

Rebuilding the Ancestral Temple and Hosting Daluo Heaven and Earth Prayer and Enlightenment Ceremony

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Kuo, Yeh-Tzu founded Taiwan's Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple in 1970. She organized more than 200 worshippers as a group named "Taiwan Tsu Huei Temple Queen Mother of the West Delegation to China to Worship at the Ancestral Temples" in 1990. At that time, the temple building of the Queen Mother Palace in Huishan of Gansu Province was in disrepair, and Temple Master Kuo, Yeh-Tzu made a vow to rebuild it. Rebuilding the ancestral temple began in 1992 and was completed in 1994. It was the first case of a Taiwan temple financing the rebuilding of a far-away Queen Mother Palace with its own donations. In addition, Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple celebrated its 45th anniversary and hosted Yiwei Yuanheng Lizhen Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao (Momentous and Fortuitous Heaven and Earth Prayer Ceremony) in 2015. This is the most important and the grandest blessing ceremony of Taoism, a rare event for Taoism locally and abroad during this century. Those sacred rituals were replete with unprecedented grand wishes to propagate the belief in Queen Mother of the West. Stopping at nothing, Queen Mother's love never ceases.

Keywords: Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple, Temple Master Kuo, Yeh-Tzu, Golden Mother of the Jade Pond, Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao (Daluo Heaven and Earth Prayer Ceremony)

Introduction

The main god, Golden Mother of the Jade Pond (Golden Mother), enshrined in Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple, is the same as the Queen Mother of the West, the highest goddess of Taoism. The Queen Mother of the West faith began to be propagated in Taiwan in 1949. It has developed into two major belief systems in which the main dieties are Queen Mother and Golden Mother of the Jade Pond, referred to as Queen Mother or Golden Mother, respectively. Kuo, Yeh-Tzu converted to the Golden Mother of the Jade Pond in 1968. The Golden Mother of the Jade Pond descended on Kuo, Yeh-Tzu in 1969 and instructed her to construct a Golden Mother of the Jade Pond temple, which she responded to when she founded the Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple in 1970.

In the early days, Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple used a rice pot as an incense burner and was enshrined in a corner of Kuo, Yeh-Tzu's home on Keelung Road in Taipei. After 50 years of development, Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple has become the largest Golden Mother of the Jade Pond Temple in Taipei and a well-known large temple in Taiwan. Worshippers are spread all around Taipei, and also in many countries. There are many unprecedented records in the operation of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple. For example: 40 episodes of the TV series "The Biography of Golden Mother of the Jade Pond" were produced at a cost of NT\$10 million in 1989. These have been broadcast by Taiwan's China Television Company since December 6, 1990, and garnered high praise.

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Temple Master Kuo, Yeh-Tzu organized more than 200 worshipers as a group named “Taiwan Tsu Huei Temple Queen Mother of the West Delegation to China to Worship at the Ancestral Temples” in November 1990. Those sacred sites visited during this pilgrimage were the Queen Mother Palace in Huishan, Gansu Province, the Queen Mother Temple in Tianchi, Xinjiang Province, and the Queen Mother Pool in Taishan, Shandong Province. From the time of political division between China and Taiwan in 1949, it was the first Queen Mother pilgrimage, owing to the Taiwan government allowed people to begin traveling to China to visit relatives only from 1987.

This trip from Taiwan to the Queen Mother Palace in Gansu Province of China prompted the rebuilding of the ancestral temple by Temple Master Kuo, Yeh-Tzu of the Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple. In 1990, all the believers worshipped the Queen Mother of the West piously at the place where she descended in Huishan, Gansu, as pictured in Figure 1. As Temple Master Kuo worshipped at Queen Mother Palace, she vowed that she would like to rebuild it. The construction started in 1992, as pictured in Figure 2, and was completed in 1994. Temple Master Kuo was the first Taiwanese to make such a magnanimous vow to Queen Mother of the West and undertake this rebuilding project in China from Taiwan.



Figure 1. More than 200 Taiwanese worshipped in 1990 at the Holy Site of Queen Mother of the West's Descention. Source: Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple.



Figure 2. Groundbreaking ceremony hosted by Temple Master Kuo, Yeh-Tzu in 1992. Source: Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple.

Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple celebrated its 45th anniversary by hosting a grand Taoist undertaking with the Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao (Daluo Heaven and Earth Prayer Ceremony) over seven days from December 5 to 11 (October 24 to November 1 in the lunar calendar) in 2015. There were seven offerings and 12 grand altars were established, each presided over by international well-known high priests and masters from Taiwan and around the world who gathered at the Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple for this ceremony. This unprecedented Taoist sacred ritual was not only the largest Taoist event in Taiwan since 1949, but also a rare worldwide event for Taoism from the Northern Song Dynasty Dazhong Xiangfu Period (1008-1016) to 2015. The great sacrament was carried out after a thousand years, reinstating the blessings of the Three Realms and Ten Thousand Spiritual Forces. Much manpower and many material resources were dedicated to this religious event. In addition to praying for participants' whole families and their ancestors, worshippers also petitioned to save lonely souls and ghosts.

Temple Master Kuo, Yeh-Tzu's Vow to Rebuild the Queen Mother Palace

Taoism is a traditional religious belief of Chinese society. Taoist beliefs spread to Taiwan along with the Kuomintang (Nationalist) government in 1949; from hence they have developed very successfully in Taiwan. Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple is a Taoist temple which promotes the compassionate spirit of the Golden Mother of the Jade Pond as Temple Master Kuo, Yeh-Tzu's mission, and the affairs of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple are flourishing.

As Temple Master Kuo completed her worship at the ancestral temple of the Queen Mother Palace in Huishan, Gansu Province on December 8, 1990, she saw that the temple was in great disrepair from natural disasters and wars. Saddened by that, she vowed to rebuild the temple and proceeded to lead Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple to contribute more than 10 million NT dollars for this rebuilding project. The government of Jingchuan County in Gansu Province collaborated with supporting measures. The completion and seating ceremony of the Queen Mother Palace was held on October 16, 1994 as pictured in Figure 3 followed by rebuilding of the Queen's Temple, Creators of the Universe Hall, King Father of the East Hall, Three Sovereigns Hall, Five Emperors Halls, and the Returning Rooms.



Figure 3. Queen Mother Palace restored to its original appearance. Source: Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple.

Before the reconstruction of the Queen Mother Palace ancestral temple commenced in 1992, the surrounding area was deserted and transportation was inconvenient. Temple Master Kuo, Yeh-Tzu did not shun hardships, but traveled across the strait to oversee the rebuilding. After that, the Feng De Yu Bao Temple in New Taipei City followed up on the construction of other parts of the ancestral temple, while disciple Xie, Zheng-da of Taipei City also repaired the Golden Mother of the Jade Pond Hall. All told, the reconstruction of the complete ancestral temple complex took 20 years. The Queen Mother Palace once again became honored as the “First Palace in Northwest China”.

Since the rebuilding of the ancestral temple of the Queen Mother Palace, Jingchuan County has experienced much vitality as the area began to attract a multitude of businessmen, which promoted more active economic, trade, and religious exchanges between the two sides of the Taiwan strait, more frequent Taoist interactions in between Taiwan and China increased non-governmental cooperation and exchanges on both sides as well. As the Creators of the Universe Hall was completed, Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple organized a delegation to hold a Qingchengjiao (Thanksgiving Worship Celebration) on June 30, 2010, as pictured in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Qingchengjiao held upon completion of the Creators of the Universe Hall.

The Meaning and Ceremonies of Jianjiao in Taiwan

From ancient times in China, Jianjiao has meant the worshiping of gods. Since Taoism became popular in the Han Dynasty, Jianjiao has been the most important sacrificial activity of Taoism, literally meaning for priests to set up altars to worship gods. The original purpose was to ask the gods to keep the peace and maintain good weather.

Later generations referred to the temples and Taoist priests as Jianjiao. After Han people migrated to Taiwan during the Ming and Qing Dynasties and introduced Taoism, they were influenced by folk beliefs; moreover, the environments in the early days of Taiwan's development were full of great harm and threats to the immigrants. Every year, from autumn to winter (October through December on the lunar calendar), Jianjiao activities of various scales and purposes are set up. Jianjiao has become the most popular and valued traditional religious event in Taiwan.

Jianjiao According to Purpose and Category

Taiwanese people commonly refer to Jianjiao as “making Jiao” which is determined according to the purpose of the worship ceremony. The scale and duration of Jianjiao varies from one day, two days, three days, five days, seven days, and 49 days, of which three days and five days are the most common. Through religious rituals, Jianjiao serves to invite the gods, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and lonely souls worshipped by the people to enjoy offerings and foods and listen to the prayers of believers. After the ceremony, the gods are sent back to the heaven in order to satisfy the spiritual sustenance and prayers of the faithful for their wishes to be fulfilled.

