

A Study on the Cultural Changes and Political Relations of Mazu Temple in Taiwan – A Case Study of Haotian Temple Pilgrimage

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is mainly to analyze the changes in Mazu temple culture in Taiwan in recent years, the significance of the rise of walking pilgrimage activities, and how politicians use these activities to build momentum. This study adopts the phenomenological approach of qualitative research, using web social data analysis (Facebook), interview method, on-site participation in walking pilgrimage, and observation method. After analyzing the results, this study has the following findings: (1) The reason for the rise of walking pilgrimage is mainly to enhance the popularity of the temple and increase income. (2) The reason why politician's participant is mainly to provide free public venues and enhance their popularity.

Keywords: Mazu belief, temple culture, pilgrimage, procession, politics

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the trend of walking pilgrimage has arisen in Mazu temple in Taiwan. The main reason is the influence of two century-old walking pilgrimage activities, namely the pilgrimage procession from Taichung City Dajia Jenn Lann Temple for nine days and eight nights to Hsian Kang Feng Tian Temple. In addition, the number of participants has been increasing in recent years from Baishatun Gongtian Temple in Tungshiau Town, Miaoli County, to the nine-day and eight-night pilgrimage event at Beigang Chaotian Temple in Yunlin County. The two major pilgrimage activities are about 300 kilometers each way, with more than hundreds of thousands of people participating. They are one of the major religious and folk activities in Taiwan. The Pilgrimage ceremony has multiple meanings. In traditional society, it has a belief function that maintains the development of a diverse society. The Dajia Mazu pilgrimage procession and the Baishatun Mazu pilgrimage still maintain the traditional walking pilgrimage because they are one of the few large-scale walking ceremonies that are exaggerated by the media and attract public attention and participation. It has even become a representative of folk belief culture and influenced the pilgrimage ceremony of Temple in Taiwan. Also due to the influence of the two pilgrimage activities mentioned above, the Mazu Temple who went to Beigang Chaotian Temple pilgrimage before, and the Mazu Temple that was subsequently built also began to have walking pilgrimage activities. However, when walking pilgrimage activities are being "restored", "constructed", and "managed" again in modern society, in addition to continuing the traditional religious significance, why is the "walking" form particularly emphasized? Collins-Kreiner (2018) believes that pilgrimage has powerful economic, political, social and cultural impacts, and may even have an impact on global trade and health. In addition, it requires spatial movement and plays an important role within its scope. The Haotian Temple in Taichung City, walking pilgrimage to Beigang Chaotian Temple has a century-old history in Taiwan. After Taiwan's transportation developed in the 1970s, the pilgrimage was changed to a 2-day and 1-night pilgrimage by bus. However, the walking pilgrimage was only resumed 5 years ago. The main reason? In Taiwan, the majority of Mazu believers have developed a unique set of "Mazu politics" in conjunction with Taiwan's political development. Why did politicians get involved in the pilgrimage process? And the psychology and experience of the several walking participants?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Pilgrimage

Barber (1993) defines a pilgrimage as “a journey to a holy place externally for religious reasons and internally for spiritual purposes and internal understanding.” In the existing literature, a high degree of consistency in the beliefs and locations of pilgrims among different religions has been found. Therefore, pilgrimage can be considered as an independent phenomenon, with unified patterns and concepts across religions and cultures (p. 1). Previous research defines pilgrimage as a journey to a sacred site for religious reasons, during which participants are able to find personal spiritual meaning (Collins-Kreiner, 2016). Pilgrimage involves visiting a sacred center to experience the presence of God (Luz, 2020). According to Hoheisel (1971), pilgrimage involves three factors: a sacred place, the attraction of a person or group of people to the place, and a specific goal (i.e., to obtain some spiritual or material benefit). Generally speaking, the word pilgrimage has at least three meanings. First, there is the “inner pilgrimage,” which represents the “soul’s journey” from spiritual infancy to maturity (Stoddard, 1997). Secondly, as a paradigm of the intention of the religion itself, there is a literal pilgrimage of traveling to the Holy Land. This literal journey may be called “extroverted mysticism” (Turner, 1973). Finally, each long journey to a local sacred site is a microcosm of pilgrimage because it is conducted on a small scale and within the new community afforded by the general pilgrimage (Crim, Bullard, & Shinn, 1981). Pilgrimage is therefore defined as “a religious or spiritually inspired journey by an individual or group that is viewed as something more sacred or beneficial than everyday circumstances, seeking transcendent contact with a specific religious object for spiritual, emotional or spiritual gain, physical healing or benefit” (Margry, 2008, p.17).

