

# **In-between Institutional Religion and Folk Faith during the Transition into a Modern Political System – The Case of Giam Temples in Taiwan**

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*“Giam” 巖 is a popular type of temple in Taiwan, also called “Giam-a”, referring to religious architecture related the concept of “mountains”. This type of temple was initially recorded as a geographical landscape or scenic attraction and was subsequently extended to indicate a specific form of worship space. This study explores the Giam architecture under the intervention of state power. The intervention process could be divided into two stages. The first stage involved the Investigation of Traditional Customs during the Japanese rule. The second stage involved interventions by the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (BAROC) after World War II. This study depicts three significant Giam temple cases in Taiwan. From the perspective of spatial layout, architectural form, and ritual, discusses the development results of the Giam temple after the modern state system intervenes in religious affairs. Some Giam temples have made their choice between the folk beliefs and Buddhist beliefs as an adjustment, and others have still coexisted with both religious by separated them with spatial layout and different architectural style. The diverse sociocultural characteristic of the mountains makes the religious in it become the nexus of local power. So, as the state system and policy change, those religious spaces also need to change in some way, adjusting to balance the state and local power.*

## **Introduction**

As worshipped objects and sacred symbols, mountain ranges are a phenomenon across ethnic groups, geographic regions, and religions. For mankind, the summit of a mountain range is what gives it sanctity, because its height is considered by people as being proximate to heaven or the spiritual world of a religion.<sup>1</sup> Given that the summit is regarded as the closest place to the celestial realm, mountain ranges are also seen as a place for revelation and inspiration. For

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1. Naess Arne, “Mountains and Mythology,” *The Trumpton: Journal of Ecosophy* 12, no. 4 (1995): 1-3.

example, the Judaist prophet Moses had his revelation at Mount Sinai, while Muhammad received Allah's message in Jabal al-Nour.<sup>2</sup> Regarding community identity, the scenery of the mountains is shared by people from a particular region or settlement, and the surrounding social network is connected by mountain ranges and terrains through a particular cultural context. The ancestral origin and survival knowledge are also reflected in the terrain's oral stories, which serve as the link between history, landscape, and culture.<sup>3</sup> In addition, pilgrimages to mountain ranges provide a religious experience of detachment, where entering the mountain range symbolizes the entrance to another world, followed by rebirth following the pilgrimage.<sup>4</sup>

“*Giam*” (巖 in Mandarin Chinese), known as “*Giam-a*” (巖仔 in Taiwanese Hokkien), refers to religious buildings related to the concept of “mountain.” These buildings combined the features of the conception of incense<sup>5</sup> and egoism<sup>6</sup> in folk religion through worshipping Buddhist deities such as the “Buddhas”, “*Guanyin*” 觀音, and famous monks such as “*Qingshui Zushi*” 清水祖師 and “*Xianying Zushi*” 顯應祖師. Making use of natural terrain, some of them are built as ritual sites in grottos and caves (Figure 1), or as temples in different spots on mountain ranges such as piedmonts, hillsides, or summits (Figure 2), while others are located at the center of migrant settlements, serving as transplants of hometown religions. Initially, *Giam* referred to a particular terrain or landscape featuring a flatland next to a mountain that is suitable for human habitation. Combining religion with a landscape with aesthetic beauty resulted in the creation of a sacred space with unique significance. The intervention of a contemporary administration during the period of Japanese control in Taiwan, in which the Buddhist component was deliberately emphasized, turned this coexistence of religious attributes to antagonism.

The religious attributes of the *Giam* Temples range itself can be categorized into two forms. The first is institutional religion, in which the dogmas, religious leaders, scriptures, rituals, behaviors, hierarchies, and organizations are clear and independent, with fixed venues and religious activities; and the second is diffused

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2. Messerli Bruno and Jack D. Ives, *Mountains of the World: A Global Priority* (New York: Parthenon Publicarion, 1997), 39-54.

3. Dillehay, Tom D., “Mounds of social death: Araucanian funerary practices and political succession”, T. Dillehay Ed, In *Tombs for the Living: Andean Mortuary Practices* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995), 281-314.

4. Olsen Brad, *Sacred Places Around the World: 108 Destinations* (San Francisco: CCC Publishing, 2008) 34–83.

5. Taiwanese folk belief regards the smoke from burning spices as a symbol of spiritual power transmission from the gods.

6. For Taiwanese people, they often hope that their prayers to the gods will come true.

religion, in which the objects of worship, dogmas, or scriptures are not fixed, and its denominations and affiliations are blended into everyday lives and customs, tending toward efficacy and egoism.<sup>7</sup> Institutional religion typically refers to faiths with fully developed institutions, such as Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, and Islam, whereas diffused religions reflect local and ancient primitive or folk religions. Foreign religions frequently seek commonalities with indigenous religions in order to create ties with the latter before superimposing over them and evolving into localized religions. When Buddhism was introduced to China, it also absorbed many of the characteristics of local Chinese folk religions and became a “folkized” form of Buddhism. This type of Buddhism was also brought to Taiwan along with Chinese immigrants. However, when either is strengthened by historical context or political influence, they may end up in a tug-of-war against each other.

This study uses three significant Giam temples cases: *Puanthinn-Giam* 半天巖 in Chiayi, *Tshuiping-Giam* 翠屏巖 in Kaohsiung, and *Kangsuann-Giam* 崗山巖 in Kaohsiung. The abbots and monks of these three Giam temples were associated with the lineage of Tu-kang-suann during the Japanese rule and the thread of precept transmission at Taisian Giam after World War II. This study analyzes the relationship between these three Giam temples and the intervention of state power from three dimensions: spatial layout, architectural form, and ritual. Under the intervention of state power, these three Giam temples were faced with the choices of “folk religion” or “Buddhism”. The two options compelled them to make compromises and adjustments that were fully reflected in the aforementioned dimensions.



**Figure 1.** *Xiangdong Giam Built in the Cave*  
Source: Author, 2021.



**Figure 2.** *Yushan Giam Built by the Mountain*  
Source: Author, 2021.

7. C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors* (University of California Press, 1987).

### “Giam” Temples

Initially, Giam referred to a particular terrain or landscape featuring a flatland next to a mountain that is suitable for human habitation. “*Shuowen Jiezi*” 說文解字<sup>8</sup>(Explain Text) described this word as “referring to the bank of a hill, it has the radical 山 (literally means ‘mountain’) and it is pronounced as 巖 (yán)<sup>9</sup>.” The Qing Dynasty philologist “*Duan Yu-Zai*” 段玉裁 further clarified the definition of this word in his “*Annotated Shuowen Jiezi*” 說文解字注 as “a place next to mountain ranges and rocks that is suitable for human habitation.” The “*Chronicles of Anxi County*” 安溪縣志 in Ming Dynasty treated famous local Giam as scenic sites and described them as “mountains filled with bountiful natural resources and rocks, frequented by intellectuals for their scenic beauty and inspiration.” It also recorded “the twenty-four most famous Giam along the cliffs and precipices of Anxi area.” Among the 24 *Giam*, some were rocks with exotic shapes, such as *Qinglin Giam* 青林巖 with its stalagmites; some became sacred sites after being used by revered monks for monasticism, such as *Qingshui Giam* 清水巖, *Taihu Giam* 太湖巖, and *Taishan Giam* 泰山巖; some had monasteries built at the piedmonts, like the Three Monasteries at *Ruilian Giam* 瑞蓮巖; some were pathways to transcending into celestial beings, such as *Xianggu Giam* 仙姑巖 where a grand temple was built after a lady became immortal after entering and picking flowers.

Since 1995, Lin Mei-Rong has been studying Giam of various sizes across Taiwan using an anthropological approach, and has applied “Folk Buddhism” as the perspective of her research. She undertook Giam as the research object to illustrate the history and aspects of Folk Buddhism in Taiwan. She believes that the religious model of Giam represents a mode of assimilation, where people incorporate Buddhism into the system of a folk religion and turn it into a public

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8. *Shuowen Jiezi* is an ancient Chinese dictionary compiled by Xu Shen during the Eastern Han dynasty.

9. The original content is “岸也从山巖聲”. “Yan” is the way of pronunciation in Beijing, and “Giam” is the way of pronunciation in Fujian. The two pronunciations refer to the same word.

religion, often resulting in conflicts caused by the opposition toward orthodox Buddhists.<sup>10</sup> In Lin Mei-Rong's research, there are differences in the architectural forms used in Giam, Folk Belief Temples, and Buddhist Monasteries, but this difference and the use of space are not discussed further. Therefore, this study hopes to conduct research and description on architecture and space.

