

WHAT THE BUDDHIST BUST SAYS ABOUT GORE

Maria Hsia was found guilty today on all five counts charging her with arranging more than \$100,000 in illegal contributions during the 1996 presidential campaign. Hsia, who has been a fund-raiser for Vice President Al Gore since the 1980s, helped arrange the Buddhist temple fund-raiser.

Gore initially claimed that he did not know that the event was a fund-raiser but then later changed his characterization. Buddhist nuns and monks wrote individual checks and were then reimbursed by the Hsi Lai Temple. That event raised \$65,000 in illegal contributions.

Catholic League president William Donohue spoke for the league today:

“From the beginning, there have been two issues involved in the Buddhist temple fund-raising event. One is now concluded: the host is a criminal. What remains unclear is the status of the guest.

“In recent weeks Governor George Bush and Senator John McCain have been the target of much criticism for the way they have handled the delicate issue of religion and politics. But their errors pale in significance to what is at stake in the Buddhist bust: what is at stake is an outrageous violation of the principle of separation of church and state coupled with gangsterism.

“Just imagine the outcry if Jack Kemp, running with Bob Dole, had gone to a fund-raiser at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in 1996, organized by one of his long-time buddies. Imagine further the spectacle of nuns and priests writing checks to the Republican party and then getting reimbursed by the Archdiocese of New York. Is there any doubt what would have been the fate of

Kemp, to say nothing of Cardinal O'Connor? The fact that Gore is apparently getting away with this is emblematic of a sickening double standard. The Bob Jones fiasco is bad, but check-writing clergymen being hustled in a house of worship makes that look positively angelic by comparison."