
Religion in Nanjing

Zixuan JIN

Master's Program in Nanjing University

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is just showing the details of religion in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China. Ideological unity of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism began in the Tang Dynasty and flourished in the Ming Dynasty. Ming has established the capital at Nanjing, which lasted 53 years. But after the *Yongle*(永乐) Emperor ascended the throne, he moved the capital from Nanjing to Beijing. Then, the Ming Dynasty make Nanjing as its spare capital. During the lengthy river of time, the ancient city of Nanjing was influenced by the three religions of the religious system. The idea is destroyed many times in past century, but it still left clear traces in many places.

1. The impact of Confucianism on the Nanjing

Confucianism has influenced China for thousands of years. In old times, they would enshrine Confucius when they established school. Therefore, the characteristics of the Confucius Temple was the temple attached to the school. From the Song Dynasty they have established examinations site. To the Ming dynasty Provincial Examination held in Nanjing too. Nanjing Confucius Temple is the temple of sacrificing and consecrating Confucius. There were numerous people with good reputation here, as *Tang Bohu*(唐伯虎), *Zheng Banqiao*(郑板桥), *Wen Tianxiang*(文天祥), *Wu Jingzi*(吴敬梓), *Lin Zexu*(林则徐), *Shi Naian*(施耐庵), *Zeng Guofan*(曾国藩), *Zuo Zongtang*(左宗棠), *Li Hongzhang*(李鸿章), *Chen Duxiu*(陈独秀), and other historical figures, They were all Candidates of The imperial examinations or examiners in Nanjing.

Affected by Western thought, The imperial examinations was abolished in 1905, and implemented academic. Since the rise of the New Culture Movement in 1915, Confucianism has been attacked Seriously. During the Cultural Revolution, Four Olds campaign caused serious damage to it. Confucianism also gradually stepped down from the altar.

But the core of Confucius, as benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, faith, forgiveness, filial piety, fraternal culture, it has been the Chinese people's behavior patterns and beliefs in the transmission of thousands of years. Nanjing, as a historical and cultural city, committed to restoring the Confucius Temple, and reconstructed the Confucius Temple in 1983. Confucius thoughts and articles has become a required course for students not only to teach literature to students of knowledge, more attention on traditional cultural heritage.

2. The impact of Buddhism on Nanjing.

Buddhism was officially introduced into China in the Han Dynasty. Because its doctrine Interlinked with Eastern culture and philosophy, followers gradually increased.

The rise of Buddhism in Nanjing can be traced back to the Southern Dynasty, "The southern dynasties had four hundred eighty building temples; hide their towers amongst smoky blossoms" ,The verse has vividly described the scene of temples everywhere in Nanjing.

The founding emperor of the Ming Dynasty had done a monk, so he not only Publicized Buddhism, and constructed temples. He established a complete management system of religion using the Buddhist and Taoist which controlled in the hands, then served politics. Therefore, under the influence of politics, monks were more and more, and a large number of people believed in Buddhism. As the Buddhism Flourishing, literature and arts developed.

Nanjing has ancient temples everywhere ever, but many were destroyed in the war, annihilated in the river of history. But there were temples which were protected well, such as *Jiming*(鸡鸣寺) Temple which is Nanjing's most famous temple, built in the Western Jin Dynasty, and it was repaired in the Qing dynasty(Plate 1). Xianfeng years was destroyed by war, but rebuilt in the same year, It showed attention of Government and people of dynasties to Buddhism.

During the Cultural Revolution, Buddhism is considered to be superstition, so *Jiming* Temple was seriously damaged. The Government rebuilt the *Jiming* Temple in order to protect places of interest in 1979.



Photograph 1: *Jiming* Temple

However, the range of spreading Buddhism narrowed, and now there rarely is scene of burning incense worshipping Buddha at home as in ancient times. Buddhists are mainly businessmen, elderly and infirm person, or persons living in extreme disappointment now. Most people who go to the temple only occasionally wish, or only take the temple as a tourist place.

3. The impact of Taoism on the Nanjing

Taoism has a long history in Nanjing, and it occupies an important position in Chinese history, and with glorious page. Taoist Temple began in the Han Dynasty(汉) in Nanjing, and

there were well-known Taoist temples past dynasties. *Sanmaogong*(三茅宫) and Crane temple(仙鹤观) in the Eastern Han dynasty (东汉); *Dongxuanguan*(洞玄观) in the Three Kingdoms period (三国); *Chongxuguan*(崇虚观) in the Song dynasty (宋); there was Simon water temple in Southern and Northern dynasties (南北朝) to the Qing dynasty (清); there were *Doulaogong*(斗姥宫) and *Erlangmiao*(二郎庙) in Republican.

The most famous temple is *Tianfei Temple*(天妃宫) in Nanjing now. *Tianfei*(天妃) is *Mazu*(妈祖), and she is the patron saint of the ocean. Because the fifth year of the Ming *Yongle* (AD 1407), Zheng He's first voyage was smooth, *Yongle* Emperor Zhu Di built *Tianfei Temple*, and wrote the inscription personally, set stele in the temple to thank the Goddess bless the peace at sea. Zheng He has made a special trip to the *Tianfei Temple* worship *Mazu* before sailing the next six times(Plate 2).



Photograph 2: Mazu (in Tianhou Temple)

People enshrine God of wealth and the kitchen God of Taoism during the Lunar New Year in the folk to bless the people making plenty of money and living comfortable. The feudal superstitious activities were cracked down during the Cultural Revolution. Then geomancy, physiognomy fortune-telling and worship activities of Taoist was strictly prohibited. Taoist temples were reduced to be warehouse putting their things into.

In recent years, although some Taoist temples were repaired, and Taoist activities were carried out again, but very few Taoist pilgrims worship because they are rarely known to. Only businessmen will enshrine the God of Wealth in business establishments today in Nanjing. Most of fortune-telling activities and physiognomy are considered forms of entertainment, and few people believe in. There are Muslim mosques to conduct religious activities in Nanjing, but because of the small range of believers, it is not known to people.

References

DuMu,JiangNanSpring,Tang Dynasty (杜牧,《江南春》唐).