2.2. Pilgrimage and Pilgrimage Procession in Taiwan

In Taiwan, pilgrimage refers to visiting other temples to worship. Generally, there are shared spirit temples that go back to ancestor temples that were previously separated to worship. There are also mutual visits between friend temples, and there are also local temples that go to older temples to worship. At present, the most common method is to return to the shared spirit temple's ancestor temple and get some incense ashes from the incense burner in the temple to increase the spiritual power of the god. However, sometimes pilgrimage also has the meaning of subordinate to superior, so some relationships with temple without spirituality will be explained by the name Huixiang. For the significance of pilgrimage, in addition to strengthening the spiritual power of the gods, the accompanying pilgrims can also receive the blessings of the gods. Jing Huo refers to taking the incense ashes from the temple in the pilgrimage and bringing them back to your own temple, and then pouring them into the incense burner to combine them. For example, the pilgrimage activities from Baishatun Gongtian Temple to Beigang Chaotian Temple not only bring "ten thousand years of incense ashes " back to the local area to bless the villagers, but also use it to strengthen the spiritual power of their own temple gods.

The most common is the shared spirit temple to the ancestor temple that was originally separated. For example, Beigang Chaotian Temple returns to Meizhou Island Mazu Temple pilgrimage in Putian City, Fujian Province, China. Chaotian Temple in South Africa returns to Beigang Chaotian Temple Yezu (paying respects to the ancestors) pilgrimage in Taiwan, etc. Yezu pilgrimage usually refers to a shared spirit temple that returns to its original ancestor temple pilgrimage, and brings the incense ashes back to its own temple incense burner, and then merges them together. The purpose of this move is not only to respect the ancestral temple of the original spirit, but also to extend the spiritual power of the ancestral temple and copy the spiritual power into the spirit's temple. For example, the Empress Temple (Alley Mazu) at Dashu Jiutang in Kaohsiung City has a deity from the Beigang Chaotian Temple, so she returns to the Temple every year for Yezu pilgrimage. Pilgrimage procession is a process by which gods go out in a specific area to bring peace and good weather to local people. For example, the pilgrimage from Baishatun Gongtian Temple to Beigang Chaotian Temple contains the meaning of pilgrimage procession, and believers along the way are Their actions of paying homage and drilling bridges also bless them with safety and success, and also satisfy the believers' related prayers.

2.3. The Relationship between Taiwan Mazu Temple and Politics

The act of worshipping Mazu has evolved from praying for blessings and peace to a place for politicians to test their popularity. During the pilgrimage and pilgrimage procession activities, Temple arranged "carrying the sedan chair", "supporting the sedan chair" and "protecting the sedan chair", and the crowds organized by the power of faith The foundation is transformed into Taiwan's local political strength. Chen (2019) research pointed out that in the process of political elections, religious organizations often become the targets of candidates, and religious mobilization plays an important role during the election. Chen used the Longfeng Temple in Zhunan Town, Miaoli County, which has a large number of people, as the research object. His research found that since the 1960s, more than 100 politicians have devoted themselves to voluntary services in the temple. Politicians sometimes burn incense, offer sacrifices, and serve as maidens, burn paper money, draw fortune sticks and participate in activities to devoutly pray to Mazu for health, success in career and winning elections. Chiang (2022) research pointed out that in Taiwan since the 2000s, temple fairs have not only been a festival form supported and encouraged by the government, or integrated folk elements into various government-run activities, but also seen the government co-organizing or hosting temple fairs. Their foundation, functions and expectations the results are very different from those in the past when it fell into the category of folk belief matters. The dual self-identity image that politicians can easily create in temple fairs is conducive to resonating with the public, and is a stage that politicians cannot ignore. Tsai (2022) studied the influence of temple elections on local elections in Beigang Town, Yunlin County, and found that the influence of temple elections on local elections has three points: (1) After local politicians enter the temple system, the temple performs well and can build reputations and connections, thereby gaining voice and gaining a certain amount of attention from voters before local elections; (2) After entering the temple system, you will have abundant resources that can be used in future local elections; (3) Consolidate vote sources through vote trading in temple elections, and have a basic vote source advantage in local elections.

