

Revitalizing Confucianism 舞動儒風

古禮祭典

Display, Presentation, and Experience -
Ancient Sacrificial Rites to Confucius

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CONFUCIUS TEMPLE

Time:
Tuesday to Sunday from 8:30 am to 9:00 pm
Closed on Monday.

Taipei Confucius Temple (No. 275, Datong St., Datong District, Taipei City)

Website: www.ct.taipei.gov.tw

Tel: 886-2-25923934



Organizer: Taipei City Government

Executive Organizers: Department of Civil Affairs, Taipei City Government,
Taipei Confucius Temple Governing Board

臺北市孔廟
Taipei Confucius Temple

廣告

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CONFUCIUS TEMPLE

Zhu Xi, the Confucianist of Southern Song Dynasty, praised Confucius by saying, "Thousand years of history would be like a long dark night without Confucius."

In the critical time known as the "period of spring and autumn annals," the country was in a state of moral chaos. Confucius, who was at the age of fifty-five in 497 B.C., called for his disciples to turn the key and unlock the world of knowledge and attempted to revive the culture to match the glory of the past. In the next 14 years, Confucius travelled around six states. The teaching principle, *Education for All*, encapsulates the past 2500 years of Chinese culture and heritage while paving the way for the Confucian culture of tomorrow. Through Confucius, knowledge becomes an upward force that has helped to move the world for thousands of years, and will continue to do so in the future.

Temple architecture in China represents the doctrines and systems of rites, cultural features, and the younger generations' respect to the former sages. The Taipei Confucius Temple, situated in the north and faced toward the south, is an architectural construction combining the style of Qufu Confucius Temple and southern Fujianese architecture. In 1925, Huang Zan-Jun, Chen Pei-Ken, Koo Hsien-Jung and others advocated the reconstruction and renovation of the Taipei Confucius Temple and went asking for over 200 donations from the gentry and merchants. In 1930, Confucius Ceremony was celebrated in Taipei for the first time in over thirty years. After 14 years of construction, the temple was finished in 1939.

Confucius has long been recognized in China for his unparalleled contribution to the ancient Chinese classic studies. Take with you an affectionate attachment for the great sage when you journey through the Confucius Temple, at the same time you will receive the cultural blessing from Confucianism!

1

WANREN GONGQIANG (WALL OF SUPREME KNOWLEDGE)

The origin of this wall comes from *The Analects of Confucius*, "Tzu Kung said, our master's wall raises many times a man's height. If one does not find the door and enter by it, one can not see the ancestral temple in its beauty." Therefore, the Wall of Supreme Knowledge is where you start your journey through the Taipei Confucius Temple. The characters "Wanren Gongqiang" were inscribed by Kong De-cheng, the 77th generation descendant of Confucius.



2

ENTERING PAN GONG (SIDE GATE) AND HONG GATE (GATE OF LEARNING); FOLLOWING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND RITES

"Pan Gong" and "Hong Gate" were both names of institutes of learning in ancient times. The Pan Gong on the east or Hong Gate on the west side, are both gate towers of the double eaves type with rising ridges in "swallow-tail" style. Thus it was implied that all who entered would start their learning in Confucian's school.

To show respect to the great sage, all who enter the temple must follow the Yi Lu (Path of Righteousness) on the east and the Li Gate (Gate of Rites) on the west side, rather than by the main gate. It symbolizes that the first lesson to take is to follow the righteousness and rites.



NEXT TO THE PAN POND, REFLECTING A CHINESE UNICORN

On the inside of the "Wanren Gongqiang" is painted a colorful Chinese unicorn. According to legend, the Chinese unicorn "Qilin" is a gentle beast that heralds the birth of Confucius. Thus, in the old days, a talented son was called the son of Qilin. Here on this wall, the Chinese unicorn is shown standing with its four legs above four treasures—scrolls for cultivated minds, an official seal for great official careers, and a gourd and an auspicious plant, symbolizing good luck and peace. The wall where the Qilin is painted is made so as to reflect and absorb the rays of the sun and the moon, a typical feature of southern Fujianese architecture.

The "Pan Pond" is an architectural element unique to Confucius Temples, meaning "the water of Pan Gong Gate." Over the Pan Pond arches the stone Pan Bridge. The bridge balustrades on each side are carved like bamboo, and with pillar heads between the balustrades carved in the shape of brush tops. These beautiful designs symbolize noble character, incorruptible principles and prospering literature. It was believed that such ponds could prevent disasters as well as reduce the summer heat and constitute good geomancy.



4

THROUGH THE LINGXING GATE; REACHING THE HIGHEST LITERARY HONORS



"Lingxing" is the star sign for success in literature or writing. It was said that in ancient times only the scholar who got the first place in the civil service examinations could walk through the Pan Bridge, Lingxing Gate and Yi Gate, and straight into the Dacheng Hall to worship Confucius.

