

Communication and Diffusion: Mazu Belief in South Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

The paper based on Communicology of Mazu belief, the theory of religious and cultural communication, to discuss the spread process of Mazu belief culture in South Taiwan. This paper discusses the way of communication firstly. The second part analyzes the routes of communication. Finally, we describe the sources of communication, including immigrants, monks, officials, gentry and merchants, etc. Let us have a clear understanding of the communication and diffusion of Mazu belief culture in southern Taiwan.

Keywords: Mazu Belief, South Taiwan, Communicology of Mazu Belief

1. GEOGRAPHICAL ENVIRONMENT

The topography of Taiwan Island, with the central mountains as the main trunk, covers a wide range of mountainous areas over 3,000 meters above sea level. Most of the major rivers originate from this area, and then rapidly converge downward along the steep slope to form estuarine plains of different sizes. In the early days, most of the coastal immigrants in mainland China built estuarine ports at the outflows of rivers, and then used smaller ships or bamboo rafts and other means of transportation to gradually trace the rivers up to the banks of rivers and streams to find suitable locations for setting up ports. As inland ports for landing, establishing living bases and conducting trade.

Although the mainland's coastal immigrants can reach the ports in the north and south of Taiwan by boat, the Dutch and Zheng's Regime, who ruled Taiwan in the 17th century, took South Taiwan as the center and gradually expanded to Central Taiwan and North Taiwan. Therefore, the extension and root of traditional Chinese culture in Taiwan, the establishment and stability of Han society, and the spread and influence of Han belief culture should be followed in this way. Under the rule of the Qing Dynasty, Taiwan's administrative region was gradually set up following the pace of immigration from south to north. In 1684, the government of Taiwan was set up in today's Tainan City, with Taiwan County under

its jurisdiction, Fengshan County in the South and Zhuluo County in the north. However, because it was too vast to reach, Changhua County was added to the north of Huwei River in 1723. Later, in 1731, the county from the north of Dajia River to Keelung was set up as Danshui County. In 1812, the office of Kavalan was added to govern today's Yilan County. The spreading direction of Mazu belief in Taiwan also roughly followed this direction and gradually spread all over the island.

For the spread of Mazu belief in Taiwan, the Qing government did play an important role. Shilang (1621-1696) attacked Zheng's Regime and even Taiwan civil war in previous times, and had the outstanding deeds of Mazu to help the war. In the war between the Qing Dynasty and Zheng's Regime, Mazu belief was used many times as a united front strategy. For example, when General Wanzhengse (1637-1691) conquered Xiamen in 1680, he said that he "won with the help of Goddess secretly" [1]. Emperor Kangxi (1654-1722) granted Mazu the title of "Celestial Consort of Sublime Numinosity, Glorious Response, Magnanimous Humanity, and Universal Salvation, who Protects the State and Guards the People (huguo bimin miaoling zhaoying hongren puji tianfei)", and "granted royal incense and royal silk, and sent officials to Mazu Temple in Meizhou with an imperial edict." [2] Such a strategy had a positive impact on Zhutiangu (1647-1683), a very brave and good at fighting in Zheng's army, as well as his more than 20,000

Navy troops and more than 300 warships, who surrendered to the Qing army, and made great achievements in the Penghu naval battle, which became an important key to defeat Zheng's Regime. In addition, Wuying (1637-1712), another Putian general under Shilang's command, served as the commander of Xinghua (Putian) before he entered Taiwan. Naturally, there were many Putian soldiers and made great achievements in Taiwan. Naturally, after he conquered Taiwan, Shilang publicized more about Mazu.

After entering Taiwan, Shilang built Mazu Temples as the spiritual sustenance of the officers and soldiers' faith in the places where the Navy stationed, such as wharf in Anping, Guishan peak in Xinglong, Fengshan county, etc. The 34th generation of Linjizong monk of Kaiyuan Temple in Quanzhou is the Minister of monk in Taiwan. He lives in Mazu Temple, the capital of Taiwan. Since then, every official in Taiwan built Mazu Temple, and there have been abbots. [3] Since then, under the rule of the Qing Dynasty, many Mazu Temples have been built in Taiwan.