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Scope and Subjects

This study takes the Haotian Temple in Wuqi District, Taichung City, Taiwan, and the 7-day and 6-night walking pilgrimage to Beigang Chaotian Temple in 2023 as the research scope, and takes the pilgrims who walked the whole journey as the subjects, as well as the staff of the temple. Haotian Temple was founded in the first year of Yongzheng in the Qing Dynasty (1723 AD) and has a history of more than 300 years. It is dedicated to Mazu and is also known as "Dazhuang Mazu" and "Diving Mazu". It is the religious center of people in 53 villages in Taichung City, including Wuqi District, Shalu District, Longjing District, and Dadu District.

3.2. Survey Methods

This research adopts a qualitative research method, including: (1) Document analysis method: collecting relevant research reports of Haotian Temple, web news reports, folklore research web pages, and Haotian Temple's Facebook. (2) Interview method: It is divided into two stages. The first stage is to interview local elderly people to explain the origin and changes of pilgrimage's activities orally. The second stage was for the researcher to walk and participate in the 7-day and 6-night pilgrimage event on the spot. During the process, the researcher learned about temple's preparations, the handling of the pilgrimage event before and after, as well as the purpose and psychological experience of the several pilgrims who participated in the entire process. (3) Observation method: From the process of holding the event, observe the progress of temple's pilgrimage, and observe the entire walking pilgrimage action.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Walking Pilgrimage at Haotian Temple

As with the identification of activities, Haotian Temple began to determine the pilgrimage itinerary and personnel after convening several internal coordination meetings with existing personnel (board of directors, directors, management, staff, volunteers). Recruitment and training, announcement of pilgrimage information, registration work, interaction and connection with the temples to stay, and fund raising are the most important tasks. The general description is as follows:

4.11. Pilgrimage Activity Itinerary

The pilgrimage itinerary lasts for seven days and six nights. Basically, the route is the same as the route taken a hundred years ago, except that the temples where they stay are different (as shown in Table 1). First, the stove owner of the Haotian Temple asked Mazu at the divination blocks to decide the date of the pilgrimage and the main temple to stay. Then he decided on the places and temples to stay in the itinerary. Then a coordination meeting will be held, with Haotian Temple and Taichung City officials coordinating with the police agencies of the counties and cities that the pilgrimage road passes through (traffic, and necessary security maintenance), as well as with the parking temples during the itinerary.