Jianjiao as the Most Important Blessing Ceremony

Jianjiao is the most important large-scale blessing festival in Taoism and has different names according to the purpose and scale of the festival. In addition to praying for peace, protection from disasters, etc., due to differences in purpose, this ceremony may also differ in scale. Taiwanese folk Jianjiao are usually distinguished by the number of days, such as the One-Dynasty Jiao, the Two-Dynasty Jiao, the Three-Dynasty Jiao, the Five-Dynasty Jiao, the Seven-Dynasty Jiao, and the Luo Tian Dajiao. The scale of the Luo Tian Dajiao is on the national level, and can be set up by any country, its government officials, or common people.

Main Types of Jianjiao and Their Ceremonies in Taiwan

Taoism inherited and developed the sacrificial ritual of Jiao to interact with the gods, which was later extended to include praying for peace and making votive offerings. There are seven common types of Jianjiao in Taiwan, as described in the following list. (1) Zhongyuanjiao: The traditional Zhongyuanjiao used to celebrate the birthday of Diguang the Great. It was mixed with the Buddhist Obon Festival and later emphasized Pudu (crossing over of all lonely souls), often referred to in English as the Ghost Festival. The Jianjiao scale and form of this Jiao is nowadays only celebrated at the Zhongyuan Festival. (2) Birthday of Gods Jiao: These ceremonies celebrate the birthdays of various gods. (3) Peace Jiao: These rituals are held to pray or thank gods for blessings of peace. (4) Water Jiao: Due to lack in water conservancy projects in the past, rivers often flooded and destroyed lands and villages. In order to pray for safety, people host Water Jiao to worship the god of water and the lonely souls who died in the water. (5) Fire Jiao: This ceremony is held to pray for the whole area to avoid fires. (6) King Jiao: This worship event is a time to pray to expel plagues. (7) Qing Cheng Jiao: This thanksgiving worship celebration is held when temple construction is completed.

The Erecting of Vertical Lamp Poles at the commencement of Jianjiao is very important. These lamp poles have the functions of extending an invitation and serving as a signpost. The main purpose is to inform the gods of the heavens and the earth, as well as the lonely souls of the underworld, that there is a Jianjiao being held here, welcoming them to participate. Numbering one, three, seven, or 10, and up to 36, the lamp poles are made of tall, straight, hard, clean bamboo, and are erected at the “Pudu field” on the square in front of the temple. People treat them as the most important artifact for inviting the gods and calling the ghosts. A few days, up to 10 days, before Jianjiao, the vertical lamp poles are erected; a banner, heavenly flag, heavenly lantern, heavenly cloth, heavenly money, and heavenly gold are hung on the sun rod for the gods. The flag of lonely souls, seven-star lamp, earth cloth, earth money, etc., are hung as a signpost to guide the lonely souls of the underworld.

Launching Water Lanterns is another one of the important ceremonies for Jianjiao. In brief, Erecting Lamp Poles invites gods and ghosts on the ground, and Launching Water Lanterns invites lonely souls who died of

drowning or while sailing. This takes place in the afternoon or evening before Pudu. There is no specific standard for the style of the water lanterns. Big ones are like mini Earth God temples, and the smaller ones are less than 30 cm high. They are all made of paper mache with a styrofoam base to float on the water. Some have decorative papers, paper sculptures, or painted patterns, and others have only red roofs and white walls without patterns.

In general, the Launching of Water Lanterns ceremony is presided over by Taoist priests who lead the parade to the predetermined place of the launching, usually at a riverside or port. The Taoist priest reads the scriptures before the lantern(s) is launched, repays the gods of the heavens and the earth, invites lonely souls from the water, shares the universal heart, recites sutras to help the undead to rise above the waters, and then the priest lights the water lantern candles. Disciples launch the lanterns onto the water to let them drift. Adherents believe that the farther the water lantern drifts, the more lonely souls can be attracted, and the better the career of the launcher will be and the safer the launcher's family.

There are more Jianjiao held in the south of Taiwan than in the north due to the Han migrants from China who came to southern Taiwan first, and then developed from the south to the north. In the early days, villages took turns to host Jianjiao in their region. At the time of Jianjiao, every family had lanterns and festoons; they fasted, and avoided mountains and water. They did not go uphill to cut timber or to hunt nor did they go to sea to harpoon living creatures. At the Erecting of Vertical Lamp Poles, a Taoist troupe comprising 10 to 30 people and three to four musicians would preside over the ceremony. The highlight of Jianjiao was Pudu, during which every family entertained relatives and friends, so there were a lot of people watching the excitement during this period.

The setup of the temple for Jianjiao is also very important. In addition to the altar and lanterns, there are many gods and artifacts created from paper mache in the temple. The paper mache gods include: Mountain God, Earth God, Masters, Four Marshals, Six Riders... etc. Mountain God and Earth God are the most important patron saints. With a majestic red face and black beard, wearing armor with a knife in hand, riding a lion and looking commanding, the Mountain God guards the left door. The Earth God guards the right door, attired in yellow clothes with a yellow hat, with a kind red face and white beard, riding a yellow tiger.

