

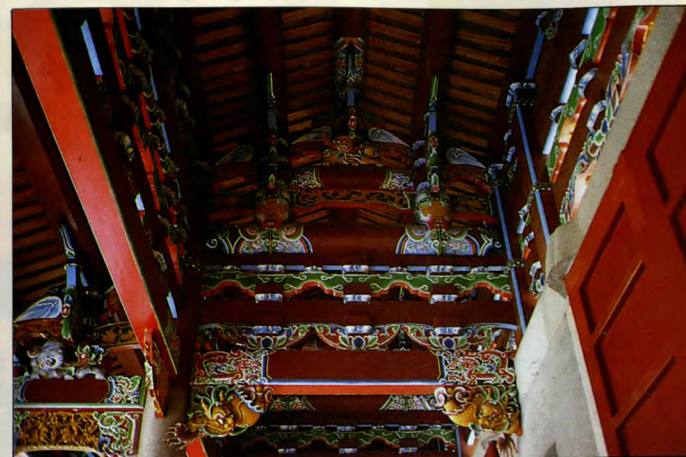
While the Confucius Temple at Talungtung is the one reconstructed in the 1930s, the people of Taipei have continually respected the teachings of Confucius all the while -- before, during and after the Japanese era. This is something we should keep in mind when we visit the Confucius Temple in Taipei.

II. The Architecture of the Taipei Confucius Temple

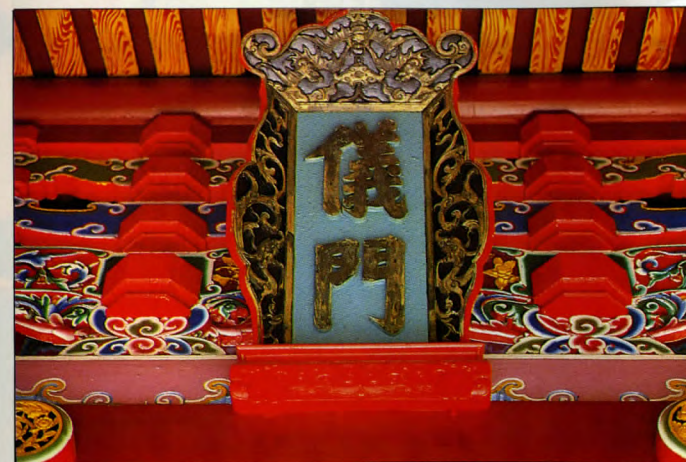
In 1927, during the period of the reconstruction of the Taipei Confucius Temple, the blue prints drawn up were very thorough and well considered, allowing for future adaptation. The main architectural structures along the central axis, starting from the front, were the Wan Jen Palace Wall, the Pan Pond, the Ling Hsing Gate, the Yi Gate, the Ta Cheng Hall and the Tsung Sheng Shrine. To the east were the East Room and the East Storehouse and to the west were the West Room and the West Storehouse. And in the open space on the left, the Minglun Hall was planned

(17) The Ling Hsing Gate has several layers of beams to ensure its soundness. There are stone sea-tortoises under the main beam with lion and elephant carvings, which symbolically carry the weight of the roof on their backs.

(18) The Yi Gate is located in front of the Ta Cheng Hall and is sometimes called the Ta Cheng Gate. The Yi Gate is open only on worshipping days. The Chinsheng Door on the left and the Yuchang Door on the right are the doors for everyday use.



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for the front and the Chu Tzu Shrine, whose upper floor was intended to be the temple for worshipping Chu Tzu and Wenchang, and whose lower floor was intended to form a library, was planned for the back. The open space on the right was planned as a martial temple dedicated to the worship of Kuan Yu. At the back a tall temple for the worshipping of the god of literature was planned to be built. There are precedents for having the literary and the martial temples stand side by side and also building a Chu Tzu Shrine and a Kuei Tower that has a Taoist character. The Confucius Temple of Tainan is the oldest and largest of the Confucius temples on Taiwan, and it contains the Minglun Hall, Chu Tzu Shrine and the pavilion for the god of Literature. But because of insufficient funding, at the Taipei Confucius Temple the four architectural structures to the left and right sides of the main buildings have yet to be built. In the original vast and complete plans drafted by the master craftsman Wang Yi-shun, one can see that beyond the Wan Jen Palace Wall are the Blue Cloud Wall and the Dismounting the Horse Stone Tablet, but these were not built.