Table1. 2023 Haotian Temple to Beigang Chaotian Temple pilgrimage itinerary

Day	Date	Journey
1	October 8	Starting from Haotian Temple, Wuqi District, Taichung City-Yuhuangdian, Siping Street Chenzhai, Shalu District-Fushou Industrial Co., Ltd.-Dadu Hexing Temple-Security Temple-Yonghe Temple-Nanyao Temple, Changhua City-Shanbian Mazu Changhua Association-Qing'an Temple in Dacun Township.
2	October 9	Departure from Qing'an Temple in Dacun Township-Yongjing Yong'an Temple-Xipan Chaotian Temple-Baishatun Mazu Tianwei Association-Beidou Town Baotian Temple-Xizhou Township Mazu Temple Houtian Temple-Yunlin County Xiluo Town Guangsheng Temple-Xintian Temple-Wucuo Chaoxing Temple.
3	October 10	Starting from Wucuo Chaoxing Temple-Huwei Tianhou (Empress of Heaven) Temple-Tuku Shuntian Temple-Yunlin County Speakership Service Office-Xinjie Cisheng Temple-Jishihui-Xinjie Prince Altar-Mazu Youth Army Hall-Beigang Chaotian Temple (the group pays homage to the driver).
4	October 11	Depart from Beigang Chaotian Temple-Yuanchang Aofeng Temple-Zimao Nantian Temple-Tuku Farmers Association (Haotian Temple Simatou Xianghui to welcome the Holy Spirit)-Huwei Guangyun Temple-Xiluo Fruit and Vegetable Market-Xiluo Cihuitang-Xiluo Cihuitang Luoguangfu Temple-Xiluo Fuxing Temple.
5	October 12	Starting from Fuxing Temple, Xiluo Town, Yunlin County - Shouting Temple, Beidou Town, Changhua County - Dongluo Tianhou (Empress of Heaven) Temple - Diiian Temple - Qinghe Church, Yongjing Township - Ganshu Temple - Tiansheng Temple - Yuanlin City Citian Temple - Zhenbei Temple - Zhenyuan Temple - Dacun Township Ciyun Temple.
6	October 13	Dacun Township Ciyun Temple - Tianyang Chenghuang Temple - Changhua Guantian Temple - Zhaosheng Temple - Xinglin Temple - Changyi Zhangshan Temple - Taichung City Dadu Township Zhenyuan Temple - Wanxing Temple - Qiaoguo Leather Factory (Co., Ltd.) - Longjing Township Longgang Yonghe Temple-Longquanyan Qingshui Patriarch Temple.
7	October 14	Longquanyan Qingshui Patriarch Temple sets off-Taichung City Councilor Lin Meng Lingzhai-Haotian Temple Five mothers will receive incense-Haotian Temple Second mothers will receive incense-Haotian Temple Youth Army receives incense-Haoan Temple-Douban Baoning Temple-Yongan Temple- Zihao Temple-Zhenhou Temple-Qiu Cuo Xi Fu Ci-Shunxing Temple-Taichung CityTianshang shengmu (Holy Mother up in the Heavens) Charity Association-Wenchang Road Jiexiang Square-Back to Haotian Temple.

4.1.2. Pilgrimage Team Registration and Fundraising Work

Originally, Haotian Temple was the pilgrimage of fifty-three people in the area. They used to take buses to go to Beigang Chaotian Temple pilgrimage. Nearly 200 buses were sent to Beigang, causing a sensational traffic jam in the area. They have now started accepting registrations from pilgrims from other places. The number of registrations this year is about several thousand (exact numbers are unknown), as most of them are local residents (who did not participate in the entire walking activity),

as well as relevant volunteers and food and beverage staff who assisted in the itinerary. In addition, in terms of fund-raising activities, in addition to donations from enthusiastic pilgrims, temple also sponsors one of pilgrimage's prime ministers, several deputy prime ministers, and pilgrimage's advisory group from the business community at an open price.

4.1.3. Establish a Youth Group and Recruit Volunteers

On September 29, 2023, Haotian Temple held a youth volunteer group founding meeting. On October 14, Haotian Temple held a welcoming ceremony for Mazu on her way back to Taichung from Beigang pilgrimage. And on September 30th, a pre departure banquet was held, with over 700 round tables. On the evening of the banquet, representatives of various teams, staff, and local people were invited to participate, and multiple singers took turns performing on stage to enhance the atmosphere of the event. About 4,000 people participated in the event. In addition, Mazu temples at home and abroad, including the temple where Mazu originates from Meizhou Island, called to wish the event a success. Before the event, Haotian Temple also recruited volunteers, vehicles to participate in pilgrimage activities, and preparations inside and outside Temple (departure and return ceremonies).

