



Chinese Shrine as Habits of Wild Animal: Unique Cases in Indochina

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Abstract

Chinese shrines are religious structures found in the Chinese ethnic community. They are primarily used for god worship. In some rare cases, the shrine may serve as a natural habitat for a wild animal. Some animals, such as snakes and bats, live in some unique shrines, making them very popular pilgrimage ritual sites. The authors present some specific cases of Chinese shrines that are home to wild animals.

Keywords: wild, animal, Chinese, shrine

Introduction

Chinese shrines are places of worship in the Chinese ethnic neighborhood. They are mostly utilized in deity worship. In extremely rare circumstances, the shrine might act as a wild animal's natural habitat. Some unusual shrines are home to animals like snakes and bats, which makes them particularly attractive destinations for religious rituals. The writers discuss a few particular instances of Chinese shrines that serve as zoos for wild animals.

Case Studies

Here, the authors present case studies from Indochina, where the Chinese ethnic communities locate. The long history result in many old Chinese shrine in this area.

A. Snake temple, Penang Malaysia

At the base of Penang Hill, near Jalan Pokok Ceri, the Bats' Cave Temple of Tua Peh Kong was constructed more than 200 years ago. The cave located inside the temple is home to a few thousand bats, making it both famous and distinctive. They hang themselves to sleep during the day and fly out at night to gather food, which is mostly insects. The beautiful granite statue of Tua Peh Kong (God of Prosperity), which stands two meters tall, greets you as you enter the temple. Tua Peh Kong is revered as the patron saint of prosperity and good fortune, making the temple an important destination for travelers.

B. Bat cave temple, Penang Malaysia

The deity Cheng Chooi Chor Soo, often referred to as Chor Soo Kong, is worshipped in the Snake Temple, also known as Hock Kin Keong or Cheng Hoon Giam. A Buddhist monk named Chor Soo Kong lived in Fujian, China, roughly a thousand years ago. Because of his spiritual enlightenment, tremendous virtue, medical knowledge, and selfless activities during his lifetime, he was highly regarded by the Chinese. After a horrible drought in Fujian province was ended as a result of his prayers for rain, he was declared god like. A statue of Chor Soo Kong was brought from China by a monk who arrived around 1850. In Bayan Lepas, the monk created a temple for Chor Soo Kong in a clearing near the Sungai Keluang river. After the temple was finished, snakes from the nearby jungle started taking refuge there, and the structure quickly earned the nickname "The Snake Temple." In 2022, early morning fire destroys parts of this temple.

C. Ban Don Hainan Shrine. Surat Thani Thailand

Ban Don Hainan Shrine is located at Ton Pho Road, Talat Subdistrict, Mueang District, Surat Thani Province. old shrine A place that has captured the hearts of people for more than 50 years, with its architectural beauty. Within this shrine, there is a ruby goddess or Ma Zhou. or Tian Ho Xia Bo presided over On the right side, there is an idol of Guan Ti or Guan Yu, which is highly respected by the people of Hainan. On the left side, there are 108 gods located as well, and this Hainan Ban Don Shrine has a group of swallows that come to nest in the shrine. Making money for this court as well

D. Chao Mae Khao Sam Muk Shrine. Chonburi Thailand

Chao Mae Khao Sam Muk Shrine is over 103 years old, located on Khao Sam Muk. Between Ban Ang Sila and Bang Saen Beach, Chonburi Province. This place has been known for its holiness for a long time. Especially with the beliefs of merchants and fishermen. that before going out to sea Often make offerings to the Chao Mae Sam Muk shrine with young coconuts, spring rolls and fruits.

In the area of the Chao Mae Sam Muk Shrine There will be monkeys that have lived for a long time. which is believed The monkey was an attendant of Chao Mae Sam Muk. If someone bullies Or catching monkeys often cause misfortune, fall ill, trouble with the whole family as well.



A. Snake temple, Penang, Malaysia



B. Bat cave temple, Penang, Malaysia



C. Ban Don Hainan Shrine. Surat Thani Thailand



D. Chao Mae Khao Sam Muk Shrine. Chonburi Thailand

Figure 1: Shrines with wild animal habitats

Discussion

Deities in Chinese culture might be thought of as ideal versions of themselves that stand for a variety of admirable qualities and moral principles. Therefore, a deity's possession is the manifestation of a perfect self. Even though they are gods, in Chinese faiths, gods must always grow spiritually [1]. As a result, the Chinese community in the area frequently links to the Chinese shrine. The shrine serves as both a spiritual and cultural hub. Other responsibilities, like animal and historical conservation, can be seen in some unique situations. A good example is this article.

A religious site, including a Chinese shrine, is typically a spiritual location for doing good. Donation is a common occurrence. In religious settings, giving an animal life by refraining from killing it or preventing its sale for slaughter is a frequent practice. This is why some Chinese shrines in Indochina house wild animals. In fact, similar phenomena have been observed in the case of snake Buddhist temples, which are unique to Myanmar. The shrine will now serve as a wildlife conservation site. This is a unique approach to wildlife conservation in Indochina.

Conflict of interest: None

References

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