thus generates more significant academic and public interests in issues and studies related to animal protection. Organizationally, its members consist of animal lovers and advocates from various background², Buddhists, non-Buddhists, Christian priests, vets, lawyers, charitable entrepreneurs, social and political activists, environmentalists, teachers, college students, to name a few. They come together and brainstorm for effective ways to promote ideas and animal protection practices. Strategically, it keeps working with different religious, social movement and environmentalist groups to push for legalization and reinforcement of related animal protection acts. As Ven. Chao-hwei reflects, one important feature of Taiwan's animal protection movement is that it has worked together with different environmental protection groups and groups that strive to maintain eco-balance and eco-diversity. With the joint efforts of these groups, more humane treatment of animals has become more widespread, and the government in Taiwan has taken more active actions in setting laws to protect animals and wild animals, coming up with more humane treatment for strayed animals. Specifically, its efforts to turn animal protection from moral persuasion into powerful action succeeded with continuous joint efforts among all these organizations. In 1993, LCA formulated an alliance with 15 environmentalist groups and established the Alliance of Ecological Protection to jointly push for the revisions of Wild Animal Protection Act. And the Animal Protection Act passed on October 13th, 1998 demonstrated the success and breakthrough created by such joint efforts and strategic alliance: animal protection can now be backed up and reinforced by law and legal acts. Against all odds and threats from interest groups related to animal gambling businesses (especially horse-racing), Article 10 of the Animal Protection Act prohibits gambling games involving any animal races or competition. Historically and internationally, it brings

² 「創會以來，協會秉持『眾生平等』的信念，以提倡動物權、為動物爭取福利，保育野生動物與維護生態平衡為宗旨。雖因主事者宗教背景，在理論架構上以佛教教義為主軸，但協會所有成員，都是由具有『動物權』理念的各階層人士所組成。」(頁2)見釋見岸，〈序言一〉，汪盈利，《動保足履關懷 20 年——1992-2012》(台北市：關懷生命協會，2013 年 4 月)。

about a significant breakthrough: it is the first act to legally ban all kinds of gambling involving animal competition/fighting, and it is also one of the rare cases for an NGO group to successfully affect the legalization and operation of the parliament in Taiwan³.

III. Conclusion: LCA as a “hybrid” NGO for Animal Welfare

In the conclusion of her book on LCA's twenty-year commitment to animal protection endeavors, Wang suggests that, among all charity-oriented and care-centered animal protection groups, LCA has introduced a fresh mode of operation to promote animal protection through social and civilian movements and it shall have profound influence on Taiwan's future animal protection movements, including its related government administration, legalization, systems, education, promotion, and public attitude toward animals. Whether we evaluate LCA's achievements from the perspectives of animal protection acts or from the perspective of social/civilian movements, this organization can be seen as a model⁴. It is true that LCA has ushered in a pragmatic and comprehensive way for its animal protection movement, and it has done more than just setting a model for

³ 1993年，LCA與15保育團體組成「生態保育聯盟」，共同推動「野生動物保育法」修正案，同時，該協會也配合國際保育團體，推行「拒吃魚翅」、保育鯨殺等活動（頁445-447）。在動保法律推行成效方面，1994年10月推動通過「野生動物保育法」（簡稱「野保法」）修正案，1998年10月13日，立法院三讀通過「動物保護法」，自此動保不只是道德勸說，更可以法律為後盾，特別是動保法第十條，明文禁止賭博性動物競賽，此一被稱為「反賭馬條款」之條文，在賭馬等相關財團與利益團體龐大勢力影響下，透過輿論清議，扭轉劣勢，影響立法委員與農政官員決策，具有重大歷史意義與國際性指標作用：此為全世界第一個用法律規範禁止賭馬、賭狗之法案，亦是台灣民間NGO以自主意識影響國會運作成功之護生法案（頁447-450），詳見釋昭慧，〈台灣的動物保護運動—觀念與實務的推展與瓶頸〉，《佛教後設倫理學》（台北市：法界出版社，2008年），頁439-468。

⁴ 在眾多以慈善照顧為主要經營型式的動保團體中，本協會創發以社會運動進行動物保護之路線，「對於往後台灣的動保運動、相關行政立法、制度、教育推廣、民間社會對於動物的態度等，都有很深的影響。」（頁421）「無論以動物保護的角度，或社會運動的角度，關懷生命協會所開創的動保運動路線，足以作為代表典範」（頁434）詳見汪盈利，〈動物保護光譜—關懷生命協會在台灣動物保護運動的定位〉，《動保足履關懷20年—1992-2012》（台北市：關懷生命協會，2013年4月），頁420-434。

animal protection and social/civilian movements.

LCA has demonstrated how a contemporary NGO can synthesize the power of modern civilian movement mechanism and ethical discourses so as to facilitate comprehensive social transformation to create a more animal friendly world with ecological justice and balance. It has also demonstrated the infinite power of mindfulness and compassion if viewed with the insight of Engaged Buddhist theories and practices. In “Introduction: A New Buddhism,” Christopher S. Queen suggests three characteristics of socially engaged Buddhism: *awareness*, a deep *Identification* of the self and the world, and the imperative of *action*. Although he was trying to outline common features of Engaged Buddhist organizations in the west, I find his observations applicable for our reflection on LCA’s vision and long-term commitment to animal protection. Queen mentions the awareness of “a *buddha*: an ‘Awakened One,’ whose deep wisdom (Pali: *pannya*) comes from seeing the true constituents and interdependence of oneself and the world,” the most representative example being *Avalokitesvara* (Kuan-yin), who “sees/hears the cries of the world” (6). Starting from the “Anti Fish-hooking Movement,” LCA has stay aware of the cries and suffering of all kinds of animals and strived to respond to various animal cruelty practices and potential animal abuse in Taiwan, with all means that are available. Behind the civilian movements promoted by LCA lies the deep Identification of the self and the world is manifested in “a sense of oneness, nondualism, interdependence, and empathy for all beings” (6). Such sense of interdependence, nondualism, and empathy for all beings is clearly stated in LCA’s founding visions, “To care for the animals is a starting point to care for life.” It is found to be a driving force to help its members realize its founding visions when they take actions and engage themselves in social, legal, moral, cultural, and even ethical/philosophical dialogues with the public and the world. Finally, the third characteristic of socially engaged Buddhism, “the imperative of *action*,” can be observed especially in LCA’s efforts in achieving equal treatment of all sentient beings as it strives to advocate for animal welfare and animal rights. It has moved beyond traditional captive animal relief to long-term engagement with more comprehensive, effective, and systematic deliverance for all suffering animals and beings, an act necessary to demonstrate equal respect for all beings, and a significant starting point to care for life.

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