At the temple today, the open space in the east courtyard was the space for the construction of Minglun Hall and Chu Tzu Shrine. And in the west courtyard, after the retrocession of Taiwan, the Minglun Hall was built. This is a modern concrete structure which is used for meetings.

1. The Hung Gate, Pan Palace, Wan Jen Palace Wall, Li Gate, Yi Path and Pan Pond

- (19) *The roof of the Yi Gate is in a double-eaved style; the curves of the ridge are plentiful and varied.*
- (20) *The Yi Gate is as wide as five normal sized rooms. There are walkways in the front, and the stone pillars are in octagonal shapes, slim and simple. The rows of stone pillars have a strong rhythm to them.*



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Now let us enjoy the following architectural structures of the temple: the Hung Gate, Pan Palace, Wan Jen Palace Wall, Li Gate, Yi Path and Pan Pond.

The Hung Gate and Pan Palace are at the main entrance of the temple, on the right and left respectively. In some Confucius temples, these are made into an honorific arch or in the form of a tower above and a gate below. The Hung Gate (west gate) and Pan Palace (east gate) are both gate towers of the double eaves type, with a "swallow-tail" ridge and a middle that opens up as an arch with circular windows at either side. From Talung Street you can see its beautiful exterior appearance.

From Chiuchuan Street to the south of the temple, one can see a high wall immediately outside the front door. This is the Wan Jen Palace Wall, necessary for any Confucius temple. The origin of this wall comes from *The Analects of Confucius*, "Tzu Kung said, our master's wall rises many times a man's height, and no one who is not let in by the gate can know the beauty and wealth of the palace that, with its ancestral temple and hundred ministrants, lies hidden within. But it must be admitted that those who are let in by the gate are few." This means that Confucius' knowledge and morals are very deep. If one wants to learn, there is no short cut; one can only go through the Hung Gate or the Pan Palace, which are both ancient institutions of learning. One must study with all-out effort to reach an advanced stage of learning.

The four characters "Wan Jen Palace Wall" were written on the outside wall of the temple. On the inside, a Chinese unicorn was painted. In Chinese legend the unicorn is a gentle beast, and heralds the birth of a talented son. In the old days, the Chinese unicorn was painted not only on the Wan Jen Palace Walls of

(21) The carved wooden windows of the Yi Gate are called "hornless dragon encircling a censer" windows. The pattern is like a censer which is composed of eight hornless dragons.





(22) A human figure raises up a water lily in this carving on the stone wall of the Ling Hsing Gate. It symbolizes the raising of the roof. In the history of Taiwan temples, there are often carvings of barbarians raising the roof.



(23) A "Chinese unicorn carries the sun" decoration, made of colorful tiles and plaster, stands in the middle of the ridge of the Ling Hsing Gate.



(24) The little stone lions in the corners of the eaves of the Ling Hsing Gate are said to have the power to drive away evils. The lion is also an auspicious animal, as in the saying "the auspicious lion brings good fortune."



(25) The Kuchi pottery decoration in the wall of the walkway of the Yi Gate is a kind of low-fired pottery. Noted for its colorful glaze, the pottery can be shaped into human figures, horses and pagodas and inlaid in the wall. Such decorations often tell stories from Chinese classic historical novels as symbolic versions of Chinese opera performances staged to thank the gods.



Confucius temples. Other temples and government offices also often had Chinese unicorns painted on the walls immediately outside their front doors. From this one can see that the painting of Chinese unicorns has a long and well established tradition.