The gods of Buddhism worshiped in the rituals of folk beliefs, showing the characteristics of the fusion about the two religious attributes, and the two religious attributes have disputes with the historical development. The religious beliefs of *Giam-a* and Guanyin are interconnected to a certain extent, where Guanyin is considered a goddess and worshipped in temples with upward-curving roof ridges, and many *Giam-a* continue to follow the practice of burning joss paper. Evidently, some *Giam-a* became village temples, joint communal temples, grand temples, and neighborhood or surname temples, while others became regional religious centers for multiple townships. These are demonstrations of the model of the popularization of Buddhism.<sup>11</sup> During the Ming and Qing dynasties, Buddhism underwent a phase of localized development that created the groundwork for its “Folk Buddhism” characteristic. During the period of Japanese administration, it underwent changes in which it became similar to Japanese Buddhism and folk religions. After World War II, Taiwanese Buddhism underwent a new phase of development in terms of political ideology and the “orthodoxy–heresy” denomination, a tendency that inspired and altered several views of Giam.<sup>12</sup>

### Impact of the State on Giam

The Buddhist aspect of the syncretic “Giam” became prominent when state governance was introduced in Taiwan. Registration and investigation policies implemented during Japanese rule initiated the religious categorization of Taiwanese temples. Local Taiwanese began to join specific Japanese Buddhist sects, and later, the “*Myōshin-ji branch of the Rinzaï sect*” 臨濟宗妙心寺派 sent Tōkai

Gisei 東海宜誠 as a missionary, and influenced the Buddhist and Giam temples in

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10. Lin Mei-Rong, “Folk Buddhism as seen in Giam-a Temples of Southern Taiwan”, *Thought and Words: Journal of the Humanities and Social Science* 33, no. 2 (1995): 1-40.

Lin Mei-Rong, “The tradition and changes of Taiwan's native Buddhism: .A survey of Giam-a. In National Taiwan Normal University”, *Proceedings of the 1st Taiwan Native Culture Symposium* (Taipei: Buddhist Youth Foundation, 1995), 701-722.

11. Lin Mei-Rong, Su Quan-Zheng. “The Tradition of Folk Buddhism in Taiwan as Revealed in the Kuan-yin Belief in Giam-a (Mountain Temples) and its Social Practice”, *New Century Religious Study* 2, no. 3 (2004): 1-34.

12. Su, Chuan-Cheng, *A Study on the belief of "Giam-a" folk Buddhism in Taiwan* (Department of History, National Chung Hsing University, 2001).

southern Taiwan at that time through their control over “*Dagang Shan sect*”大崗山派.

Under Kuomintang’s martial law regime after World War II, the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (BAROC) obtained control over *Dagang Shan sect* through the transmission of Buddhist precepts, and served as a medium of collaboration and dialogue with the government during the imposition of martial law and anti-rebellion provisions. The abbots or monks of these Giam were also linked with BAROC, and brought political influence to the Giam, which was once the center of local religious beliefs.

### Religious Policy of the Japanese Colonial Government

The colonial government adopted a non-involvement and non-interventionist religious policy of “keeping pre-existing customs” during the early years of Japanese rule,<sup>13</sup> which had a crucial impact on the pre-existing religions in Taiwan. Japan began sending Buddhist missionaries to Taiwan. The compatibility of the system and features of local and foreign Buddhist sects directly affected the spread of Japanese Buddhist sects in Taiwan.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, *Rinzai sect* 臨濟宗 and *Sōtō sect* 曹洞宗 were the more accepted Japanese Buddhist sects in Taiwan. The five major traditional Buddhist sects in Taiwan established in early Japanese rule were branches that originated from *Gushan Yongquan Temple* 鼓山湧泉寺 in Fujian 福建. They merged the arrangement pattern of sculptures in traditional Chinese Buddhism with particular Japanese Buddhist ceremonies and invited monks from both mainland China and Japan to preach. Buddhism in Taiwan at this period sparked the new monastery construction movement and had an increase in Buddhist monks’ knowledge and self-cultivation. The *Dagang Shan Chaofeng sect* was from *Gangshan Giam*, while the *Lingyun Temple* was from *Nei Giam*, commonly known as Mount Guanyin in Wugu. In this historical setting, these facts demonstrate the ascendance of Buddhism in Giam. In addition to local Buddhist sects, the arrival of Japanese architecture had an impact on the design of Buddhist monasteries.<sup>15</sup>

13. Tsai Chin-Tang, *The Religious Policies in Taiwan under the Imperialistic Rule of Japan* (Department of History, University of Tsukuba, 1994), 18.

14. Wu Min-Xia, *Taiwanese Buddhism during the Japanese occupation period* (Taichung: Taiping Ciguang Temple, 2007), 29.

15. Huang Lan-Shiang, “Traditional Buddhist Monasteries in Taiwan during the Qing Dynasty and their Transformation under Jaese Colonialism,” *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies* 18, no. 7 (2005): 139-206.

After the Tapani Incident,<sup>16</sup> the Japanese government launched an investigation on folk religion in Taiwan, which saw a number of Giam being included under the *Myōshin-ji branch of Rinzai sect*. The origin of this branch can be traced to the early years of Japanese rule, when local Taiwanese temples established head-branch relationships with Japanese religious groups to protect the properties owned by local temples during the change in regime.<sup>17</sup> As local temples typically visited Gushan to receive precepts during Qing Dynasty,<sup>18</sup> they naturally interacted with the Japanese Rinzai and Sōtō sects.<sup>19</sup> *Yu Qingfang* 余清

芳 constructed the Tapani Incident in 1915 in the name of Wang Ye's divine will and the teachings of the vegetarian religion to appeal to the general population. As a result of the incident, the colonial authorities initiated a comprehensive inquiry into the "pre-existing traditions" of local religion (Tsai Chin-Tang, 1994). In April 1916, *Marui Keijirō* 丸井圭志郎 commissioned local government officials, public sect staff, and police officers to compile a registry of temples,<sup>20</sup> which took a year to complete. At the same time, Hase Jien, abbot of Taipei's Linji Huguo Temple (also known as Rinzai Gokoku-ji during Japanese colonial era), sought to expand the influence of the Rinzai sect in Taiwan and subsequently cooperated with Marui by arranging a visit to southern China and Japan for *Shi Chuanfong* 釋傳芳, *Shi Benyuan* 釋本圓 and *Shi Chengyuan* 釋成圓, and facilitated *Kaiyuan Temple* 開元寺, *Chaofeng Temple* 超峰寺, *Zhuxi Temple* 竹溪寺, *Chishan Longhu Giam* 赤山龍湖巖, *Daxian Giam* 大仙巖, *Lingyun Temple* 凌雲寺 of Mount Guanyin and *Xiyun Giam Temple* toward becoming the liaison temples of Rinzai sect,<sup>21</sup> many of them are acclaimed Giam temples in Taiwan.

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16. The Tapani incident was one of the biggest armed uprisings, against Japanese rule in Taiwan. It took place through religious activities, so the colonial government subsequently paid more attention to popular religion and took steps to improve colonial administration in southern Taiwan.

17. 宗報 [Sōtō sect Bulletin], 1908, February 1, 41-42.

18. 臺灣宗教調查報告書 [Investigation Report of Religion in Taiwan], 1 (1919): 72-74.

19. Shi Hui-Yan, *Tai Wan Yu Min Rih Fo Jiao Jiao Liou Shih* [The history of Buddhist exchange between Taiwan and Fujian and Japan] (Kaohsiung: Chunhui Publishing House, 2008), 37-38.

20. 南瀛佛教 [South Seas Buddhism], 1934 February, 112: 2, 28.

21. Shi Hui-Yan, *Tai Wan Yu Min Rih Fo Jiao Jiao Liou Shih* [The history of Buddhist exchange between Taiwan and Fujian and Japan] (Kaohsiung: Chunhui Publishing House, 2008) 373.