2. THE WAY OF COMMUNICATION

In volume 12 of the "Local chronicles of Zhuluo County", it is clearly recorded that around the 17th century, Mazu Temples were successively built near Zhuluo County Office, Bengang street, Xianshuigang street, etc. [4] These Mazu Temples, which have a long history, have developed into Mazu belief centers in the future. As the mother (ancestor) temples of other Mazu Temples in Taiwan, they spread Mazu belief to all parts of Taiwan in the form of divide incense and spirit. It is also possible that the ancestral temples of the descendants will develop into local temples, and then spread incense to other places to establish a new Mazu Temple or Mazu Goddess Association. In this way, Mazu belief culture has been built all over Taiwan.

In folk religious belief culture, the concept of divide incense (fen-xiang) derives from the concept of ancestor worship in traditional Chinese clan system to a certain extent. The relationship between the ancestral temple and the son (or grandson) temple is quite similar to the relationship between da-zong (large clans) and xiao-zong (small clans) in the ancestral temple worship system. From the ancestral temple to the new (son or grandson) temples, it is just like the family sacrifice from the kitchen fire to the new family. Like the idea of "going back to mother's home" or "returning to ancestor's grave", jin-xiang (pilgrimage) or ye-zu (paying homage to ancestors) activities can play a role in confirming blood identification and strengthening the close connection with Gods. Ancestral temple is the root, and the temple of son or grandson is the branch and leaves. The wider the branches and leaves, the more effective the Goddess is.

Every once in a while, the statues of divide incense (fen-xiang) temple need to return to the original temple to pay homage, and even hold the ceremony of "cutting fire" (praying for fire) in order to increase the magic power of the Gods. It needs the consent of the majority of temple believers and administrators, which can show the source of Deities in their religious psychological cognition. By observing the pilgrimage activities in temples, we can not only understand the collective consciousness of pilgrimage ancestors in temples, but also can trace the transmission route of belief culture.

3. THE ROUTES OF COMMUNICATION

The late 17th century was the key period for Mazu belief to develop in Taiwan. In addition to the fact that Xiao-Mazu Temple in Xidingfang was jointly built by villagers, Shilang and his Navy entered Taiwan in 1684 and built at least five Mazu Temples in various flood prevention sites in southern Taiwan, including Zhenbeifang Tianfei Temple, Anping Tianfei Temple, Guishantian Temple in Fengshan County, Zuoying Mazu Temple in Xinglongzhuang, Fengshan County, etc. After that, the civilians built Mazu Temples in Kaohsiung Qihou, Bengang and Yanshuigang streets, and the civil and military officials built Mazu Temples in Zhuluo county and Luermen in the political and military center. Apart from the Mazu Temple in Zhuluo County, these early Mazu Temples were all located at the seaside and the port. It can be seen that the spread of Mazu belief in Taiwan was first to build temples at the seaside port and other military and political strongholds, and then slowly spread inland. These early Mazu Temples became the foundation of Mazu belief in Taiwan, and most of them also became the source of incense for Mazu temples all over the country.

Since the 18th century, the society has been in a state of prosperity for a long time, which encouraged the construction of Mazu Temple in southern Taiwan. At this time, after the immigrants in various regions stabilized their lives, they organized fellow villagers to establish their own Mazu Temple. For example, Quanzhou people in Fujian Province built the Tianhou Temple (Wenlingma Temple) in Zhiximen of Zhuluo County in 1760, and Pinghe people in Fujian Province built the Tianhou Temple in Lanjing south of Zhuluo County in 1762.