After passing through the Hung Gate, one will have to go through the Li Gate to get to the Ling Hsing Gate and Pan Pond. The Li Gate and Yi Path are on the left and right of the main buildings of the Confucius Temple and form the main entrances of the main buildings. The designs of these two doors are simple and there is only one door involved.

The Pan Pond is in the shape of a half moon and is located between the Ling Hsing Gate and Wan Jen Palace Wall. Half-moon shaped ponds were often placed in front of houses or temples in ancient times. They were thought to prevent disasters as well as reducing the summer heat and constituting good geomancy. Besides the above-mentioned functions, the Pan Pond in front of the Confucius Temple also means the water of Pan Palace, that is, the pond of the school.

There is a three-arch stone bridge, the Pan Bridge, over the Pan Pond of the Taipei Confucius Temple. The bridge is arched like a rainbow and the balustrades on each side are carved like bamboo. Pillar heads between the balustrades are carved in the shape of brush tops. They are more than pretty; they also symbolize noble character, incorruptible principles and prospering literature. They are well worth looking at carefully.

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- (26) By comparing carefully, you will find the wooden structure on the left is different from the one on the right in the Yi Gate. There were often competitions between teams of craftsmen while building temples in the old days. Please note the different styles of the hornless dragons on the brackets.
- (27) The East Room. Inside the East and the West Rooms are the tablets of ancient sages who have contributed to the study of Confucian thought.
- (28) When looking at the East Room from the roof of the West Room, one can see that the ridges of the East and the West Rooms are simple and slope gently.



There is an interesting story about the Pan Bridge over the Pan Pond. It is said that in ancient times the residents of any place which had once produced a scholar who placed first in the civil service examinations presided over by the emperor could walk through the Pan Bridge, Ling Hsing Gate and Yi Gate and into the Ta Cheng Hall to worship Confucius. But there are some Confucius temples that are built without a Pan Bridge.

2. Ling Hsing Gate

After the Pan Pond, one goes around the garden and arrives at the Ling Hsing Gate. Originally there were only stone floors and lawns in the Taipei Confucius Temple; the gardens were added on later.

A Ling Hsing Gate is necessary for any Confucius temple and it is placed in the front. In the Chufu Confucius Temple, for example, the Ling Hsing Gate is built like an honorific arch. The Ling Hsing Gate of the Confucius Temple in Changhua, Southern Taiwan, has a roof and is like a tower with a gate underneath. The Ling Hsing Gate of the Taipei Confucius Temple is as wide as seven normal sized rooms, and its roof is in the hip-and-gable style which makes it look like a Buddhist or Taoist temple. In this respect, it is completely different from the Chufu Confucius Temple.

In the middle of the entrance of the Ling Hsing Gate, there is a pair of beautiful coiled dragon stone pillars. Most of the stone materials used to build these were brought over from Chuanchow. We can see two kinds of stone. The one colored blue-green is called Chingtou stone, while the ivory color one is called Chuanchow

(29) The Kochi pottery decoration in the wall of the walkway of the Yi Gate is of flowers in a vase. The composition is simple and the colors are elegant.



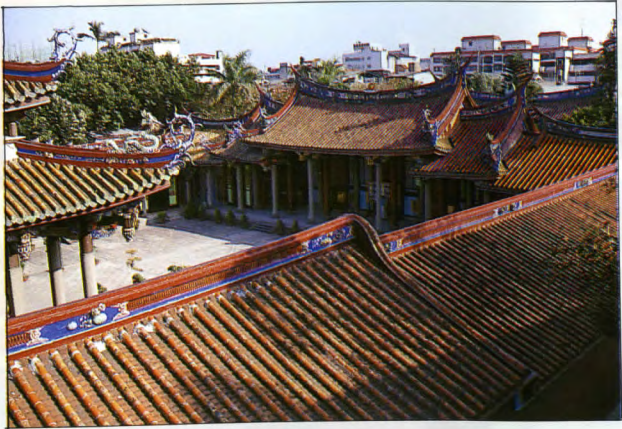
white stone. Besides the dragon stone pillars, there are all kinds of stone carvings with flower and bird patterns. The carvings are all in a simple style that brings out the gracefulness of the Confucius Temple.