Moreover, Tōkai Gisei, a missionary sent by the *Myōshin-ji branch of Rinzai sect* of Japanese Buddhism at that time, frequently engaged in Buddhist missions with Liao Tan, a member of the Longhua Buddhist Association and manager of *Daxian Giam* 大仙巖 (now known as Daxian Temple), and Master Yicun from Ensui-kō (Giamshuigang) Missionary Office, together with other believers of Shōka (Changhwa) and Kagi (Chiayi).<sup>22</sup> He therefore entered Daxian Giam in 1925 and became a Buddhist teacher there.<sup>23</sup> Given the abovementioned history, Tōkai Gisei would later become the consultant of Longhua Buddhist Association.<sup>24</sup> On April 20, 1923, the *Myōshin-ji branch of Rinzai sect* set up an administrative office in Tainan's Kaiyuan Temple, and Tōkai Gisei was assigned there as a manager.<sup>25</sup> On December 26, 1923, the colonial government approved the construction of “*Longquan Temple*” 龍泉寺.<sup>26</sup> Longquan Temple superseded *Yongquan Temple* 湧泉寺, which was also called “*Heshui Giam* 喝水巖.” Tōkai Gisei became the abbot of Dagu Giam Yuanheng Temple 打鼓岩元亨寺 in Takao (Kaohsiung) for 10 years from 1933. He was also the abbot of *Dashe Cuiping Giam* 大社翠屏巖, and completed the renovation of the main hall in 1934. During the later period of Japanese rule, he had influence over the entire “*Dagang Shan sect*” 大崗山派, which originated from “*Gangshan Giam* 崗山巖,” through his agent Monk Miaoji, and brought Dagang Shan sect under his full control.<sup>27</sup> Tōkai Gisei erected numerous Buddhist temples throughout Takao (Kaohsiung) and Heitō (Pingtung), and took Taiwanese monks as his disciples, in order to achieve his strategy of “subduing Taiwanese with Taiwanese.” At the later stage of Japanese

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22. 佛教說教 [The Teaching of Buddhism], 臺灣日日新報 [Taiwan Daily News] 1922, January 27.

23. 火山大祭 [The Great Volcano Festival], 臺灣日日新報 [Taiwan Daily News] 1922, April 11.

大仙巖舉行秋季 [Autumn Event at Daxian Giam], 臺灣日日新報 [Taiwan Daily News] 1924, September 28.

24. 諸羅特訊 ,僧往掛錫 [Special News from Chulo, Monks Staying at a Temple, 臺灣日日新報 [Taiwan Daily News] 1924, September 28.

25. Yu, Shan, “高僧略歷” [A Brief Biography of a Revered Monk], 南瀛佛教 [South Seas Buddhism], 7: 2 (1929), 77-78.

26. Jiang Cian-Tteng, *The reform and reflection of modern Buddhism in Taiwan* (Taipei: Dongda Books, 2003) 229-230.

27. Jiang, Cian-Tteng, “Gisei Higashiumi and the development of Buddhism in Gaoxiong during the period of Japanese rule,” *Chinese Buddhist Journal* 6 (2003): 211-231.



rule, Tōkai Gisei had become the most powerful leader of Buddhism in southern Taiwan.

### **The Buddhist Association of the Republic of China during Marial Law Rule**

After World War II, the Chinese Nationalist Government retreated to Taiwan. The BAROC became the “Orthodoxy” of Taiwanese Buddhism in 1953, when it held the first triple platform ordination in post-war Taiwan under martial law. Since the commencement of Japanese control, the “*Dagang Shan sect*” established by Kaiyuan Temple’s monks Yimin 義敏 and Yongding 永定 was extremely powerful in southern Taiwan, with monasteries in all of the cities and counties of the region. However, neither of them transmitted precepts, leaving a large number of monks without precepts. In 1948, Daxian Temple raised funds for the construction of Guanyin Hall, which was completed in 1950 along with the Northern and Southern Tower of Requit and the main gate. By the next year, the two visitors halls on the north and south sides of the Mahavira Hall were also completed,<sup>28</sup> when the monks attempted to exploit the opportunity to transmit precepts in secrecy as the construction works were coming to an end.<sup>29</sup> As the monks were inexperienced, an informer leaked this attempt to BAROC. The temple, realizing the seriousness of this incident, promptly applied to join BAROC, and began to transmit precepts under its guidance. In 1949, BAROC was essentially a hastily coordinated group comprised of Chinese immigrant monks and had no legal legitimacy. Nonetheless, the authoritarian regime under martial law forced Daxian Temple to capitulate. Master Baisheng, who was responsible for directing the transmission of precepts, became the de facto foreman of BAROC and maintained influence over the *Dagang Shan sect* in the south.<sup>30</sup>

Under the martial law regime, BAROC was the supreme organization governing Buddhist affairs in Taiwan, and promoted Buddhism in collaboration with government policies. Taiwanese Buddhism was under its jurisdiction as prescribed by the *Act of Supervising Temples*.<sup>31</sup> During the 1950s, some Buddhist groups advocated “Separation of Deities and Buddha” in an effort to oppose the folk religions that blended Buddhism with Taoism.<sup>32</sup> The national policies of

28. Huang Wen-Po, Tu Shun-Cong, Huang Ming-Hu, *Guan Zih Ling Da Sian Sih* (Tainan: Cultural Bureau of Tainan County Government, 1995).

29. At the time, Master Kaican was concurrently the abbot of both the old and new Chaofeng Temple of Daxian Temple and Dagang Shang.

30. Jiang Cian-Tteng, *Understanding Taiwan's native Buddhism: transformation and diversified new appearances since the lifting of the martial law* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 2012), 166.

31. Jiang, Cian-Tteng, “Transformation and innovation of Chinese Buddhism in Taiwan after World War II,” *Twenty-first Century* 121 (2010): 167-177.

32. Cheng, Chin-Min, *The Development and Change of Religion in Taiwan* (Taipei:

“party-state system” and “anti-rebellion state-building” had rendered Buddhist monks into subservient status without their knowledge,<sup>33</sup> while BAROC and its affiliated associations cooperated with the government in “advancing in the aspiration of eliminating communist bandits” through activities such as a 3-day “Abbot-Managers Workshop” hosted by the local Buddhist chapter in Taipei on September 25, 1956, which aimed to educate temple abbots and staff in cooperating with anti-communist and anti-Russian policies. Besides organizing workshops on temple management and economics, seminars were conducted on “Presidential Oath of Office” and “Counterintelligence through Protecting State Secrets and Anti-Espionage,” hosted by the Central Committee of Kuomintang and the commissioner of the Criminal Investigation Corps of the Taiwan Provincial Police Administration, to enhance the political awareness of the temple management and staff.<sup>34</sup> The Buddhist community collaborated with the government, and their ties with the party facilitated the hosting of various activities.<sup>35</sup> Several activities were branded with “Anti-Communism” or “Safeguarding the Nation.” Furthermore, modern technology and materials were used in the classic Chinese palatial architecture as a means of declaring the sovereignty of the nationalist government and its legitimacy as a representative of China. This idea coincided with BAROC’s objective of “rebuilding Buddhism in Mainland China”.<sup>36</sup>

### Choice and Coexistence

In contrast to the diversity, volatility, and intractability of folk religion, Buddhism is perhaps more stable and easier to interfere and manipulate. Buddhist aspects became more prominent in the *Giam* temples during the Japanese rule, some had even developed into powerful denominations, some had even developed into powerful denominations. Together with *Tōkai Gisei*’s mission sent by the *Myōshin-ji branch of Rinzai sect*, Buddhist temples and *Giam* in southern Taiwan were dominated through his control over *Dagang Shan sect*. After the Second World War, BAROC acquired control of *Dagang Shan sect* through transferring precepts at Daxian Temple, and became the regime’s conduit for collaboration and

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Wenjin Publishing House, 2011) 134.

33. Shi Zhao-Hu, *Fo Jiao Lun Li Syue* [Buddhist Ethics] (Taipei: Fajie Publishing House, 1995), 203.

34. 臺北市縣局各寺廟主持員講習會 [Workshop for Temple Abbots in the City, County and Bureau of Taipei]. (1956, September). 臺灣佛教 [Taiwan Buddhism], 10(2), 2.

35. Jiang Cian-Teng, “The Strategies and Effects of Japanese Monk Donghai Yicheng from Linjizong Miaoxin Temple in the Japanese Era to Taiwan to Manage Buddhist Business,” *Miao Lin* 9, no. 2 (1997): 23-27.

36. Chen, Ming-Yen, *The Study of Modernization of Buddhism Architecture in Taiwan* (Department of Architecture, National Cheng Kung University, 2003), 2-41.

communication. A portion of the dual-ideological *Giam* was also highlighted and revealed. Some *Giam* temples began to select a side or move toward coexistence as a result of the two state initiatives.

### Choosing the Folk Belief—Bantian Giam 半天巖 in Chiayi

The genesis of Bantian Giam is connected to a Buddhist teacher who brought God statues to the temple, although its management was ultimately entrusted to the local sector. According to one account of its beginnings, three Buddhist monks each took a Guanyin statue to Taiwan with the intention of constructing a temple there. The first set up residence in Chishan Giam (Chishan Longhu Giam in Liujia, Tainan), the second in Huoshan Giam (Daxian Temple in Guanziling, Baihe), and the third in Bantian Giam. Another version is recorded in the chronicle written by Master Baisheng with reference to a monk named Nengyuan, which said, “a monk in his 70s came here in the 21<sup>st</sup> year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi of Qing, and gasped, ‘This is such an excellent location for a serene temple.’ He then proceeded to chop his way through the thorns and clear the land of weeds before constructing a thatched hut and inviting a Guanyin statue from Mount Putuo in the South Sea for worship. Half of the view was taken up by the sky, so he named this spot Bantian Giam (Half Sky Rock); the clouds between the mountains frequently appeared purple, so he named the temple Ziyun (Purple Cloud) Temple.”