The Meaning and Purpose of Scale Regarding Jianjiao

Each Jianjiao is named a number of Chao Jiao according to the length of the festival. The number of days ranges from one to seven and 49 days, respectively named: One-Dynasty Jiao, Two-Dynasty Jiao, Three-Dynasty Jiao, Five-Dynasty Jiao, Seven-Dynasty Jiao, and the longest is Luo Tian Dajiao. The most elaborate rituals of Jianjiao are called Dajiao, such as the Luo Tian Dajiao held by Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty for 49 days. There are many factors that determine the scale of the Jianjiao. In principle, it is correlated with the size of the temple; big temples host larger Jianjiao, and the small temples host more modest ones.

The most important work of Jianjiao is to set up the altar, which is about 10 feet high and divided into three or five layers. Each layer of the inner altar and the outer altar is decorated with wonderful flowers and birds and traditional folk stories. The inner altar is dedicated to the main deity; the outer altar is extremely gorgeous and magnificent, and is set up on the court for offering sacrifices. If there are several big altars for Jianjiao, they will compete with each other to become the most beautiful focus of the event.

Jianjiao Held in Taiwan From the Founding of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple

The sacrifice area of Jianjiao dictates the distribution of worshipers. The size of the sacrifice area correlates with the size of the temple. The more worshipers, the more spacious the sacrifice area; the more prosperous the temple, the more prolific the incense burned. Since the founding of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple, the Jianjiao that have been held on both sides of the strait between China and Taiwan have been very successful. Worshipers from different walks of life, as well as societal elites, have enthusiastically participated in them.

Jianjiao to Celebrate Temple Completion and 25th Anniversary

The Qingchengjiao held in 1985 celebrated the completion of the temple that had been under construction since 1970 and was the first time Jianjiao was hosted there during the initial construction phase of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple. The scale of the festivities held thereafter correlates with the development of the temple affairs, each time grander than the last. In honor of the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple, a Grand Ceremony to Pray for Heaven to Protect the Country, Bless the People and Multiply Blessings was held in 1995, as pictured in Figure 5.

Five-Dynasty Jiao for Completion of Refurbishment of Queen Mother Hall

Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple celebrated the completion of the refurbishment of the Queen Mother Hall by hosting the Dingchouke (2nd period in a 60-year cycle) Prayer for Heaven to Protect the Country, Bless the People and Multiply Blessings with a Five-Dynasty Jiao in 1997.

Seven-Day Qingjiao to Celebrate 35th Anniversary

In celebration of the 35th anniversary of the Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple, a Qingjiao Prayer Ceremony was held for seven days in 2005, as pictured in Figure 6. Gaogong (High priests) Lee Song-xi, leader of the Taiwan Zhengyi School of Taoism Guangyuan Altar in Keelung, and his son Lee You-kun, were appointed to preside over the construction of the altar.

In addition, more than 20 masters, priests, and sutra masters from the six Daquan Taoist temples, including Tianshi Cave, Laojun Pavilion, Shangqing Palace, Feixian Temple, Jianfu Temple, and Erlang Temple, were engaged to preside over the ceremonies: multiply longevity blessing, raise up the ancestors of each surname, and lead infant souls across the blood lake. Moreover, the Zhengyi Zenhe Taoist Sect leaders Zhao Ke-she and Ma Li-ling, as well as the chanters of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple jointly participated in ceremonies for bringing blessing and eliminating disaster.

Dafa (Great) Conference for 40th Anniversary

During the celebration of the 40th anniversary of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple in 2010, Temple Master Kuo stated, "I am grateful to Queen Mother; I appreciate the friendship and loving care of all devotees to the great virtues, the 'blessed children', members of society and other temples toward Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple, for only in this way are we enabled to attain today's achievement". In former President Ma Ying-jeou's speech, he noted that he had made the acquaintance of Temple Master Kuo 15 years earlier and had witnessed the development of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple. He expressed his hope that Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple would not only be a center of religious belief in Taiwan, but also be a center of cultural, educational, and social harmony. Former Taipei Mayor Hao Long-bin, on behalf of the residents of Taipei, expressed his gratitude to Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple for its contributions to poor families, enthusiasm in education, and cultural undertakings in Taipei City over the past 40 years as pictured in Figure 7.



Figure 5. Qingchengjiao held for 25th anniversary, participation by elites from all walks of life. Source: Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple.