The Ling Hsing Gate of a Confucius temple does not have door gods painted on it. In this respect it is very different from a Buddhist temple, which have the four guardians of the world painted on the doors, or a Taoist temple, which have Shen-shu and Yü-lü on them. As was the ancient fashion of making doors, the inside of the door of the Ling Hsing Gate has one hundred and eight protruding door studs. Moreover, if we compare the wooden structures of the Ling Hsing Gate and the Ta Cheng Hall carefully, we will find that the styles of the carvings are different. This is because when the Ling Hsing Gate was being built, Wang Yi-shun, the designer of the temple, had already gone back to Chuanchow, where he died. The Ling Hsing Gate was completed by local craftsmen.

3. Yi Gate

After one goes through the Ling Hsing Gate, one approaches the Yi Gate. The Yi Gate is also called the Ta Cheng Gate and is the main door to the Ta Cheng Hall. The Yi Gate is as wide as five normal-sized rooms and there are doors on the left and right. This kind of design is identical to the Chufu Confucius Temple. On its left is the Chinsheng Door and on the right is the Yuchen Door,

- (30) Interior of the West Room. The materials for the frame of the house are simpler and there are fewer carvings. Inside the idol niche are the tablets of ancient Confucian followers and sages.
- (31) The brackets under the eave of the East Room. In the Southern-Fukienese style the brackets are often decorated as hornless dragons. They look flowing and decorative.
- (32) View of the magnificent eaves of the Yi Gate and the Ta Cheng Hall from above the West Room.





(33) In the Confucius ceremony, three types of sacrificial offerings are presented in the Ta Cheng Hall.



(34) The Ta Cheng Hall, the center building of a Confucius temple, is where the tablet of Confucius is placed. An impressively inscribed wooden tablet is hung above the door.



(35) The front of the Ta Cheng Hall. There is a seven-story pagoda in the center of the ridge which is said to have the power of driving away evils. The cylinders on both sides are said to look like bamboo cylinders, which in the past helped to preserve books.



(36) Looking at the Ta Cheng Hall from afar. Its double-eaved style roof is very grand.

which are used on normal days.

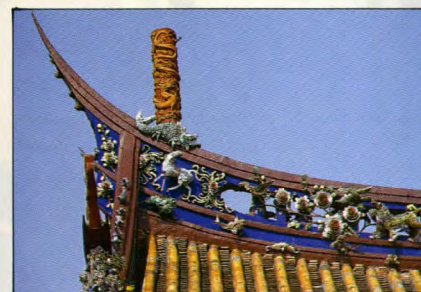
There are also stone pillars in the corridor of the Yi Gate but there is no dragon carving on the pillars and they look relatively simpler and plainer. Kochi pottery decoration is inlaid in the wall of its hallway and the colors of these inlays are very graceful, and worthy of careful appreciation. The wood carvings in the windows on each side of the middle entrance ("hornless dragons encircling a censer") are the most important of all. The hornless dragon was one of the nine sons of the dragon and was often carved on buildings or furniture in the old days. "Hornless dragons encircling a censer" is a pattern that uses several pairs of dragons to make a pattern of a censer. The lines of this pattern are smooth and fluid. The "hornless dragons encircling a censer" carving in the Yi Gate of the Taipei Confucius Temple uses eight hornless dragons to outline the shape of a censer, and the carving is refined and recognized as a masterpiece.

