The Environmental Factors for Establishing Mazu Temple — A Case Study of Citian Temple in Taiwan

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Abstract. In traditional Chinese culture, the religious belief of the geographical environment, should be considered in the establishment of any temple. This paper points out that the establishment of Mazu Temple must be in accordance to the Geomancy of traditional Chinese culture, and examine the surrounding environment and its relation to Geomantic points. On the placement of the inner deities, we should also carefully place them in accordance with the believers' cognition of the level of deities, and the pattern of ethical difference between the left and the right. All these indicate the traditional Chinese ideology of environment and living space.

1. Introduction
Citian Temple (Figure 1), Beipu Township, Xinzhu County, has its special position in Taiwan's historical development. It locates in the center of the Jinguangfu, the largest reclamation organization in Taiwan (Figure 2). In terms of geographical location, Citian Temple situates in the center of Beipu settlement, Jinguangfu mansion locates in the southwest of the settlement. It shows that Jinguangfu is responsible for reclamation affairs, Citian Temple is the belief center of the nearby area. There is an important local activity to welcome Mazu at the end of the lunar year. In addition, Citian Temple also organizes the performance Mazu opera in the first month of the lunar year annually and of a large-scale of activity around Mazu every ten years. These popular activities indicate that the Citian Temple in Beipu is a local temple, which serves as channel for religious and cultural activities.
2. Geographical environment
In terms of geographical environment, this temple is located in the south of Xinzhu County, Taiwan. Most of the area is surrounded by hills with height of 100 to 600 meters. The hills and the terrains around this area, cross over from southeast to northwest. Wuzhi Mountain (1067m) and Egongji Mountain (1579m) is located in the southeast, while Shitou Mountain (492m) stretches to the south. The headwaters of main river originate from these mountains that flows northward and passes through Beipu settlement. In this position, around Beipu settlement, there is a big bend, turning south to the northeast end of Emei Township. The upstream is called Beipu River, after entering Emei Township, it is named as Emei River. Beipu River flows gently. Beipu settlement is situated on the terrace which is formed by the alluvial deposition of Beipu River. On the right, there is a refuting ridge, and under the river, there is a stream, which is quite convenient for defense. On the left, there are holes created by the erosion of streams, which is an excellent natural blocking measure. The terrain of Beipu settlement is surrounded by mountains and water, which is featured by the principle of spacious front and solid back. [1,2,3]

3. The choice of environment
In the process of Han people immigrating to Taiwan, they started to seek for spiritual consolation and spiritual stability when they moved to a new place. After settled down, the village people collectively initiated the construction of the village temple belonging to our own village which served as the center of the village’s religious belief and social lives. In sum, the settled immigrants worshiped different deities according to their life experiences, such as the religious tradition of their ancestral home or the deeds of miracles etc. Below is a case study of establishing a village temple by Han immigrants. [4]
In the winter of 1834, Jiang xiuluan (1783-1846), the head of a Cantonese reclamation household, led hundreds of people including Fujianese and Cantonese to cultivate cattle and farm implements. The followed the cattle road, drove away the ethnic minorities who used to live here, and finally entered the Beipu settlement. As it says in historical texts, in October 1835, Jiang xiuluan, the local leader, decided to enshrine a small wooden statue of Avalokitesvara (Guanyin) that he had brought to Huizhou in order to cultivate people's mind. According to the investigation of geomantic master, he found the place of Dragon Cave, and chose the foot of Beipu Mountain (later Xiuluan Mountain) as the base of the temple. Right on this site, Jiang built a simple public house with thatch as a place to cultivate people and pray for peace. The temple was situated in the middle, the best place of the whole settlement, so as to enshrine deity, protect the prosperity of reclamation industry, and bring happiness. The geographical situation in the vicinity of Citian Temple in Beipu is strictly based on the principle of "Luantou School". "This geomantic school emphasizes the role of "dragon", "acupoint", "sand," and "water" in building a temple.
By close examination of the actual situation of Beipu settlement, this paper makes a detailed explanation on the geomantic aspects of Beipu. First, Egongji Mountain is the "Taizu Mountain", and Wuzhi Mountain is the "Shaozu Mountain". When Dragon vein crosses through Beipu settlement Beipu settlement, it settles on Xiuluan Mountain. In this sense, Xiuluan Mountain is the "parent mountain" of the cave, which is called "dragon". Second, Citian Temple is the place where the spirit of still originates nurture ends, which is called "acupoint". Third, there are mountains on both left and
right sides of Beipu settlement, namely "green Dragon on the left" and "white Tiger on the right". The Longfengji Mountain on the opposite side is "Chaoshan". There are hills surrounding the Beipu settlement, called "sand". Fourth, the streams cross over the north and south foot of Xiuluan Mountain and influxes at the "Mingtang" in front of the cave. The flat area near the Beipu settlement is the "inner Mingtang". After the confluence, a curve is formed, and the field in the far south of the curve belongs to "outside Mingtang", and then comes back for water. The central axis (golden line) of Citian Temple in Beipu settlement is facing the top of Xiuluan Mountain, which is the "Leshan" of the dragon vein. In addition, the bamboo planting and gate setting are not only designed by the need of defense, but also achieve the effect of encircling, storing wind and gathering Qi on Geomancy.