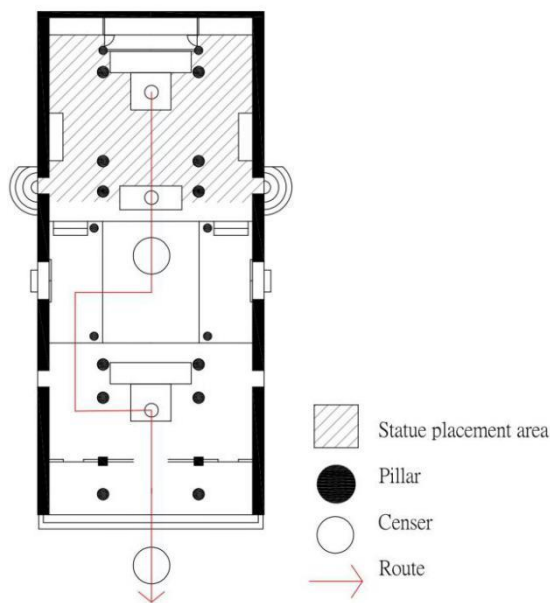
The current configuration of Bantian Giam is the result of the renovation in 1950, with two halls, two hallways, and two guarding chambers. At the center are the front Hall, left and right shelter hallways, and the main hall, with two side halls on both sides of the main hall, bell and drum towers on both sides of the Hall of front hall, and small doors connecting the side chambers on the left and right wing. In 1953,<sup>37</sup> the management committee of the temple hired *Master Tianyi* 天乙師 from Daxian Temple as the abbot, who passed away in 1980. Conflict intensified between the local community and the succeeding abbot *Master Yichun* 乙純師, which was reflected by the construction of the columbarium and the removal of heritage site designation for the renovation of the monastery. In 1990, local residents reorganized the congregation to elect new members of the management committee. The coordination with the monks was not successful at first, but with the help of Wu Dahai and Hong Haoran, the locals provided NT\$3,000,000 to the monks for their relocation to the newly-built *Haien Temple* 海恩淨寺 in Minxiong Township.

Since 1990, the local community has regained management rights over the

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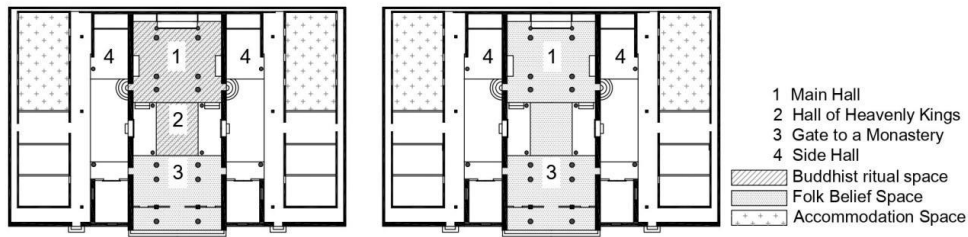
37. Master Tianyi received the precepts in 1953 at Daxian Temple during the first post-war Triple Platform Ordination.

temple, and the venue is currently used by believers of folk religions for activities attributed to the conception of incense, such as allotting of spiritual incense and praying (Figure 3). The center serves as the main venue for pilgrimage missions, where no Buddhist activities are undertaken. In the main hall, which is only accessible to the staff, there is an offering table with the deity's sculpture brought by the pilgrimage missions and another for the "allotting of spiritual incense" for the believers. The incense ash within the censer is used to stuff the sculpture for the "allocation of spiritual incense" and the "censer amalgamation" performed by pilgrimage missions, with the incense ash signifying the continuation and distribution of spiritual energy. The Lantern of Eternal Light and the Tai Shui Lantern likewise reflect the needs of the populace. The offering table, which was originally positioned in the impluvium, has been relocated to the main gate, where practitioners of spiritual formation attempt to have a supernatural experience while sitting beneath it. Both side chambers have been converted from monks' residential quarters into receiving, lodging, and dining areas for pilgrimage missions. The temple is distant from any settlement; therefore the side chambers are used to provide accommodation and catering services (Figure 4).



**Figure 3.** *The Route of the Statue Across the Censer*

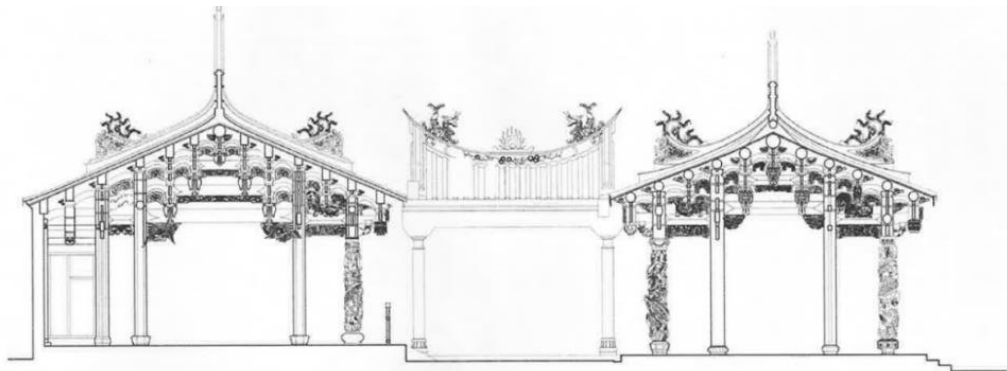
Source: Author, 2021.



**Figure 4.** *The Spatial Distribution of Buddhism (left) and Folk Belief (right)*

Source: Author, 2021.

Although it retains the southern Min style of architecture since the renovation in 1947, the swallowtail roof ridges and the traditional Han style carpentry, which are important symbols of southern Min temples (Figure 5) that played a key role in the conflict caused by state intervention, are seen as unorthodox by the Taiwanese Buddhist community controlled by BAROC.<sup>38</sup> The monks' intention to have the heritage site designation removed in order to renovate it into a structure that adheres to "Buddhism" has begun a conflict with the local community.<sup>39</sup> As the monks left and the locals took control, the southern Min style of architecture has been retained.



**Figure 5.** *Sectional View of the Central Axis Space Wooden Structure*

Source: Yan Ya-Ning 2005.

Apart from the southern Min style of architecture, the construction of the profit-seeking columbarium (Figure 6) was also a starting point of the conflict. In order to secure more income for the monastery, the columbarium was completed

38. Chen Ming-Yen, *The Study of Modernization of Buddhism Architecture in Taiwan* (Department of Architecture, National Cheng Kung University, 2003), 2-41.

39. Yan Shan-Wen, "Cong Jia Yi Sian Ban Tian Yan Zih Yun Sih Kan Jheng Sin Fo Jiao Yu Min Jian Fo Jiao De Hu Dong Yu Yan Bian," *Taiwanese Literature* 59, no. 1 (2008): 21-48.

in 1981 after Yichun succeed as the abbot.<sup>40</sup> The locals believed that by building a columbarium in Bantian Giam, it may turn from a sprightful temple (*Giamg miao*, temples dedicated to deities and heavenly beings) to a spectral temple (*yin miao*, temples dedicated to ghosts and spirits without a proper resting place), disturbing the peace in the surrounding believers' community, and therefore greatly opposed the construction of the columbarium in the temple.<sup>41</sup> Consequently, the columbarium was never used, and was reconstructed into the Statue of the Rising Dragon and Guanyin (Figure 7).<sup>42</sup>



**Figure 6.** *Demolished Ossuary Tower*  
Source: Yan, Shan-Wen 2008.



**Figure 7.** *Ossuary Tower Changed to Rising Dragon and Guanyin*  
Source: Bantianyan Official Website.

### Choosing the Buddhism—Cuiping Giam 翠屏巖 in Kaohsiung

Cuiping Giam is now known as *Dajue Temple* 大覺寺 of *Mount Guanyin* 觀音山. Legend has it that two men with the surnames Su and Lin hired a feng shui geomancer to find a suitable location for a graveyard for their ancestors. As they moved to Mount Guanyin, one of them marked his location by burying a holed-coin, while the other one did so by burying a nail. Conflict broke out on the day of groundbreaking when they discovered that the buried nail went through the

40. Yan Shan-Wen, “Cong Jia Yi Sian Ban Tian Yan Zih Yun Sih Kan Jheng Sin Fo Jiao Yu Min Jian Fo Jiao De Hu Dong Yu Yan Bian”, *Taiwanese Literature* 59, no. 1 (2008): 21-48.