A *yung* bell and a *chin* drum are placed inside the Yi Gate and are used in the Confucius ceremony. When one walks to this place, one should look carefully at the wooden structure of the beams. Some ancient Chinese buildings don't have ceilings. This kind of style is called *Lumingtsao*, a style in which there is no ceiling and one can see the beams. The beams must bear the weight of the

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- (37) There is a water wheel platform in the corner of the Ta Cheng Hall where clay sculpture is placed. There is a Chinese unicorn on top of the water wheel platform and an owl stands on top of the ridge.
- (38) There is one cylindrical Tungtien pillar or Tungtien cylinder at each end of the ridge of the Ta Cheng Hall. And there are hornless dragons on them and sea-tortoises below them. It is said that this is to commemorate that Confucius is the model of perfection. Another legend says that it is to commemorate the bamboos that were used to hide books when Shih-huang-ti, the first emperor of Chin, ordered the books to be burnt and scholars to be buried alive.
- (39) There are water dragons and weed decorations in the sloped ridge of the Ta Cheng Hall. It is said that the water dragon can quell Chu Jung, the fire god, and so guard against fire.



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roof and be carved so that they look beautiful. The beams used in the Yi Gate are known as the "two beams three melon style". That is, there are two beams and three melon pillars. The melon pillars are shaped like pumpkins with whiskers that go down and wrap around the beams. This kind of structure is very sturdy, useful in a place like Taiwan where earthquakes are frequent.

There is still another interesting feature of the beams of the Yi Gate: the detailed carving of the left and right are different. In the old days, when building a house, two craftsmen were often hired to carve the beam on each side respectively. Therefore, the size would be the same, but they could carve whatever they wanted. Wang Yi-shun, the designer, hired two groups of wood carvers to work on each side. Now we can carefully observe the special features, the differences between the left and right.

4. Ta Cheng Hall

- (40) These are the five steps of the Ta Cheng Hall. Only an honorable big hall can use this style of stairs.
- (41) There is an imperial road inlaid in the wall of the platform in front of the Ta Cheng Hall. The imperial road is an honorable place on which no one can step. A cloud dragon, with one claw clutching a pearl and another grabbing a seal, looks askance at everything.
- (42) There is a seven-storey-pagoda in the center of the ridge of the Ta Cheng Hall. There are also pagodas in Buddhist temples, but pagodas in Confucius temples are thought to help drive away evil. They have been in Confucius temples since ancient times.
- (43) Detail of (41).
- (44) The platform in front of the Ta Cheng Hall is also called Tanchih. Every Confucius temple has this platform for the performing of a six-fold formation dance while worshipping Confucius.
- (45) The coiled dragon pillars in front of the Ta Cheng Hall have very delicate carvings and are of a magnificent style.



44



After going through the Yi Gate, one can see the Ta Cheng Hall standing in the middle of the broad stone courtyard. According to ancient etiquette, the various officials involved in the Confucius ceremony stand in certain positions on the granite floor. This gives the ceremony a very solemn appearance.

The Ta Cheng Hall is the main building of a Confucius temple and the tablet of Confucius, the greatest sage and teacher, is placed here. The tablet is placed on a very high platform and there are steps leading up to it. In front of the Ta Cheng Hall is a platform called the Tanchih, where, during the Confucius ceremony, the musicians stand and the young boy dancers dance the six-fold formation dance. In the ancient times there was also an eight-fold formation dance, danced by 64 dancers. But the Tanchih area in the Taipei Confucius Temple is not big enough and so only the six-fold formation dance is performed, danced by 36 dancers. In front of the Tanchih there is the imperial road, on which is carved the cloud dragon, whose spirit is well shown in the carving of its head. The carving is of a very high artistic standard.

The Ta Cheng Hall is as wide as five normal-sized rooms and as deep as six normal-sized rooms, and 42 huge pillars were used altogether. It has a hip-and-gable double-eaved style roof. There is a corridor around it, and one can walk around the hall along the winding corridor. The design of this hall is grand and the structure is careful; it is one of the few traditional buildings in Taiwan.

The carved stone pillars used in the corridor are all made of Chuanchow white stone. In the middle are a pair of coiled dragon pillars. The carving is very fine and the pillars are considered to

(46) Above the beams in the Ta Cheng Hall, a lot of brackets were used to support the plafond, which is in the middle, and the ceiling around it. The entire structure is put together with tenons and not one nail has been used. Prodigious workmanship indeed.