4.1.4. Pilgrimage Team Training

Since the hardest part of the seven-day trip is the training of the sedan-carrying team, daily training before departure is very important. The chairman of the Haotian Temple Reconstruction Committee said that the entire team starts training before departure, especially the hardest-working sedan-carrying team. It adopts the method of walking to lift the sedan, and the personnel are constantly replaced, so the training is to train the physical strength and the skills of lifting the sedan into the various temples. It is the tradition of Haotian Temple to hold a Qima Banquet (pre-departure party banquet) one week before departure. The staff and committee members will eat vegetarian food for 7 days after the banquet. On October 8th, when the journey starts, the staff will eat meat and have the strength to carry the sedan. (Sedan staff, 36 soldiers, sentry team, etc.), and the accompanying palace and temple committee members must remain vegetarian until October 10th.

4.1.5. Pilgrimage Procession

As shown in the itinerary in Table 1, during this process, in addition to stopping at the designated locations, the pilgrimage team also had believers placing incense tables and paying homage along the way. In addition, there are also a few believers who drill sedan chairs (with their bodies on the ground, allowing the Mazu divine sedan chair to cross over) to pray for Mazu's blessings. After arriving at the Beigang Chaotian Temple on October 10th, the group held a ceremony to enter the temple and worship in the evening. After a ceremony to collect incense ash at 5am on the 11th, they began their journey back to the temple. Return to Haotian Temple on October 14th, perform the altar setting of deities outside the temple, accept various temples to worship, and finally enter the temple to perform enshrining ritual to complete this sacred journey.



Figure1. Haotian Temple Mazu sedan chair walking pilgrimage procession



Figure2. *Devout believers are waiting for the arrival of the Haotian Temple Mazu sedan chair.*

4.2. The Relationship between Temple and Politics

4.2.1. Before Departure

Because Taiwan adopts a democratic election method, and Taiwan's temple activities are mostly large-scale events, and most of the people are local influential people, these temple activities have become important occasions to canvass votes. As Taiwan will hold presidential and legislative elections in 2024, it is also a good opportunity for politicians to use pilgrimage activities for election campaigning. Haotian Temple held a Qima Banquet before departure this time, and held banquet at the Zhonghong High School Stadium on September 30. The banquet was held at more than 700 tables to entertain temples with exchanges from all over Taiwan. Among the participants were the 2024 Kuomintang presidential candidates (the current mayor of New Taipei City), and the founder of Hon Hai Group, an independent candidate, were present. In addition, there are the mayor of Taichung City, the vice-president of the Legislative Yuan, the deputy speaker of Taitung County, the councilman of Taichung City, the director of civil affairs, the director of digital governance, the director of the Taichung City Police Department, the director of Wuqi District, the chairman of the Chinese Health Care Party, The mayor of Shalu District, the mayor of Longjing District, the deputy speaker of the Taichung City Assembly, the People's Party legislative candidate and the local mayors were all present. In addition, on the day of departure on October 8, when the pilgrimage starts, a large cannon will be fired in front of the temple to indicate that the pilgrimage team is about to set off. Participants include the deputy speaker of the Yunlin County Council (currently the chairman of Beigang Chaotian Temple), the deputy speaker of the Taichung City Council, and the People's Party Legislative Candidate.

4.2.2. During Pilgrimage

The arrival of Mazu's sedan chair is also one of the favorite occasions for local politicians to build momentum. On the first day (October 8), when Haotian Temple Mazu arrived at Qing'an Temple in Dacun Township, Changhua County and stayed overnight, the people who arrived to receive Mazu's sedan chair included Dacun. The township chief and Dacun Township Qing'an temple personnel have exchanges with the local temple chairman, Dacun township chief and future township chief candidates, villagers' representatives and Daqiao village chief, etc. On the evening of October 12, Haotian Temple Mazu stay again in Dacun Township, Changhua County. The location was Ciyun Temple, which worships Guanyin Bodhisattva. On that day, many political figures gathered to welcome Mazu's sacred sedan chair. including: Changhua County County Magistrate, Dacun Township Mayor, 1 legislator, 1 2024 Legislative Candidate, Director of the Civil Affairs Department of the County Government, Chairman of the Township Representative Association, and Vice Chairman of the Township Representative Association. The chairman, 3 villagers' representatives, 1 county councilor, the local village chief and others.