Figure 6. Qingjiao for 35th anniversary celebration. Source: Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple.



Figure 7. Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple celebrates 40th anniversary. Source: Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple.

Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao to Celebrate 45th Anniversary

In 2015, to celebrate its 45th anniversary, Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple hosted a Yiwei Yuanheng Lizhen (gather the original good conditions into one body to stay appropriately firm during a “dry period” of lunar calendar) Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao, which was the largest and grandest Taoist ceremony in Taiwan ever. Lee You-kun of Taiwan was appointed to lead the Blessing Ceremony for this national-level Jianjiao, while groups from Taiwan, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Hong Kong were invited to preside over it.

Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao is a prayer to the heavens for favorable weather and peace in the nation and among the people; the breadth of Daluo Tiandi covers all things, material and immaterial, seeking peace and blessings for all souls under heaven, and an end to disaster and misfortune. By praying for the merciful protection and blessings of the Golden Mother of the Jade Pond, the whole world may be able to prevent deaths from natural disasters, eliminate disasters, and avoid difficulty; rather, everyone may live in peace and happiness, with every family safe and sound. The ceremony procedure is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple’s Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao Procedure

Ceremony item	Notes
1. Inform the pantheon	Choose perfect time of 11 am to 1 pm on May 9th of the lunar calendar in 2015. Prepare incense and tea offering table as a memorial of blessing to announce the date of the ceremony to the pantheon and pray to the gods.
2. Groundbreaking for the altar	Choose perfect time of 9 am on August 29th of the lunar calendar; wave hands from the west toward the initial point of groundbreaking. The following should avoid this ceremony: 42-year olds, for whom the day is not suitable as well as those who are 21 and 81 years old, for whom the hour is unsuitable.

Table 1 to be continued

3. Collect the bamboo for the lamp poles	Choose perfect time of 1 pm to 3 pm on October 9th of the lunar calendar. The following should avoid this ceremony: 62-year olds, for whom the day is not suitable as well as those who are 21 years old, for whom the hour is unsuitable.
4. Erect lamp poles	Choose perfect time of 1 pm to 3 pm on October 12th of the lunar calendar. Erect the lamp poles starting from the east. The following should avoid this ceremony: 59-year olds, for whom the day is not suitable as well as those who are 43 years old, for whom the hour is unsuitable.
5. Report the lamp poles	Choose perfect time of 9 am to 11 am on October 16th of the lunar calendar. The following should avoid this ceremony: 55-year olds, for whom the day is not suitable as well as those who are 57 years old, for whom the hour is unsuitable.
6. Annunciate the altar	Choose October 16th of the lunar calendar in 2015. Invite the gods from all cities and towns in Taiwan to sit at the altar.
7. Place ritual lamps	Choose October 16th of the lunar calendar in 2015. Reverently place each bucket lamp.
8. Keep the fast	Choose the time from 11 pm on October 1st to 11 am on November 1st of the lunar calendar in 2015. During this period, worshipers fast and eat a vegetarian diet to express sincerity and purity.
9. Avoid mountains and water	Starting from 11 pm on October 24th of the lunar calendar, worshipers are forbidden to slaughter animals, hunt, fish, trap, curse, or scold; rather they should be solemn to show respect and sincerity.
10. Announce opening of Jianjiao	Choose perfect time from 5 am on October 24th of the lunar calendar. With the beating of drums, the procession enters the Jianjiao venue from the eastside of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple. The following should avoid this ceremony: 47-year olds, for whom the day is not suitable as well as those who are 83 years old, for whom the hour is unsuitable.
11. Launch water lanterns	Choose perfect time from 5 pm on October 27th of the lunar calendar. Launch water lanterns from the northwest. The following should avoid this ceremony: 44-year olds, for whom the day is not suitable as well as those who are 41 years old, for whom the hour is unsuitable.

Note. Source: Compiled by author.

The Yiwei Yuanheng Lizhen Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao created a glorious page in Taiwan's religious history. It was equivalent to Luo Tian Dajiao, a prayer ceremony for the whole nation's populace in ancient times. The ritual can recommend release for lonely spirits, and all participants receive good blessings in their lives. Details of the Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao are described in the following sub-sections.

Inspiration for Holding Luo Tian Dajiao

By 2015, the Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple had grown mightily from its inception in a corner of a residence to its 45th anniversary to become the largest faith center of Golden Mother of the Jade Pond in Taipei as well as one of the major temples in Taiwan with devotees distributed throughout Taiwan and many places overseas. Founder and Temple Master Kuo, Yeh-Tzu said, "Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple has overcome countless trials and tribulations during 45 years of development to grow and thrive with the support of worshipers from all walks of life, reaching the scale of the 45th anniversary". The Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao was held not only to pray for the Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple and the worshipers. It also elevated the significance of Jianjiao to the lofty vision of praying for the whole populace and recommending release for all lonely spirits. This Jianjiao attained the highest merit by carrying out traditional religious ceremonies.