The Lingxing Gate of the Taipei Confucius Temple adopts its roof in the hip-and-gable style with double eaves, which makes it look like a palace. In this respect, it is completely different from the Qu Fu Confucius Temple. Unusually, no guardian deities were painted on the doors; instead, 108 decorative studs protrude from the wood. This method which follows ancient rites is to show respect to the great sage. The number of the studs on the doors, together with the Eight Diagrams painted on the beams inside of the door is used to expel devils and protect the temple.

There are no couplets or inscriptions on the sides of the gate, for one dare not flaunt one's writings before Confucius. On the sides of the middle gate, there lies a pair of drum-shaped bearing stones. These stones are used as buffer to the counterforce of the door when it is being moved inwards or outwards. Their silent existence can be seen as a metaphor for guarding and protecting one's house.

The carved stone pillars used in the corridor are all made of Quan Zhou white stone. The carving shows the lively patterns of coiled dragons moving upward from the bottom. Besides the dragon, there are also all kinds of flower and bird patterns in a simple style that brings out the gracefulness of the Confucius Temple.

The exterior walls of the side gates are decorated with Cochin pottery, which shows one of the Mingnan features of Taipei Confucius Temple. The pottery works show two scenes: "Confucius's talking about the rules of rites with Laozi, the Old Master of Daoism" and "Confucius's learning from a prodigy called Xiang Tuo."



5

JING SHENG AND YU ZHEN - PRAYING FOR GOOD LUCK



Yi Gate, as the main entrance to the Da Cheng Temple, is also called the Da Cheng Gate. It is flanked by the Jing Sheng Door on the left and the Yu Zhen Door on the right, which are used on normal days. The main gate is closed in respect of Confucius, and is only open during the time of sacrificial rites.

On each side of the walls of Yi Gate, there is a figurine of a military general made in Cochin pottery. The general on the left holds a flag and Qing, which forms meaning of good luck; the one on the right holds a flag and a ball, signifying praying. Apart from generals, there are flowers from four seasons, symbolizing peace and well-being. Eight hornless dragons outlining the shape of a censer are carved on the doors, which are objects of auspiciousness. The carving is refined and recognized as a masterpiece.

Entering Yi Gate, you will see a Yong bell and a Jin drum placed next to each side of the gate. These are musical instruments used in the Confucius ceremony, making sounds of auspiciousness and peacefulness.