4.2.3. After Pilgrimage Returned to the Temple to Enshrining Ritual

On the 16th, Haotian Temple Mazu returned to the temple to enshrining ritual. Political figures were still indispensable, including the Taichung City Civil Affairs Director (attend on behalf of the mayor), the deputy speaker of the Taichung City Council, two Taichung City councilors, Wuqi District Mayor, Director General of Wuqi District Farmers Association, the speaker of the Taichung City Council, and a city councilor, and the legislator of the constituency sent staff from the service office to pay tribute.

In addition, there are 2024 Taiwan presidential candidates from the People's Party, 1 People's Party candidate for the 2024 Legislative Council, 1 former city councilor, the village chief of Dazhuang, and the chief of each village in Zhongbao 53, Dadu District. Be present and participate.

4.3. The pilgrims’ Mental and Experiences in the Pilgrimage Process

There were not many pilgrims walking and participating in the pilgrimage process this time. We conservatively estimate that there will be less than 50 people, or even less. During this participation process, the researcher interviewed an elderly man (male) who started early every day, and there was another elderly man who had difficulty walking, but he still completed the entire journey. The interview results regarding the pilgrims’ mental and experiences are shown in Table 2:

Table2. Analysis of interviews with pilgrims on walking pilgrimage

Respondents	Gender	Age	The pilgrims’ mental and experiences in pilgrimage
M1	Male	72	Because I am a retired person, I have actually participated in the full walking pilgrimage activities of Dajia Jenn Lann Temple and Baishatun Mazu. By participating in the full walking pilgrimage, I feel that I can exercise my body. I also feel that I am very moved by going to pilgrimage with Mazu. Although walking the whole journey is tiring, I feel like I can get Mazu to bless myself and my family with good health.
M2	Male	55	Another man interviewed mentioned that he is a local from Haotian Temple, and the purpose of the entire pilgrimage on foot is mainly due to the influence of Mazu's faith. The most important thing is to pray that Mazu can bless his wife's illness and make it better. It is very hard to walk the whole pilgrimage, and the weather is a bit hot, but the hard work is worth it, because I believe that such efforts will be blessed by Mazu.
F1	Female	26	The main reason for participating in this activity was not only to think about my own abilities, but also to lose weight (note: this woman is obese), but I am very happy that I completed the whole process. It was blessed by Mazu. I also prayed before setting off. I believe that Mazu will bless our whole family after we complete the journey.
M3	Male	28	I have also participated in walking pilgrimage activities. This time I participated in the Haotian Temple walking pilgrimage. I felt it was much easier than the other two pilgrimages (Dajia Mazu pilgrimage procession and the Baishatun Mazu pilgrimage). The main purpose of participating in the activity was to accept challenges and affirm yourself.
F2	Female	62	It is very difficult for my husband and I to participate in this walking pilgrimage event because we (M4 is her husband) are devout Mazu believers, and we are also loyal believers of Haotian Temple Mazu. We have actually been practicing for a long time, because it was only a few years ago that Haotian Temple started walking pilgrimage, and we were afraid that we would not be able to keep up with the Mazu sedan chair, so we only had the confidence to participate in the event this year. I believe that it was Mazu’s blessing that gave us the strength to complete the activity. I also believe that by completing the activity, we will be blessed by Mazu and our whole family.
M4	Male	63	My opinion is the same as my wife’s. This is our first time to participate in pilgrimage by walking the whole way. Before, we took the bus. In fact, we discussed and practiced for several months before we dared to participate in this event. Tired, of course, but the thought of going to pilgrimage with Mazu makes me feel happy.
F3	Female	25	By participating in this activity, I felt that the more I paid, the more I gained. Because in the process, I can learn some things about Mazu, and I feel much better when I visit some temples. The reason for walking the whole process is to pray that after completing this activity, the condition of the elders in the family will improve and be safe.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1. Conclusion