41. Lin Mei-Rong, “Giam-a and Guanyin Belief in Taiwan,” in Yang Hui-Nan & Shi Hon-Gyin, *Proceedings of the Taiwan Buddhist Symposium* (Taipei: Buddhist Youth Cultural and Educational Foundation, 1996), 177-193.

42. Oral statement from Zhu Zhenyuan on March 3, 2021.

buried coin's hole. Though each of them insisted on their right to bury their ancestors there, Yang, Fang-sheng 楊芳聲, the Magistrate of Fengshan County, ruled that this land of good feng shui quality was only for Guanyin, and subsequently ordered the seizure of the land for building a temple.<sup>43</sup> During the era of Qing rule, the mountainous landscape was known as “Twilight of Cuiping” and was considered as one of the Eight Sceneries of Fengshan. When it became a *Giam* temple, it had jurisdiction over the joint communal union that included today's Dashe, Renwu, and Nanzih. Similar to Gangshan Giam, Cuiping Giam was not built by monks and was originally a part of the folk religion, serving as the grand temple and public temple for regional towns.

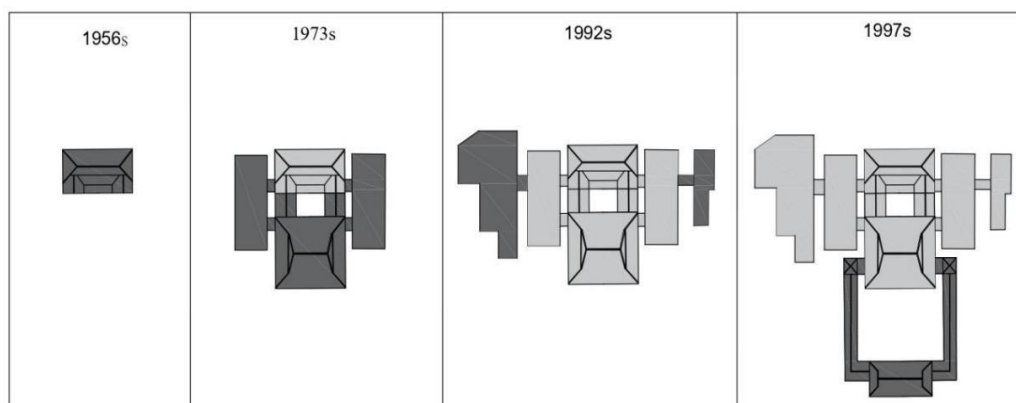
The current configuration of Cuiping Giam is the result of gradual expansion from the rear to the front. Along the central axis, Guanyin Hall, Mahavira Hall, and the Hall of Heavenly Kings are positioned from the rear to the front. The living quarters, dining hall, and kitchen are located on both sides. During the era of Japanese rule, the privately-managed Cuiping Giam was converted into the residence for the Japanese monk Tōkai Gisei. The Mahavira Hall was renovated in 1924,<sup>44</sup> which was located at the Guanyin Hall next to Mount Guanyin. In the next year, a sculpture of the Buddha made of white jade was bestowed to the temple by the Japanese Emperor. In 1959, *Master Longdao* 隆道師, a disciple of Tōkai Gisei and *Master Yimin* 義敏師, and concurrently the abbot of Longquan Temple in Kaohsiung City and Baiyun Temple in Kaohsiung County, was appointed abbot of Cuiping Giam, with *Master Ciai* 慈靄師 as the prior. They raised funds to rebuild the temple, demolished the existing structure, and planned the reconstruction of the Guanyin Hall with the manager *Wu Shui-Sheng* 巫水陞. Cuiping Giam was renamed as “Dajue Temple of Mount Guanyin” in 1964, and a new Mahavira Hall was built in front of the Guanyin Hall in 1973. In 1991, there was a dispute over management rights between monks and local residents, with the monks winning the lawsuit and obtained management rights in 1994. Frontward expansion continued when *Master Shengyue* 聖岳師 became the abbot in 1997, and the Hall of Heavenly Kings was built in front of the Mahavira Hall, while the hall itself also received renovation. The site was also reconfigured to

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43. Lin Mei-Rong, “Folk Buddhism as seen in Giam-a Temples of Southern Taiwan,” *Thought and Words: Journal of the Humanities and Social Science* 33, no. 2 (1995): 1-40.

44. Jiang, Cian-Teng, “Gisei Higashiumi and the development of Buddhism in Gaoxiong during the period of Japanese rule,” *Chinese Buddhist Journal* 16 (2003): 228.

accommodate the new Arhat Hall, Vitreous Hall, Hall of Pure Land, and the statues of the twenty-four Devas (Figure 8).



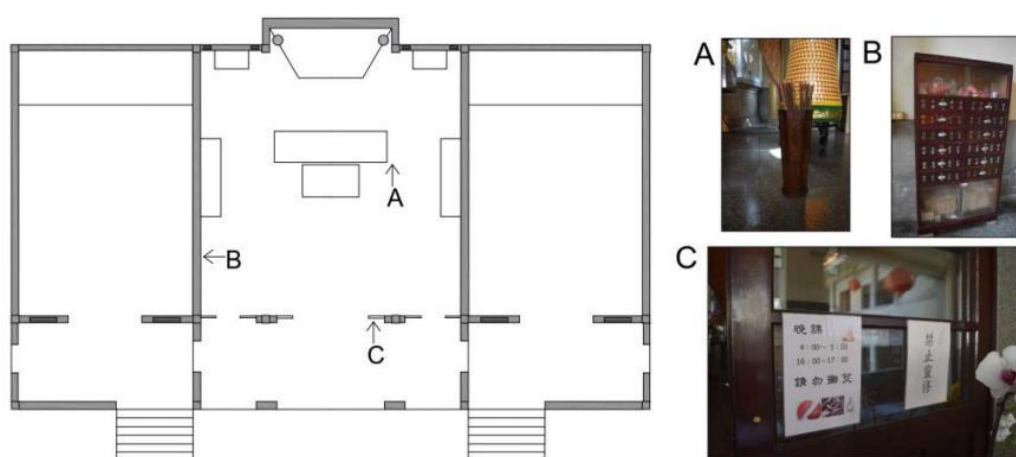
**Figure 8.** *Expansion from Back to Front Makes the Space More in Line with Buddhism (The Dark Part is the Added Part)*

Source: Author, 2021.

Guanyin Hall was situated in the original site. Folk religious activities were conducted there with some limitations. This may be the result of the relationship between the attributes of the *Giam* temple as a place of worshipping Guanyin and the “Lecture Hall” at the rear of the temple, which is dedicated to Guanyin, and the possible separation and concealment of folk religious activities at the rear. In 1959, Master Longdao was appointed abbot of Cuiping Giam, with Master Ciai as the prior. They raised funds for rebuilding the temple, demolishing the existing structures, and planned the reconstruction of the Guanyin Hall with the manager Wu Shuisheng.<sup>45</sup> A bucket of inscribed sticks (used in divination by drawing an oracle lot) and moon blocks (used in poe divination) are placed at the corner of the Guanyin Hall, but with notice signs saying “NO PLANCHETTE WRITING OR SPIRITUAL FORMATION” and “REFRAIN FROM THROWING MOON BLOCKS DURING EVENING CHANTING” (Figure 9).

45. Lin, Mei-Rong, “The tradition and changes of Taiwan’s native Buddhism: .A survey of Giam-a. In National Taiwan Normal University,” in *Proceedings of the 1st Taiwan Native Culture Symposium* (Taipei: Buddhist Youth Foundation, 1995), 701-722.