After the 19th century, pirates were rampant in Southeast China. In order to fight against these rampant pirates, the government continued to strive for the support of coastal residents, and the construction of Mazu Temple became one of the ways to win over the folk forces. Most of the major Mazu Temples in southern Taiwan were built in the Qing Dynasty. Most of these Mazu temples developed into local temples and became the source of other Mazu temples.

Most of the major Mazu Temples in southern Taiwan were built in succession during the reign of the Qing Dynasty. Most of these Mazu Temples developed into local temples and became the source of fen-xiang (divide incense) for other Mazu temples. (see Table 1.)

Table 1. Distribution of Mazu Temples in southern Taiwan under the rule of Qing Dynasty

Districts	~1700	1701~1800	1801~1894
Yunlin	1	4	4
Jiayi	-	4	2
Tainan	3	10	5
Kaohsiung	3	9	12
Pingtung	-	2	9
Total	7	29	32

The first relatively formal religious survey in Taiwan was conducted by Marui Keijirou (1870-1934), the Governor General of Taiwan during the period of Japanese rule, from 1915 to 1918. The results were published in March 1919 as "Taiwan religious survey report Volume I". In the appendix of this book, there are statistics on the number of important temples for worshipping Gods at that time. According to the statistics, there are 320 Mazu Temples in Taiwan, accounting for 9.87% of the total temples in Taiwan, ranking third only to Wangye Temple and Earth Temple. There were 165 Mazu Temples in southern Taiwan (Jiayi, Tainan and Ahgou), accounting for 51.56% of all 320 Mazu Temples in Taiwan at that time. (see Table 2.) This shows the prosperity of Mazu belief in southern Taiwan. Among them, there are 81 Mazu Temples in Tainan, accounting for 25.31% of the total. There are 57 Mazu Temples in Jiayi, accounting for 17.81% of the total number of Mazu Temples in Taiwan. There are 27 Mazu Temples in Ahgou, accounting for 8.44% of the total number of Mazu Temples in Taiwan.

Table 2. In 1915, statistics of Mazu Temples in southern Taiwan

	Total number of Temples	Mazu Temples	%
Taiwan	3,241	320	9.87
Jiayi	640	57	8.91
Tainan	640	81	12.66
Ahgou	181	27	14.92

Source : Marui Keijirou, Taiwan religious survey report Volume I, pp.17-19.

After Marui, Masuda Hukutarou(1903-1982) continued to use religious survey data for religious research. Due to the restructuring of the administrative region, its statistics are closer to the current situation of Taiwan's administrative region. According to his survey around 1935, there are 335 Mazu Temples in Taiwan, including 37 in Taipei, about 11.04%, 25 in Hsinchu, about 7.46%, 81 in Taichung, about 24.18%, 117 in Tainan, about 34.93%, 66 in Kaohsiung, about 19.70%, 6 in Penghu, about 1.79%, and 3 in Taitung, about 0.90%. Among them, Tainan has the largest number. [5] There

are 117 Mazu Temples in Tainan and 66 Mazu Temples in Kaohsiung. The total number of Mazu Temples is 183, about 54.63%, which is more than half of all Mazu Temples in Taiwan. This shows the prosperity of Mazu belief in southern Taiwan. (see Table 3.)

Table 3. In 1934, statistics of Mazu Temple in southern Taiwan

	Total number of Temples	Mazu Temples	%
Taiwan	3,662	335	9.14
Tainan	1,188	82	6.90
Kaohsiung	538	66	12.27

Source: Masuda Hukutarou, Taiwan religion, pp.14-15.

4. THE SOURCES OF COMMUNICATION

4.1. Immigrants

Mazu belief was first known to the world as the patron saint of navigation near Meizhou Island in Putian. In Fujian coastal areas, Mazu is usually worshipped on fishing boats to pray for smooth sailing on the sea. These customs of worshipping Mazu on boats are known as "bow ma". In order to consider the space on the ship and the convenience of carrying, the statue of "bow ma" is small in shape, but also soft in shape. [6] When the ancestors arrived in Taiwan by boat, they would also worship the "bow ma" on the ship for protection. Once they landed successfully, they would continue to worship and thank the Goddess for their kindness.