Goal of Holding Luo Tian Dajiao

1. Promote traditional Taoist culture; pray for the country and society

This Jian Jiao was held for the 45th anniversary celebration to pass down Taoist Jianjiao culture and pray for the country and society.

2. Promote Jianjiao Taoist culture and pass it on to future generations

Promote the traditional culture of Jianjiao, affirm the traditional cultural assets of Taoism, and pass them down to future generations.

3. Combine the power of public and family education with Jianjiao

Combine education of the general public and family education with the strength of Jianjiao to enhance culture and cultural exchanges.

Planning for Jianjiao and Activities of the 45th Anniversary

1. Jianjiao and celebration activities

Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple celebrated its 45th anniversary with Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao as well as a series of arts and cultural activities in order to promote traditional Chinese culture and increase exchanges among various religions.

2. Organizer and co-organizer

Organizers: Taipei City Government, Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple

Co-organizers: Taipei Fude Elementary School

Various folk culture groups

Various social groups

3. Jianjiao time and venue

(1) Dates: December 5-11, 2015

(2) Venue: Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple

Jianjiao and Activities of 45th Anniversary Program

1. Blessing and praise of Jianjiao

- Invite leader of the Republic of China to serve as the officiant and leader of government office to serve as the deputy officiant

- Invite representatives of religious organizations from various countries to send delegates to perform and observe the ceremony

(1) Dharma Rain Descends

Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple Yiwei Yuanheng Lizhen Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao

(2) Incense Salute

a. Procession around the territory

b. Devotees from all temples in Taiwan join in the worship

c. Chanting for the single gods in the Golden Mother of the Jade Pond Temple

d. Chanting for other gods, palaces and temples

2. Series of cultural activities

Cultural and literary activities held at Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple.

(1) The 6th Meeting of the 5th Session of the Taiwan Temple Golden Orchid Club

(2) Respectfully receive the ancestor spirit of the God of Wealth of Xi'an to visit Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple for three days as the first stop of the Taiwan patrol

(3) Calligraphy competition

(4) Sketching competition

(5) Hokkien (Southern Min dialect) speech contest

(6) Procession to pray for peace

(7) Welcome party

a. Welcome representatives of religious groups from all over the world

b. Recognize people and groups who have contributed to the celebration

(8) Breaking ground for Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple Yiwei Yuanheng Lizhen Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao hosted by Temple Master Kuo, Yeh-Tzuon October 11, 2015, as Figure 8

(9) Cross-strait Taoism Symposium

(10) 6th International Forum on Golden Mother of the Jade Pond (Queen Mother of the West) Belief and Culture



Figure 8. Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao groundbreaking and related rituals. Source: Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple.

The origin of this Forum was the birthday of the Golden Mother of the Jade Pond on July 18th of the lunar calendar in 2005. The first Queen Mother of the West Cross-Strait Cultural Forum was held in the ancestral

temple in Huishan of Jingchuan County in Gansu, China. From that time on, it has been held alternately on both sides of the strait every two years. Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple was honored by the 5th Forum to be nominated by devotees from all walks of life on both sides of the strait to host the 6th Forum. As it coincided with the 45th Anniversary Celebration in 2015, the scope was expanded to be an international forum. The 8th Queen Mother of the West Cross-Strait Cultural Forum in 2019 was also hosted by Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple.

Distinctions Between Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao and Ordinary Jianjiao

The main distinctions between Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao and general Jianjiao are scope, length, and elaborateness. For the Qingjiao, 1,200 holy thrones were set up as recommended points of offering. The range of gods invited and worshipped is larger than that of general Jianjiao, more ritual altars are established, and the number of day ranges from three to five days, with 49 days being the grandest as pictured in Figure 8.

Hosting and Announcing Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao

The 45th anniversary of the establishment of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple in 2015 coincided with the 4,712th year of the Tao calendar. Temple Master Kuo initiated the construction of Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao by Queen Mother's decree to set up 12 altars for worshipping the gods of heaven and earth according to the specifications of Luo Tian Dajiao. Incense was lit concurrently at each altar; the altars were proclaimed open for individual proclamations and prayers; and the gods were thanked at the same time on the perfect day. The grand ceremonies performed 12-fold for seven days and nights at the same time exceeded the scope of 49-day period of Luo Tian Dajiao.