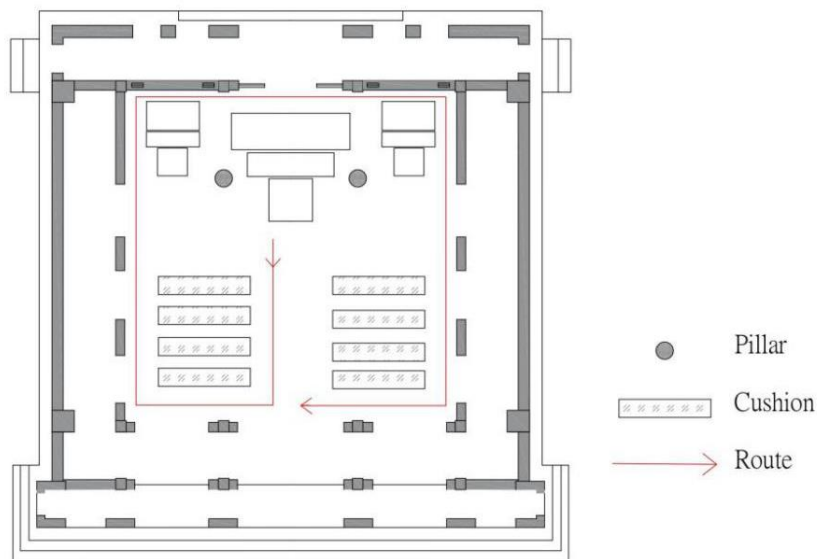


**Figure 9.** *The Guanyin Hall is Furnished with a Folk Belief Lottery Box (A) and a Poetry Lottery Cabinet (B), but its Folk Behavior is Still Restricted (C)*  
 Source: Author, 2021.

“Cuiping Giam” was renamed as “Dajue Temple of Mount Guanyin” in 1964, and a new Mahavira Hall was built in front of the Guanyin Hall in 1973, which serves as the main structure and the venue for Buddhist rituals such as morning and evening chanting. Apart emphasizing “Buddhist belief,” the Mahavira Hall’s adherence to BAROC’s requirements was also underlined given that it is dedicated to the Buddha. As the monks obtained management rights in 1994, Master Shengyue succeeded Master Ciai as the abbot in 1997, and oversaw the expansion of the Hall of Heavenly Kings,<sup>46</sup> turning the overall configuration into the Hall of Heavenly Kings—Mahavira Hall—Lecture Hall that conforms with the “orthodox” Sangharama layout.<sup>47</sup> Today, the Mahavira Hall is an important venue for Buddhist rituals. The corridor behind the statue of Buddha serves as both the passageway to the Rear Hall and the path used in the circumambulation ritual during chanting. Such clockwise circumambulation of the statue of Buddha derived from Hindu conceptions of space and the universe (Figure 10). Meanwhile, the Hall of Heavenly Kings corresponds to the “Main Gate” as the boundary of the temple’s domain.

46. Lin, Mei-Rong, “The tradition and changes of Taiwan’s native Buddhism: A survey of Giam-a. In National Taiwan Normal University”, Proceedings of the 1st Taiwan Native Culture Symposium (Taipei: Buddhist Youth Foundation, 1995), 701-722.

47. Huang Lan-Shiang, “Traditional Buddhist Monasteries in Taiwan during the Qing Dynasty and their Transformation under Jaese Colonialism,” *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies* 18, no. 7 (2005): 139-206.



**Figure 10.** *The Mahavira Hall Detours Around the Buddha Statue During Religious Ceremonies*

Source: Author, 2021.

Its architectural style showed little trace of state intervention during the era of Japanese rule, with the southern Min architectural style of swallowtail roof ridges retained after the renovation in 1924 (Figure 11). The post-war renovation motivated by “Buddhization” left Cuiping Giam with simplified decorations, but folk elements were still retained on structures jointly built by local managers and monks. As the monks obtained management rights, efforts were made to enhance the Buddhist symbolism and the northern palatial style of the temple.

The northern style of palatial architecture was used to renovate the Real Hall in 1959 (Figure 12); however, its interior design still exhibited a certain folk style, such as the intentional change of ceiling design from checkered to octagonal in front of the niche to evoke a resemblance to the Chinese trigrams of Bagua, and the hanging of octagonal Yuanchendeng (Lantern of Auspicious Time) from the center of the trigrams (Figure 13). The floor was embellished with “nail in the coin’s hole” decorations (Figure 14) to reflect its legendary feng shui origin. Folk style was a relatively prominent architectural feature during this period of time.



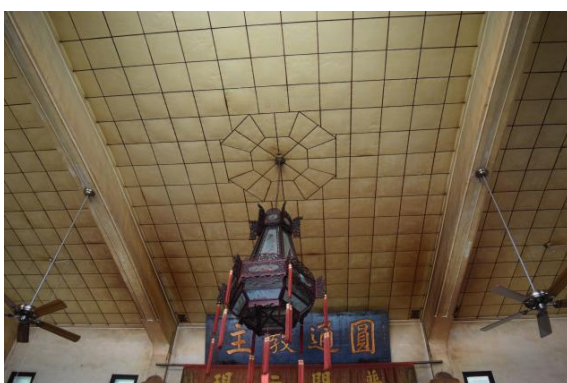
**Figure 11.** *Guanyin Hall in 1924*

Source: Highlights of Fengsan County.



**Figure 12.** *Guanyin Hall Rebuilt in 1959*

Source: Author, 2021.



**Figure 13.** *The Octagon on the Ceiling of Guanyin Hall Symbolizes Eight Trigram*

Source: Author, 2021.



**Figure 14.** *The Pattern on the Ground of Guanyin Hall Symbolizes the Legend of Feng Shui*

Source: Author, 2021.

The Buddhist symbolism of the lotus and the northern palatial style of the roof (Figure 15) better met BAROC's demand for "orthodoxy" and the government's demand for "legitimate sovereignty".<sup>48</sup> The secular managers and the monks were still in a cooperative relationship in 1973 during the construction of the Mahavira Hall, where it adopted a northern style of roof while retaining the style of folk temples with the two dragon pillars inside the Mahavira Hall. As the monks obtained management rights, streamers and archways shaped in lotus petals were added to the Mahavira Hall to enhance its Buddhist symbolism (Figure 16), while the northern palatial style of carpentry, which was imitated with reinforced concrete (Figure 17), was used in the expansion of the northern-styled Hall of

48. Chen Ming-Yen, *The Study of Modernization of Buddhism Architecture in Taiwan* (Department of Architecture, National Cheng Kung University, 2003), 2-41.

Heavenly Kings and the left and right cloisters connecting the Mahavira Hall (Figure 18), in addition to the northern-styled roof.



**Figure 15.** *The Exterior of the Daxiong Palace, the Northern-Style Roof Combined with the Lotus Petal-Shaped Arch as the Main Image*

Source: Author, 2021.



**Figure 16.** *Lotus Sash as Main Decoration*  
Source: Author, 2021.



**Figure 17.** *The Exterior of the Hall of Heavenly Kings, with the Northern Roof*

Source: Author, 2021.



**Figure 18.** *Using Reinforced Concrete to Imitate the Northern Wood Structure*

Source: Author, 2021.

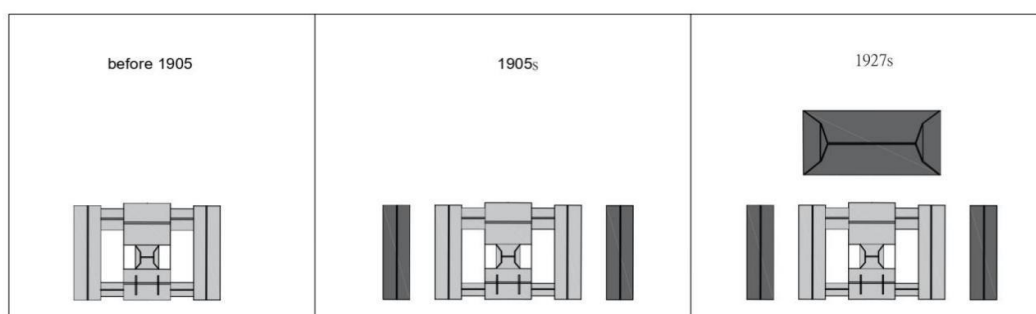
### **Choosing Coexistence—Gangshan Giam 崗山巖 in Kaohsiung**

Located in Alian, Gangshan Giam was originally built by Buddhist monks, but its clerical system became unclear afterward, and developed closer relationships with the locals and the public sector. “*Revised Chronicles of Taiwan Prefecture*” 續修臺灣府志 mentions: “Guanyin Pavilion of Chaofeng Rock: Located



in Gangshan. Built by a monk named *Shaoguang* 紹光.” At the time, Chaofeng Temple was built by a Buddhist monk, and a stone sculpture of Guanyin was enshrined there. Zeng Jing-Lai’s investigation referred to this place as Chaofeng Giam, a name given by local officials in 1749 (or 1763) when they patrolled there and appropriated funds to rebuild a hermitage into a monastery. However, the locals habitually called it Gangshan Giam.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, there is also the legend of the nail in a coin’s hole as two families quarreled over a feng shui issue, which resulted in an adjudication of transferring the site to Guanyin. Zeng identified three of the abbots, namely Shaoguang, Duanchun, and Xinghui, while the rest of them remain unknown.<sup>50</sup>

The arrangement is centered on Guanyin Hall. Its rearward and sideward expansions were caused by the influx of monks and state intervention, which led to the separation of venues for folk religious and Buddhist activities as Buddhism grew more prevalent and the number of monks increased. In 1905, *Master Yimin* 義敏師 traveled to Chaofeng Temple with his disciple *Master Rongding* 永定師, and instructed Rongding to stay there for the renovation and expansion of the temple, where the Guanyin Hall would be renovated and the living quarters would be expanded sideward. The temple joined the *Myōshin-ji branch of Rinzai sect* in 1927 as a liaison monastery in Takao Prefecture, and the construction of a new Hall of Three Jewels behind the Guanyin Hall began next year (Figure 19). However, before the completion of the construction, the monks were forced to relocate to the foothills and build a new Chaofeng Temple there due to World War II.

