

Spatial Hybrid of Reality and Imagination: Architectural Characteristics and Functions of the Great Matzu Temple

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ABSTRACT

The Great Matzu Temple of Tainan, a Grade I historical monument, was built more than three hundred years ago during the Ming-Zheng era. For various reasons, related information and literature remains limited and scarce. Moreover, along with the social changes in different periods, the names and functions of these ancient buildings also varied in connection with the then historical events. Passed down through legends and folklores, such names and functions were constantly recreated. Hence, the architectural characteristics and functions of these historical buildings became hybrids of reality and imagination; and their actual existence or authenticity became questionable.

In the light of traditional architectural theories and principles, this paper compares the contemporary recognized names and functions of these ancient buildings against related literature and historical materials. Whether there exist other possible names and functions is further explored for more in-depth analysis and for reconstructing the actual reality.

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