More than 1,000 well-known Gaogongs (those possessing high merit), Taozhang (dignitary of the Tao), and Taoshi (priests) from Taiwan and abroad presided over the ceremony. This was a rare event in the Taoist circle of Chinese society. Three famous Taoist masters from Taiwan served as ceremony hosts: Master Lee You-kun of Zhengyi School of Taoism Danxinzong Altar chief, as shown in Figure 9, Taozhang Lin Yuan-qi of Zhenxing Taoist Temple, and Taozhang Ma Li-ling of Chanhe School. Well-known Taoist groups were invited from various countries to participate, including: Chinese Tsunglin Wudang Mountain Taoist Association, Jiangxi Gezaoshan Taoist Group and Hong Kong Taoist Federation, Malaysia Chihui Tang KL, Guangdong Yuxing Palace, Philippine Dao De Gong Temple, and other Taiwan Taoist groups came to host the altar rituals.



Figure 9. Master Li Youkun of Taiwan's Danxinzong Altar presided at the ceremony. Source: Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple.

Regulations for 12 Altars of Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao

The Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao is a grand Taoist undertaking that includes 12 altars over seven days. High priests and masters from around the world gathered at the Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple to complete this ceremony.

1. Unlimited Palace of Enlightenment Peace Altar

(1) Enshrined: Golden Mother of the Jade Pond, Jade Emperor God, Mother Lord of the Earth, and all the gods of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple.

(2) Appointed Ritual Leader: Taiwan Zhengyi School of Taoism, founder of Danxin Zhongtan, Lee You-kun, presided.

(3) Purpose: expel evil, eliminate natural disasters and human harm, bless society, and protect the safety of the country and the people.

2. Universal Altar for Kings and National Affairs

(1) Enshrined: Golden Mother of the Jade Pond, the Three Emperors and Five Kings, Xuantian Grand King, the gods of the surnamed temples and the plague gods, with 3,600 sacred star thrones set up.

(2) Appointed Ritual Leader: Great master of the Wudang Taoist Association of Hubei Province in China presided.

(3) Purpose: eliminate plague and disease.

3. Vital Energy Cycle Altar (Water and Fire Altars to Defer and Protect)

(1) Enshrined: Golden Mother of the Jade Pond, Sun God, Lunar God, Four Rivers Dragon God, Water God, Fire God, with 2,400 star thrones set up.

(2) Appointed Ritual Leader: Taoist Federation (Singapore) Lorong Koo Chye Sheng Hong Temple Jing Musical society presided.

(3) Purpose: protect from floods and fires.

4. Luo Tian Altar for Seeking Blessings

(1) Enshrined: Jade Emperor God, Four Guides, Emperor Tian, Emperor Ziwei, Emperor Changsheng, Emperor Qinghua, with 1,200 star thrones set up.

(2) Appointed Ritual Leader: Highest master from Hezaoshan of Jiangxi Province in China presided.

(3) Purpose: pray for gods to bless people with peace.

5. Supreme Profound Spirit Nine Emperor Gods Altar

(1) Enshrined: Golden Mother of the Jade Pond, Mother Dipper, Lord of Northern Dipper and Guardian Dipper God.

(2) Appointed Ritual Leader: Hong Kong Taoist Association presided.

(3) Purpose: master of Jianjiao prays for the glory of souls, to increase blessing and longevity, protect life with safety, and avoid disasters.

6. Set up Golden Dragon First Wish Altar

(1) Enshrined: Golden Mother of the Jade Pond, Three Officials Emperor, Martial Wealth God, with 360 heavenly thrones set up.

(2) Appointed: Daoist Lin Yuanqi of Zhenxing Taoist Temple and Zhiwei Taoist Temple presided.

(3) Purpose: commit to be vegetarian, repent of sins, and bless with peace.

7. Emerald Tablet Qingchengjiao (Thanksgiving Celebration of Completion) Altar

(1) Enshrined: Golden Mother of the Jade Pond, Jade Emperor God, Mother Lord of the Earth, Great Emperor Jiuli of Tufu; this altar of the Jiao is listed as holy.

(2) Appointed Ritual Leader: Chihui Tang KL (Malaysia) presided.

(3) Purpose: pay respects and thanks to the Earth God for the temples, bridge piers and new buildings completed.

8. Amber Tablet Refuge Altar

(1) Enshrined: Six Screen Thrones for the Amber Tablet Fast.

(2) Appointed Ritual Leader: Daoist Chanhe School in Taiwan, Ma Li-ling presided.

(3) Purpose: cultivating souls with heavenly alms.