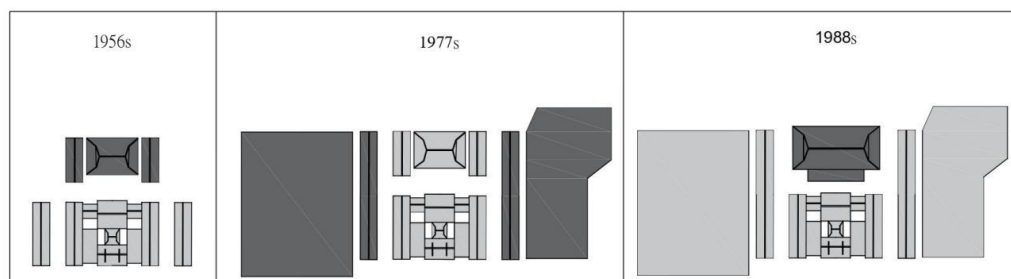


**Figure 19.** *Spatial Changes in the Japanese Period (the dark part is the added part)*  
Source: Author, 2021.

49 Zeng Jing-Lai. *Religion and superstition in Taiwan* (Taipei: Taiwan Religious Research Association, 1938).

50. Zeng Jing-Lai, “臺灣佛教資料—赤山の龍湖巖—大崗. 山と超峰寺” [Materials of Buddhism in Taiwan—Longhu Giam of Chishan—Da Gangshan and Chaofeng Temple], *南瀛佛教會報* [South Seas Buddhist Associations Bulletin] 16, no. 2 (1938): 24.

After the World War II, *Master Kaizhao* 開照師 returned to the mountain and rebuilt Chaofeng Temple in 1948. The Front Hall and the chambers on both sides were the first to be rebuilt. In 1953, Master Kaizhao received precepts in the triple platform ordination at Daxian Temple under the guidance of BAROC, which was held for the accumulated mass of monks from *Dagang Shan sect* who had not received precepts yet.<sup>51</sup> Subsequently, the Hall of Three Jewels and the living quarters were rebuilt in 1956. Initially, the abbot was nominally reserved for the clergy, while the manager was nominally reserved for the laity. When *Master Fazhi* 法智師 succeeded as the abbot, *Chen Bao* 陳豹, who was the manager, transferred his managerial power to Master Fazhi; the master expanded the living quarters, kitchen, and dining hall and rebuilt the Hall of Three Jewels in 1988 (Figure 20).<sup>52</sup>

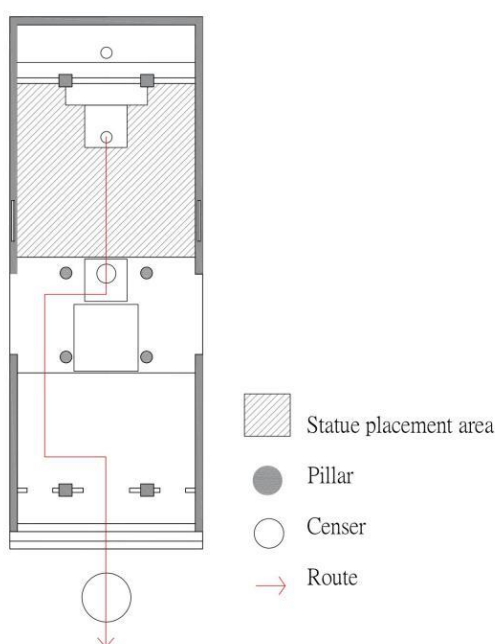


**Figure 20.** *Spatial Changes After World War II (The Dark Part is the Added Part)*

Source: Author, 2021.

51. Jiang Cian-Teng, *Understanding Taiwan's native Buddhism: transformation and diversified new appearances since the lifting of the martial law* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 2012), 166.

52. Chen Yu-Chuan, *The Relationship with Folk Belief for the Dagangshan Chao-feng Temple through the Perspective of Folk Buddhism* (Institute of Religion and Humanities, Tzu Chi University, 2010), 37-40.



**Figure 21.** *The Route of the Statue Across the Censer*

Source: Author, 2021.

Guanyin Hall has always been the location for incense-related folk religious activities, such as the distribution of spiritual incense and prayers. In accordance with the “Separation of Deities and Buddha” advocated by some Buddhist groups in the 1950s, pilgrimage missions cannot conduct their activities beyond Guanyin Hall. This reflects the separation of folk religion and Buddhism caused by the growing dominance of Buddhism after state intervention, and conforms to the “Guanyin Hall Rule”.<sup>53</sup> The deity sculptures brought by pilgrimage missions are placed in the main space, and removing the sculpture from the temple requires passing across the top of censer on the table (Figure 21). Only the monks or the abbot of the temple are allowed to insert joss sticks into the inner censer of the niche. The incense ash is purposely collected for pilgrimage missions as a means of sharing the spiritual energy of Chaofeng Temple, or as “lu dan” (incense ash perceived to have medicinal properties) for the believers. Folk religious activities that require “throwing of moon blocks”<sup>54</sup> or “drawing of oracle lots” are also carried out inside the Guanyin Hall.

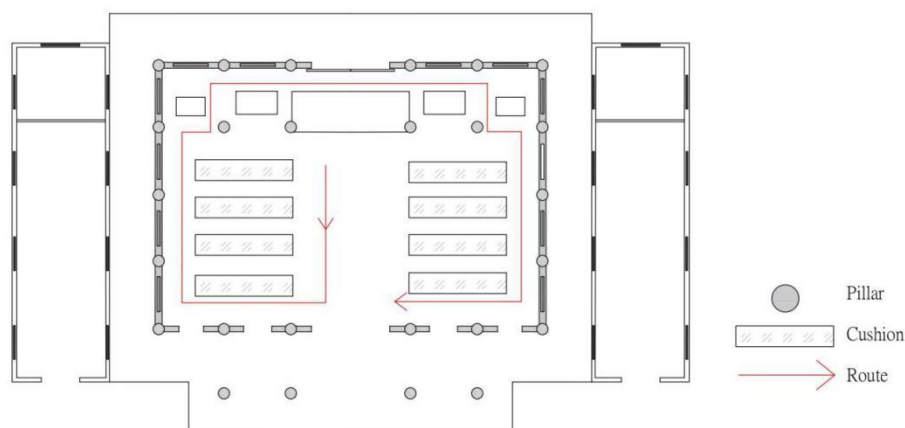
As the monks began to settle in Chaofeng Temple in 1915, a notion emerged

53. Cheng, Chin-Min, *The Development and Change of Religion in Taiwan* (Taipei: Wenjin Publishing House, 2011), 134.

54. Oral statement from a member of staff receiving pilgrimage missions on September 13, 2019.

that considered a “Mahavira Hall” necessary in a “Buddhist temple”.<sup>55</sup> After joining the *Myōshin-ji branch of Rinzai sect*, the construction of the Mahavira Hall began the next year (1928),<sup>56</sup> which symbolized and asserted the conversion of Chaofeng Temple from the folk religious Gangshan Giam to a Buddhist monastery.<sup>57</sup> However, the monks were forced to leave the mountain due to the Second World War.

After the war, the Hall of Three Jewels was rebuilt in 1956, and Master Baisheng of BAROC hosted the transmission of precepts ceremony there, which was seen as the continuation of that one held at Daxian Temple in 1953, and established the dominant status of Chaofeng Temple in the Buddhist community in southern Taiwan. Although this ceremony was considered a resurgence of the powerful *Dagang Shan sect* from the era of Japanese rule, it was also seen as a departure from the local community.<sup>58</sup> The current layout of the Hall of Three Jewels is the product of the enlargement work in 1988, which provided monks with the necessary space to conduct daily chanting and monastic rites and services. Behind the statue of the Buddha is a passageway used for ceremonial circumambulation (Figure 22).