6

MASTER WITH GREAT ACHIEVEMENT - EDUCATION FOR ALL

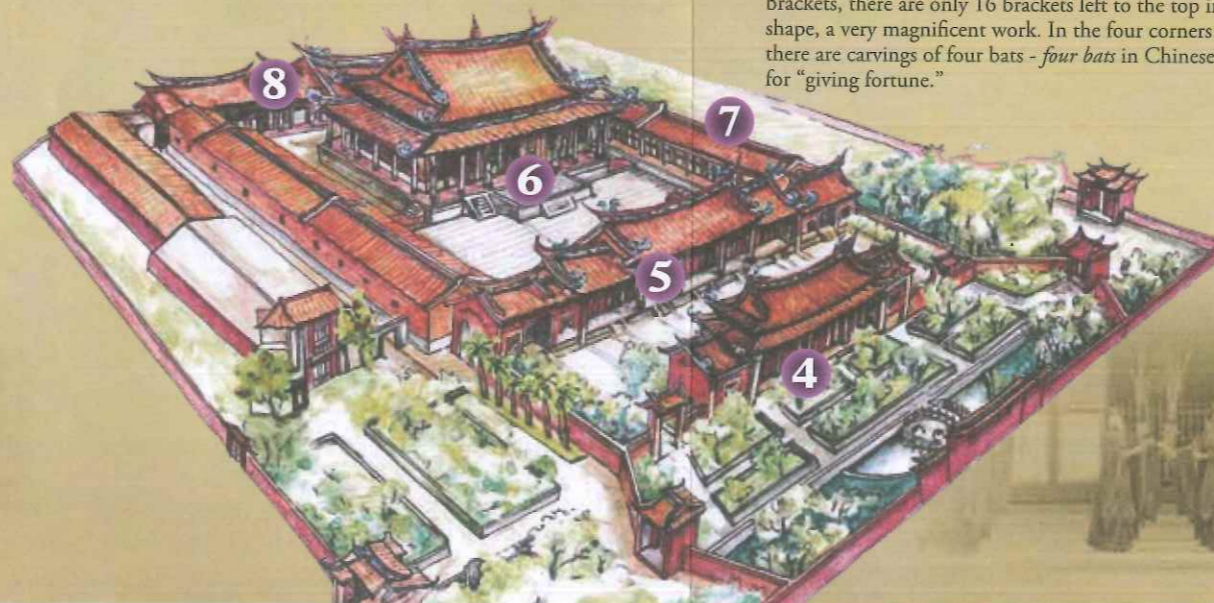


The Dacheng Hall, meaning "Great Achievement," is the main building of Confucius temple. The name comes from Hui emperor (Zhao Ji) of the Song dynasty who once praised Confucius as "the great sage of outstanding achievements." On the ridge of the Hall you will find there is a seven-story pagoda in the middle, used to suppress evils, a cylinder-like objects sit at both ends, known as Tong Tian Pillars, and 72 clay owls adorn the roof ridge, representing the accomplishment of Confucius' teaching philosophy - *Education for All*. All these decorations are unique to Confucius Temples.

Situated in the central courtyard, the Dacheng Hall of Taipei Confucius Temple is built with corridors on all four sides, together with 42 huge pillars made of Quan Zhou white stone. These pillars, which carry only simple carving and no special patterns, show Confucius' character as humble and unadorned. In front of the Dacheng Hall is a platform called the Dan Chi, where, during the Confucius ceremony, the musicians stand and young boys perform the Yi Dance. In front of the Dan Chi there is the imperial road, on which is carved the cloud dragon, whose spirit is admirably captured by the craftsman in the delicately carved head.

The Tablet of Confucius is placed in the sanctuary in the middle of the Dacheng Hall. The black tablet on which President Chiang Kai-shek wrote in gold: "Education for All" is hung on the upper beam. While in the middle there is a tablet on which our present President Ma Ying-jeou wrote in year 2008: "Gracious virtue in Confucius' teachings." On the left and right walls are the shrines of "Fu Saint" Yenzi, "Shu Saint" Zisi Zi, "Zong Saint" Zengzi, the "Lesser Sage" Mencius, and the Twelve Philosophers.

In the ceiling above the hall is an octagonal plafond, and there are 24 brackets concentrated in the center. After four layers of eaves brackets, there are only 16 brackets left to the top in a radiation shape, a very magnificent work. In the four corners of the plafond there are carvings of four bats - *four bats* in Chinese is a homonym for "giving fortune."

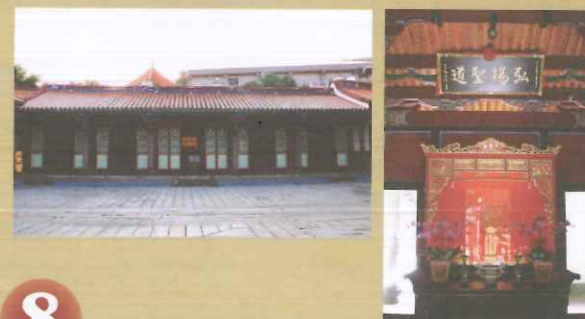


7

EAST AND WEST SIDE-BUILDINGS, HONG DAO SHRINE

The East and West Side-buildings are symmetrically located on either side of the Dacheng Hall. With lower roofs, they are like the side rooms of an ancient house. These two side-buildings, together with the Dacheng Hall and the Yi Gate, form the central part of the Confucius Temple. The rows of pillars in the corridor are carved in a simple style, no inscription nor scroll, giving a strong sense of rhythm. The eaves brackets of these two rooms also have lively patterns of hornless dragons that show the beauty of Southern Chinese architecture. The idol niches inside them accommodate the 154 scholars and outstanding students of Confucius who have made great contributions in promoting Confucianism.

Da Longdong in the old times was a place with a thriving and active literary atmosphere and known for having the most of successful candidates in the civil service exams. One such example was Mr. Chen Wei-Ying who achieved the second best result in the imperial exam in the province in 1895. In the following years, Mr. Chen Wei-Ying taught with great distinction in many colleges in different parts of Taiwan, and he became an important contributor to education in Taiwan. On September 23rd, 2006, Mr. Chen Wei-Ying was included among spirits of former Confucianists to be venerated in Hong Dao Shrine. He is the first local teacher to be included since the last enshrinement of former Confucianists in 1919.



8

THE CHONGSHENG SHRINE - OFFERING SACRIFICES TO REMOTE ANCESTORS

The layout of Confucius temples can be very similar to that of a clan ancestral temple. The Chongsheng Shrine is five rooms wide, with the east and west wings housing ceremonial objects and musical instruments, and currently used as display room and media center. According to the Chinese clan system that have prevailed in China for several thousand years, the Chongsheng Shrine is where five generations of Confucius' ancestors have been venerated, including his brother, the fathers of his four sages, and the fathers of Confucian scholars of later dynasties.