Citian Temple in Beipu can be considered as the most spiritual place in the settlement. The square in front of the temple is a vast "Mingtang", through which the Qi is easy to drain. The wall facing the temple, the gate and the ditch outside the gate can be heavily blocked to stop the wind. Among them, the gate is particularly important. The Secret Purpose of Yangzhai "Buildings takes the gate as the water outlet and the road as the water vapor, so the most important one is the gate." If the settlement is regarded as the enlargement of the scale of the buildings, the gate is the gateway of the settlement. Following this idea, the square in the temple and the upper street, and even the lower street outside the gate, are the "waterways" of Qi. Therefore, the gate should function as a water gate, so that the air of the incoming dragon and the water belt will not leak. The residential buildings in the settlement compactly surrounded around the temple, and the lanes are zigzag and narrow. This design can stop the wind blowing and Qi dispersion, and retain Qi in the settlement. Looking at the Geomantic pattern of Beipu settlement, Citian Temple situates firmly in the Dragon acupoint. There is a Taixi behind the Dragon acupoint connecting the Dragon vein to the parent mountain (Xiuluan Mountain) as the barrier, which is the Xuanwunao. On the left and right wings are bamboo arches and houses, which are green Dragon and white Tiger. In front of it, there are ponds and ditches surrounded by streams, which are called red Phoenix water. Therefore, Beipu settlement is appropriate to the Geomantic pattern of "eastern green Dragon, southern red Phoenix, western white Tiger and northern black Xuanwu". Specifically, there are rivers in the east, depressions or lakes in the south, roads in the west and mountains in the north. According to Geographical principles, it is really a good living environment.

4. Arrangement of sacred space
In 1835, when Jiang xiuluan led his people to reclaim Beipu, Citian Temple in Beipu was built, consisting of an assigned temple site, and the simple public houses to worship Avalokitesvara brought by the Jiang xiuluan’s family from Huizhou. At that time, there were many ethnic minorities who were bothered. Believers all went to pray for their family’s safety and prosperity. Later, it was refurbished in succession in 1846 and 1853. In 1871, Jiang ronghua (1832-1887), the third generation of the head of Cantonese reclamation household, proposed to expand the temple again, and raised the donations from villagers. This expanding project was completed in 1874. The layout of Citian Temple is similar to the typical "double hall and two horizontal" architecture in Hakka area, which shows the influence of their ancestral traditional culture. [6]

The deities worshiped in Citian Temple are the indicator of the believer's ethics and inner belief world. The middle of the main hall, enshrines Guanyin Buddha (Avalokitesvara) and Mazu, which is the so-called "double kindness and worship" (Figure 3). Avalokitesvara is accompanied by good fortune and dragon girl. Mazu is accompanied by thousands of miles' eyes (General Kim) and downwind ears (General Water). According to popular belief of Taiwan that Mazu sits in front and Guanyin in back, Mazu seems to be the main Goddess of the temple. In the Hakka tradition, Mazu became one of the
main deities to be worshipped. [7] That is due to its multi-function and practicability. In addition, considering the factors of ethnic integration, Mazu is regarded as a popular deity worshiped by different ethnic group. In the main hall, on the left wing is the so-called Dragon side worshiping Three Official Emperors, Shennong Emperor, Wenchang Emperor, Kuidou Xingjun and Zhuyi Xingjun (Figure 4). All of them belong to high level deities, with emperor titles, so they are placed on the left wing (Dragon side) that symbolizes higher status. On the right wing is the so-called Tiger side of the main hall enshrining Three Mountain Kings, accompanied by the deity of earth. These deities belong to the king level deities, which is lower than the emperor level. Therefore, they are placed on the right wing (Tiger side) that symbolizes lower status. The decoration of the idols in the corridor follows the same pattern. In the left wing (Dragon side) of corridor, there are Zhu Sheng Goddess, Kitchen God, Xinzhu City God and Baozhongyimin Master worshipping (Figure 5). Due to the popularity of these deities, they are placed in the left wing (Dragon side) corridor. Li Siye (? - 1839), Jiang xiujuan (1783-1846) and Jiang ronghua (1832-1887), the great masters of the army, Yang master, etc., who were the great elders of the temple, were worshipped in the right wing (Tiger side) corridor (Figure 6). Due to the fact that they were worshipped after death and had lower divinity, they were worshipped in the right wing (Tiger side) corridor. [8] Looking at the setting of the inner sacred space of Citian Temple, it shows the different pattern of left is superior to the right.
5. Discussion

Under the guidance of Geomantic principle, Beipu settlement has indeed constructed the living environment from the beginning of rich local Qi and water Qi. It is surrounded by bamboo and houses layer by layer, and closely blocked by roadways and ditches. Therefore, it can store wind and gather Qi, so that the Qi can permeate the whole settlement, and then spread to each household's point, so as to provide residents with a so-called shelter from the wind and a home with shelter. [9] In terms of the internal sacred space of Citian Temple, we should observe the differential pattern, and carefully arrange the deities according to the cognitive status of the believers and the principle of being dignified on the left (Dragon side) and low on the right (Tiger side). From the example of Citian Temple in Beipu settlement, Taiwan, we can clearly see that the influence of traditional Chinese culture on the selection of temple geographical environment.

6. References

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