**Figure 22.** *The Mahavira Hall Detours Around the Buddha Statue During Religious Ceremonies*

Source: Author, 2021.

55. Gang Shan Jyun Yi Suo, *Gang Shan Jyun Yao Lan* [Overview of Okayama County] (Taipei: Chengwen Publishing, 1923).

56. 超峰寺之建築 [The Architecture of Chaofeng Temple]. (1928, October 4). 臺灣日日新報 [Taiwan Daily News] (4th ed.).

57. Chen Yu-Chuan, *The Relationship with Folk Belief for the Dagangshan Chao-feng Temple through the Perspective of Folk Buddhism* (Institute of Religion and Humanities, Tzu Chi University, 2010), 29-36.

58. Chen, Kuang-Jung, *The Development and the Change of Lifestyle of Alien Village* (Native Culture Research Institute, National Tainan University, 2003), 37.



Guanyin Hall embraced the southern Min architectural style, with roof ridges resembling folk religious structures prior to governmental interference. From the times of Japanese rule to the post-war era, the increasing magnificence of Guanyin Hall (Figures 23, 24) represented the growing significance of its folk religious attributes. The hall was constructed using a method of carpentry known as “bidanying” (pillar-bearing wall), in which the load-bearing walls support the pillars and the beams before the roof is constructed. Octagonal “yuanchendeng” (Lanterns of Auspicious Time) are hung from above, and specialists known as “xiangdengshi” (lantern keepers) are employed to attend to the lanterns and keep them indefinitely illuminated by constant refueling (Figure 25). There is a saying among fishermen in Kaohsiung and Pingtung that the Guanyin Hall’s lanterns, which are located on the high Gangshan Giam, guided the navigation of fishing vessels in the times before lighthouses. There is a modest octagonal tracery at the praying pavilion (Figure 26). The surrounding walls are adorned with clay sculptures depicting traditional themes, such as the Dragon and Tiger Wall and The Heaven-Moving Filial Piety. The wood carvings in the niche depicting fortunate flowers and birds exemplify the majesty of southern Min architecture.



**Figure 23.** *Guanyin Hall in 1922*

Source: Chen, Yu- Juan, 2005.



**Figure 24.** *The Current State of Guanyin Hall, the Roof has Become More Ornate*

Source: Author, 2021.



**Figure 25.** *Wooden Carved Shrine with Bright Lamps*



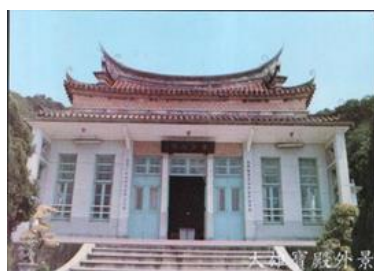
**Figure 26.** *Octagonal Wood Carving Ceiling*

Source: Author, 2021.

The Hall of Three Jewels exhibits three architectural styles, viz. the southern Min style during the era of Japanese rule (Figure 27), the simplified southern Min style of the swallowtail roof ridges during the early post-war era (Figure 28), and the northern palatial style used in recent renovations (Figure 29). The shifting styles reflect the simplification of secular decorations as the Buddhist attributes became prominent, as well as the trend of Buddhist monasterial architecture under the influence of BAROC and the political notion of “legitimate sovereignty.” The first design of the temple was made during Japanese rule, and was never completed as the monks were forced to leave the mountain due to World War II; the second design was completed in 1958, where the swallowtail and upward-curving roof ridges were simplified while the niche and dragon pillars inside were resplendently decorated (Figure 30); the final design as of now is the result of renovation in 1988, when the monks obtained full management rights. The main structure is built with reinforced concrete, where efforts were made to imitate northern palatial architecture. In contrast to Guanyin Hall, the ceiling is modestly ornamented with a timber coffered ceiling and a motif relating to the Buddha’s life (Figure 31). In the back of the Hall of Three Jewels, the swallowtail roof ridges transition to a northern style roof, signifying the building’s evolution from a symbol of “folk religion” to a structure consistent with “orthodox Buddhism”.<sup>59</sup>



**Figure 27.** *The First Generation of Mahavira Hall*  
Source: Dagangshan Chaofeng Temple



**Figure 28.** *The Second Generation of Mahavira Hall*  
Source: Dagangshan Chaofeng Temple



**Figure 29.** *The Third Generation of Mahavira Hall*  
Source: Author, 2021

59. Chen, Yu-Chuan, *The Relationship with Folk Belief for the Dagangshan Chao-feng Temple through the Perspective of Folk Buddhism* (Institute of Religion and Humanities, Tzu Chi University, 2010).



**Figure 30.** *The Interior Landscape of the Second-Generation Mahavira Hall, with Bright Lights and Stone-Carved Dragon Columns on Both Sides*

Source: Dagangshan Chaofeng Temple.



**Figure 31.** *The Top of the Third-Generation Three Treasures Hall is Decorated with a Latticed Ceiling, Surrounded by the Story of Sakyamuni Buddha*

Source: Author, 2021.

## Conclusion

This essay analyzed the configurational and architectural transformation of Giam temples facilitated by two stages of state intervention, the era of Japanese rule and the post-war era, through their legendary origins, their spatial changes and the styles and details of how the buildings were used, and with three examples illustrated the adjustments of aligning to folk religion or Buddhism, as well as the result of the attempt to adapt both religious attributes. Registration of religious institutions began from the era of Japanese rule, and was turned into more thorough investigation targeting local religions after the Tapani Incident, where the dualistic Giam temples were subjected to registration policy that kept their attributes and management in records to ensure their cooperation. Simultaneously, the government gained control over the religions in Taiwan through such investigations, while the intervention from the Buddhist sects in Japan made the Buddhist attribute of Giam temples more prominent. This continued after World War II, where Giam temples were considered Buddhist and formed connections with BAROC, turning them into venues that exerted the will of the government under the martial law regime.

This essay arrives at the following findings: folk religion-oriented Giam temples placed greater emphasis on the transmission of spiritual power through incense, smoke, and censers, whereas Buddhism-oriented Giam temples focused more on the embodiment of cosmology and Buddhist sutras. Furthermore, some Giam temples might even attempt to enable the coexistence of the two religious orientations in the spaces and rituals. The overall results reflected the choice between Buddhism and folk religion after the rivalry between them, or the

compromised coexistence between the two religions through spatial division. Bantian Giam restored its folk religious nature as a result of its handover to the management to the local community due to disputes between the monks and the locals regarding the construction of the columbarium and the attempt of demolishing the original structure; Cuiping Giam assimilated the Guanyin-worshipping “Giam-a” into a Buddhist “Lecture Hall,” which is also dedicated to Guanyin in accordance to the Sangharama layout of Buddhist monasteries, and further conformed to orthodox Buddhist monasterial layouts by forward expansion; and Gangshan Giam brought coexistence in both religions by separating the venues for different uses. The Guanyin Hall at the front, which retained the swallowtail roof ridges of the southern Min architectural style, is used for offering incense and drawing oracle lots, while the venue at the back adopted the northern palatial style, and is used for Buddhist rituals and ceremonies.

As shown in the development of the three examples, the origins of Giam temples in Taiwan were often closely linked to their surrounding terrain and mountain ranges. Details such as feng shui legends and the stone sculpture of Guanyin highlighted the “specialness and sanctity” of these places, and their naming was also closely related to the mountains, such as Gangshan Giam, Cuiping Giam, and Bantian Giam, which were all named after the mountains surrounding them. Even when Buddhism was introduced in these temples, their names retained the theme of mountains. For example, Gangshan Giam was renamed Chaofeng Temple of Mount Dagang, while Cuiping Giam was renamed Dajue Temple of Mount Guanyin.

Three cases reflect a pattern of confrontation between institutional religion and folk belief, possibly related to the properties of mountains as sacred symbols across regions and interracial. Mountain ranges, as an important and sacred phenomenon across ethnic groups, geographic regions, and religions, can bring together local and foreign religions, where attributes of different religions may form connections in the conceptions of the world and the universe. Apart from embodying the center of the world and the universe, the towering mountain ranges, with exotic terrain and rocks that are easily turned into canonized objects, are worshipped and even deified in certain religious beliefs. However, because mountain ranges unite religions with different characteristics, they are easily impacted when modern governments and policies intervene in religious affairs, and may be compelled to align themselves with one of the many religious characteristics, or find ways to allow for the coexistence of the various characteristics. This phenomenon is represented in the use of space and the style of architecture, which are frequently modified in reaction to the governing institution to create a balance of influence among local cliques. In the follow-up, it may be possible to extend the issue on the religious buildings related to the mountain and the impact of the intervention of state power.

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