9. Salvation from Suffering Altar

(1) Enshrined: East Pole Qingxuan God, Lord Taiyi of Salvation, Ten Halls of Hades.

(2) Appointed Ritual Leader: Chanters of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple presided.

(3) Purpose: pray for relief for those in the Netherworld.

10. Main Pu Jiao Altar Patterned after the Emperor Liang Altar

(1) Enshrined: Five Sages' Thrones.

(2) Appointed Ritual Leader: Yongfan School Master Yuan Zang presided.

(3) Purpose: pray for relief and transcending of ghosts, as well as to retrieve increased blessing, wisdom, and peace for all believers.

11. Blessing Altar

(1) Enshrined: The holy places listed on the altar are throughout the large cities and small towns of Taiwan, such as Lady of Heaven, Emperor Guan Sheng, Master Ji Gong, and many more. Based on the sentiment of celebrating all gods and shared Pudu, the gods gather blessings and welcome auspiciousness, and the lucky stars illuminate the people.

(2) Appointed Ritual Leader: Various Taoist groups presided at this altar.

(3) Purpose: pray for the gods to bless Taiwan and benefit the whole world. When a great master is performing Taoist rituals in Taiwan, local deities will not be invited to the altar. However, these local deities are usually the spiritual pillars and belief centers of the people, as in the holy places listed on the altar. Thus, this "Taiwan Cultural Belief Blessing Altar" was specially created for this Jiao.

12. Jianjiao Altar

(1) Purpose: invite deities enshrined in temples and homes across the country to come together to reflect this Jiao.

(2) Appointed Ritual Leader: Various Taoist groups presided.

The temples in Taiwan and from abroad sent tribute in the form of members of their societies setting up auspicious blessings, best wishes, and good fortune talismans, as shown in Figure 10. The various Taoist groups cultivated at Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple recited the classic sutras together to make this altar even more successful.

(3) Diety Respect

a. This altar provided a place for dieties from various temples or believers' homes to participate in the Jianjiao. Those who wished to participate registered with Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple Service Center by phone, letter, or in person. The registering unit, sacred number, and specifications are required as a reference for arranging places setting for the dieties; applications were accepted until the registration was full.

b. Those deities participating in the Jianjiao Diety Respect Altar were enshrined on the altar from December 1 and the seating ceremony was held on December 5, 2015.

c. Dieties must be righteous gods. If the dieties who come to show respect have gold medals, ritual artifacts, mirror frames, or other utensils, they must be kept by themselves.

d. After the dieties participating in showing respect were set in their places on the Altar, Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple draped them with red ribbons.

e. The farewell ceremony was held on December 11, 2015, in which the masters of all temples were invited to participate. Within one week after the completion of this Jianjiao, the sacred number cards issued were used to claim the dieties who participated in this altar.



Figure 10. Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao's Diety Respect Altar. Source: Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple.

Conclusion

Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple grew out of nothing more than half a century ago. Presently, it is not only the largest Golden Mother of the Jade Pond temple in Taipei but also one of the great temples in Taiwan. It is also famous on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, having enjoyed splendid achievements of development over these 50 years. Founder Kuo, Yeh-Tzu has long promoted the Queen Mother's spirit of compassion and charity, and organized many large activities to promote the Queen Mother's sacred deeds, motivating worshipers to follow her and promote all manner of religious activities. This has attracted many people to convert to belief in Queen Mother and to join the ranks of volunteers. Their joint effort has developed Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple from a family-style temple during its inception period into faith center for Golden Mother of the Jade Pond Taoism.

During the 1990 pilgrimage of more than 200 worshipers from all over Taiwan organized by Temple Master Kuo to visit the ancestral temples of Queen Mother of the West in China, she vowed to rebuild the Queen Mother's ancestral temples of Gansu's Queen Mother Palace, which was completed as she desired. Temple Master Kuo was instructed by Golden Mother of the Jade Pond to create Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple; she has the supernatural ability to communicate with Queen Mother. When the spirit of the Queen Mother moves the worshipers, they become increasingly devout and enthusiastic to participate in carrying forward the holy cause of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple.

In celebration of the 45th anniversary of Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple in December 2015, a seven-day Yiwei Yuanheng Lizhen Daluo Tiandi Qingjiao was held. This was the grandest Taoist ceremony held in centuries and an unprecedented religious event for the Queen Mother faith in Taiwan since 1949. Sung Shan Tsu Huei Temple is committed to promote the faith of Golden Mother of the Jade Pond and inspire believers of all ages to participate in its various holy activities. This amazing cohesion of religious sentiment, in the practice of mutual affirmation and belief, allows the love of Queen Mother to continue forever.

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