(47) A sectional drawing of the Ta Cheng Hall. In the drawing you can see the relationship between the style of roof and the indoor wooden structure. Looking at the plafond in the middle and the ceiling around, it is very clear which is the main thing and which is the subordinate.



be masterpieces. All these carvings are the work of craftsmen from Huian, Chuanchow. The style is powerful and simple, very different from the ornate style used in most temples.

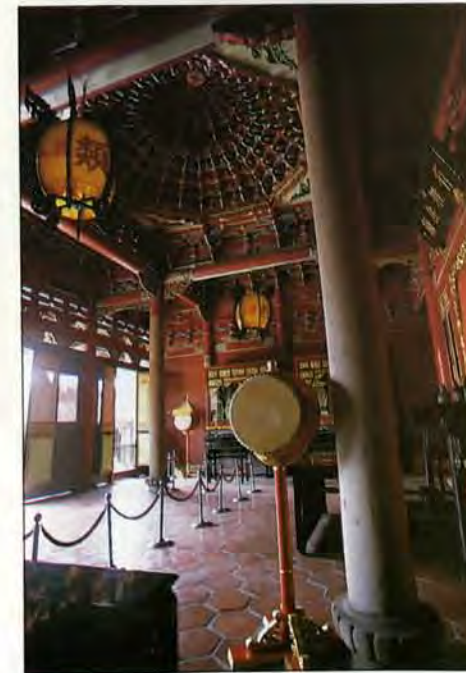
If you raise your head and look at the ridge of the Ta Cheng Hall, you will find there is a seven-storey pagoda in the middle, a cylinder-like object on the swallow-tail eaves at both ends and dozens of clay owls on the roof ridge. All these decorations have their origins and stories.

Although the pagoda has its origins in Indian Buddhism, it became a principal feature of Chinese architecture after Buddhism came to China. It is said that the pagoda symbolizes suppressing evil, and so there is also a small pagoda in the Ta Cheng Hall. The cylinder-like object, known as a Tungtien Pillar, is put on the body of a sea-tortoise. There is also a coiled dragon on the cylinder. It is said that during the Sung Dynasty, Chu Hsi remembered with gratitude that Confucius was the model of perfection and put a Tungtien pillar in the roof of the Chuanchow Confucius Temple to show his respect. It became a tradition to do so in the Confucius temples of Southern Fukien. Another story about the pillar is that Shih-huang-ti, the first emperor of Chin, burned the books and buried the scholars alive. In order to preserve books, scholars hid them inside bamboo. To commemorate the protecting of books, Tungtien pillars were put on the ridge.

In the sanctuary in the middle of the Ta Cheng Hall is placed the tablet of Confucius, the greatest sage and saint. The black tablet on which President Chiang Kai-shek wrote in gold lettering "Instruction Recognizes No Castes" is hung high up. On the left and right walls are the tablets of "Fu Saint" Yen Tzu, "Chung Saint"

(48) There is an octagonal plafond and 24 brackets in the Ta Cheng Hall. Because it looks very much like a spider web, old craftsmen called it "the web." There is a bat in each of the four corners (in Chinese "four bats" sounds like "giving fortune").

(49) The inside of the Ta Cheng Hall. There is a forest of huge pillars and cleverly structured brackets, making for a solemn atmosphere.



Tseng Tzu, "Shu Saint" Tzu Szu, the "Lesser Sage" Mencius, and the Twelve Philosophers. The Ta Cheng Hall is very spacious and solemn. 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 which is very magnificent. In the four corners of the plafond there are four bat carvings (four bats in Chinese is a homonym for "giving fortune").

In addition, on the two sides of the plafond, there are sloped carved ceilings which serve to cover the beams while also serving ventilation purposes. This combining of the decorative and the practical makes one admire the cleverness of ancient Chinese architecture.

5. The East and the West Rooms

The courtyard encircled by the Ta Cheng Hall, the Yi Gate and the East and the West Rooms is the central part of the Confucius Temple. The East and the West Rooms are like the side rooms of an ancient house. They have lower roofs, and the idol niches inside them accommodate 154 outstanding students of Confucius and scholars who have made great contributions in spreading the teachings of Confucius.