4.2. Monks

According to legend, it was in 1694 that Monk Shubi of Xinghua, Fujian Province sailed to the sea with Mazu of Meizhou. However, he encountered a hurricane in the middle of the voyage and the shipwrecked ship was broken. He drifted to the coast of Xiahukou near Beigang. At that time, most of the nine villages outside Zhuluo were the places where the immigrants from Quanzhou and Zhangzhou lived together, so they could not worship the gods. Therefore, seeing that the Monk Shubi came to worship the statue of Mazu, they proposed to keep the monks in charge of incense and build Mazu Temple in Bengang street. [7] In 1799, the flood occurred in Bengang River, and Mazu Temple in Bengang was destroyed by the flood. Monk Jingrui, holding the statues and cultural relics in the temple, moved eastward to Xingang. Later, with the help of believers, he established Fengtian Temple.

4.3. Officials

According to the traditional view, the reconstruction of Mazu Temple from King Ningjing palace was attributed to Shilang, who thought that Shilang occupied the palace after entering Taiwan, and later rebuilt it into

Mazu Temple because he avoided suspicion. In fact, General Wuying, commander in chief of Xinghua who came to Taiwan with Shilang, was in charge of the construction of Mazu Temple. After Shilang left Taiwan, Wuying was still ordered to stay for more than a year, which was enough time for the construction of Mazu Temple. This temple is the earliest Mazu Temple built by the government and included in the official sacrificial ceremony in Taiwan. It has a very important position in Taiwan Mazu belief because it is a public temple in Tainan. When the Datianhougong holds activities to welcome Mazu, it can raise funds across all temples in the city.[8]

4.4. Gentry and Merchants

Haian Temple at Xidingfang port in Tainan City, was built in 1736 by a combination of three trade associations and initiated by Suwanli, Lishengxing and Jinyongshun.

In order to seek the protection of the Goddess and ensure the safe navigation of the temple, the merchants welcome the "sugar merchant's ma" (Kaiji Third Ma), and the grocers welcome the "Zhenjiao Ma" and the "Bujiao Ma" from Bujiao. Oil merchants welcome "Shuijiao Ma" (commonly known as Xiangdan Ma), which is worshipped in Mazu Temple in Yanshui Town, Tainan. [10]

Mazu Temple in Yancheng, Tainan, is also known as "Fangang Tianhou Temple" because in the past, most of the nearby residents transported the salt from the salt works to Anping through the "Fangang" behind the temple. When Yancheng was close to the inland sea of the Taijiang, the residents not only basked in salt and farmed for a living, but also traded between Fujian and Xiamen by water transportation. In order to pray for Mazu's blessing in sailing smoothly, Tianhou Temple became the belief center of Yancheng area. [11]

5. CONCLUSION

The paper refers to South Taiwan as Yunlin County, Jiayi County, Jiayi City, Tainan City, Kaohsiung City and Pingtung County in Taiwan's administrative region today. This area is located in the southwestern part of Taiwan Island and is the first area for Han immigrants to reclaim.

The paper based on Communicology of Mazu belief, the theory of religious and cultural communication, to discuss the spread process of Mazu belief culture in South Taiwan. This paper discusses the way of communication firstly. The second part analyzes the routes of communication. Finally, we describe the sources of communication, including immigrants, monks, officials, gentry and merchants, etc.

Since the Qing Dynasty, Mazu Temple in South Taiwan was built one after another. These Mazu

Temples, which have a long history, will become the center of Mazu belief in this area. They will serve as the mother (ancestral) temples of other Mazu Temples in Taiwan, and then spread Mazu belief to all parts of Taiwan by divide incense or efficiency. This progressive way of communication has built a deep-rooted Mazu belief culture in all parts of Taiwan.

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