5.1.1. Meaning of Walking Pilgrimage

The reason for the rise of walking pilgrimage is mainly to continue the traditional culture, to enhance the popularity of the temple, to gather the centripetal force of local believers, and to increase the income of the temple. Especially the case of this study, Haotian Temple, is currently raising funds for expansion and needs donations from the public. Therefore, organizing Pilgrimage activities can seek more financial sponsorship from the outside world. In addition, it can also increase the temple's popularity and attract temples from other regions to visit. In addition to gathering believers, various believer organizations and formations have also begun to develop. For example, this time Haotian Temple has established a youth team, a volunteer group, etc., and various groups have begun to emerge in response to the pilgrimage activities. It can be seen that the three functions of publicity, display, and cohesion are the keys to the use of walking pilgrimage to organize folk beliefs.

5.1.2. The Relationship between Walking Pilgrimage and Politics

Since temples are bound to a large number of votes, many candidates will always be seen visiting various temples during elections, because for politicians, believers in temples are the warehouse of a large number of votes. The main reason why politicians intervene is to provide free public venues, while city government officials are to increase public support for the current mayor (who has a term system). For those who want to run for election or be re-elected as public representatives, large-scale events on religious occasions provide free election campaigning activities to enhance their popularity. Based on this, this article believes that there is a close relationship between temple elections and local elections. Especially when politicians successfully enter the temple system and participate in local elections in the future, compared with other non-temple system candidates, they have more resources and votes. Source advantages. From this we know that there is an absolute correlation between Mazu culture, popular beliefs and political elections.

5.1.3. The Pilgrims' Mental and Experiences in the Pilgrimage

"Walking pilgrimage" is one of the ways many religious believers fulfill their vows. Physical labor is an important part of their faith practice. In particular, modern transportation is convenient, and walking has become a symbol of "asceticism". With the cultural impression of Dajia Mazu and Baishatun Mazu pilgrimage, walking has been shaped as an important way of faith practice. Through modern people's "ascetic" walking ritual as a way of practicing Mazu beliefs. In addition, believers believe that the more physical ascetic efforts they make, the harder and more tiring they are, the more they can achieve their expectations.

5.2. Suggestion

- Overall, the number of pilgrims who participated in the walking pilgrimage was not large, estimated to be less than 50 (possibly less). Some of the pilgrims who participated in the walk, except for the first day and the day when they returned to the temple, were not large in number, and most of them were local residents of Haotian Temple. Therefore, Haotian Temple is expanding its popularity and strength. In addition to the believers in the Temple's faith circle, a certain number of people can participate in the walking pilgrimage activities. Haotian Temple can also invite other temples to participate in the event, which will increase the number of people in the pilgrimage team and make the event more popular.
- During the pilgrimage process, the temple staff took turns riding the car and did not walk the whole way, including the staff who carried the sedan. However, these staff smoked, ate champagne, drank alcohol along the way, and some even ran red lights. These behaviors will have a negative influence on the image of the temple. Therefore, the Temple Management Committee requires and restrains the staff to pay attention to their own image when they continue to carry out Pilgrimage activities next year, and even when they go to temples in other regions to carry out pilgrimage procession activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was supported by a grant from Major project of Fujian Province Social Science Research Base (FJ2023JDZ060).

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Citation: Hsiao-Ming Chang & Ching-Hui Lin.. "A Study on the Cultural Changes and Political Relations of Mazu Temple in Taiwan – A Case Study of Haotian Temple Pilgrimage" *International Journal of Political Science (IJPS)*, vol 10, no. 1, 2024, pp. 5-13. doi: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2454-9452.1001002>.

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