The East and the West Rooms are symmetrically located on either side of the Ta Cheng Hall. Because their roofs are simpler, the carvings on the beams are simpler and plainer too. The row of pillars in the corridor makes for a strong sense of rhythm. But one cannot find scrolls hung on these pillars. A rule observed by all

(50) The idol niche of the Ta Cheng Hall accommodates the tablet of Confucius, the greatest teacher and saint.

(51) There are many Kochi pottery decorations depicting stories of all kinds of virtues in the water wheel platform in the Ta Cheng Hall. The figures are all very lifelike and the landscapes are all very elegant and tasteful.



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Confucius temples is “never dare to show off one’s literary skill in front of Confucius.” The eaves brackets of these two rooms also have lively patterns of hornless dragons that allow one to experience the beauty and intricacy of Southern Chinese architecture.

6. Tsung Sheng Shrine

Finally, we go around the Ta Cheng Hall to the rear court room, the Tsung Sheng Shrine. The Tsung Sheng Shrine is where Confucius’s ancestors for five generations are venerated, including Chaosheng Duke Muchinfu, Yusheng Duke Chifu, Yisheng Duke Fangshu, Changsheng Duke Pohsia and Chisheng Duke Shuliangho. Confucius’s brothers, the fathers of Yen Tzu, Tseng Tzu, Mencius and Tzu Ssu and the fathers of other Confucian worthies are also venerated here. In a nutshell, the Tsung Sheng Shrine accommodates tablets that belong to the ancestors of Confucius, ancient sages or Confucius’ followers. In fact, this kind of arrangement is deeply related to the Chinese clan ethics that have existed for several thousand years. The layout of Confucius temples is also very similar to that of a clan ancestral temple.

The Tsung Sheng Shrine is as wide as five normal-sized rooms. There is a warehouse for instruments for sacrificial ceremonies in the east wing and a warehouse of musical instruments in the west wing. These two warehouses are also necessary in every Confucius temple. The beams in the Tsung Sheng Shrine are like the ones in the Yi Gate: one can see the beams and the carvings of the melon

(52) The side of the Ta Cheng Hall. There are musical stone shaped green glaze windows on the gable.

(53) The Tsung Sheng Shrine is located behind the Ta Cheng Hall and is the rear court room of a Confucius temple. This is where the tablets of the five generations of ancestors of Confucius, who were given the status of noblemen in the Ching Dynasty, are placed. Confucius temples all around Taiwan have Tsung Sheng Shrines.



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pillar. Its frame has three beams and five short pillars. The melon pillars are carved into pumpkins or papayas and they look very round and substantial, both powerful and beautiful, especially the carved lions on the top which seem to carry the beams on their shoulders. They look very true-to-life.

III. The Ritual Objects and Musical Instruments of Taipei Confucius Temple

In contrast to Buddhist or Taoist temples, no idols are venerated at Confucius temples. Because the Confucian Analects clearly state that “the Master never talked of prodigies, feats of strength, disorders or spirits,” only tablets can be venerated in Confucius temples. The atmosphere of Confucius temples is respectful and solemn, which is in accord with the unyielding spirit of the Confucian culture. Although there are not many idols and sacrificial articles, there are quite a few ritual objects and musical instrument made in accordance with ancient designs. These instruments are used on September 28 every year, when worshipping Confucius. It’s a really breathtaking ceremony.

The *Yung* bell and *Chin* drum are placed beside the Yi Gate,

(54) *The wooden structure of the Tsung Sheng Shrine is built in the “three beams and five melons” style. Note that all the melon pillars have long whiskers to wrap around the beam. On the top is a carving of a lion. This kind of frame combines excellent structural engineering with great artistic beauty.*

(55) *The idol niche of the Tsung Sheng Shrine accommodates the tablets of five generations of ancestors of Confucius.*



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