

# Sansia Tsu-shih Temple — a temple of birds

## 三峽祖師廟 「鳥廟」名聲傳



The artist Li Mei-shu (1902-1983) supervised the restoration of the Tsu-shih Temple in Sansia in Taipei County. Not only has it been called a hall of eastern art, it is also a temple of birds that any ornithologist visiting Taiwan must visit. In a survey by the Taiwan International Birding Association five years ago, the **carvings** inside the temple included more than 1,000 birds of 106 different kinds. Of these, seven kinds are unique to Taiwan. Thanks to the Internet and the spread of photographs, the Tsu-shih Temple is now the world's best known "Temple of birds."

Simon Liao, president of the Taiwan International Birding Association, said most visitors to the temple focus on the carvings. When Liao and a Canadian friend visited five years ago, they discovered that most carvings in the temple were stone carvings of birds, creating a breathtaking impression of a flock of thousands of birds.

Liao and some of his foreign friends spent five months taking pictures of the more than 1,000 stone bird carvings in the temple, archiving them and then checking the species one by one. In the end they had confirmed 106 different kinds of bird, including Formosan Blue Magpie, Taiwan Whistling Thrush, Taiwan Firecrest, Taiwan Bush-warbler, White-eared Sibia, and Formosan Laughing Thrush, which all are unique to Taiwan.

Liao said expert evaluations showed that the

bird species represented in the Tsu-shih temple carvings were very **realistic**. He believes Li Mei-shu was not only an artist, but also an early bird lover. These works of art represent a record of rare bird species, and are a reflection of environmental conservation.

Liao later found one of Li's sons, Li Ching-kuang, who heads the Li Mei-shu Memorial Gallery, and told him of this. Unexpectedly, Li Ching-kuang told him that while he was still alive, his father had said that someone some day would find the reason for restoring the Tsu-shih temple. Late last year, the memorial gallery cooperated with the Taiwan International Birding Association on the publication of a pictorial book that gave an introduction to and explanation of the Tsu-shih Temple from an artistic, a literary and an environmental perspective.

Liao revealed that foreign guide books recommend the temple, saying that it is one Taiwanese temple most worthy of a visit, and that the Tourism Bureau has assisted in the publication of a pictorial book showing the different bird species represented in the stone carvings. That book was published in English, Japanese and Chinese versions, and every copy was quickly **snapped up** by foreign bird lovers. Liao said that if someone were willing to put up the money for a reprint, the association would be happy to provide the **copyright**.

(LIBERTY TIMES, TRANSLATED BY PERRY SVENSSON)

台北縣三峽祖師廟由藝術大師李梅樹監修，不只有「東方藝術殿堂」之稱，還是世界鳥友來台必定造訪的「鳥廟」。台灣國際觀鳥協會五年前調查，廟內雕刻有多達一百零六種鳥、超過一千隻，包括七種台灣特有鳥種，經網站和圖鑑宣傳，祖師廟已是國際上知名度最高的「鳥廟」。

觀鳥協會理事長廖世卿表示，大部分遊客造訪祖師廟焦點都集中在建築雕工，五年前他和加拿大友人造訪時，發現廟中作品多數都是鳥類石雕，形成千鳥薈萃的景象，大為驚豔。

廖世卿和國際友人花了五個月，將廟內一千多個鳥類石雕全部拍照建檔，再一一鑑定比對鳥種，最後確認有一百零六種，還包含台灣藍鵲、紫嘯鸚、火冠戴菊鳥、褐色叢樹鸛、白耳畫眉、畫眉及金翼白眉等台灣特有種。

廖世卿說，經專家鑑定，祖師廟內的鳥類石雕相當逼近真實型態，他認為，李梅樹不僅是藝術家，應該也是早期的鳥友，這些藝術作品記錄下稀有鳥類，也和生態保育觀念相呼應。

廖世卿後來找到李梅樹二子、李梅樹紀念館長李景光告知此事，沒想到李景光告訴他，父親生前就交代，「總有一天會有人發現他建造祖師廟的原意」。紀念館去年底也和協會合作，出版名為「百鳥朝梅」圖鑑，以藝術、文學和生態角度，重新詮釋三峽祖師廟。

廖世卿透露，還有國外旅遊書籍推薦，三峽祖師廟是全台最值得一觀的廟宇，觀光局曾贊助印製祖師廟的鳥類圖鑑，發行中、英、日文等版本，馬上被國際鳥友索取一空，如果有人願意出資重印，協會可以免費提供版權。

(自由時報記者蔡偉祺攝)



Top left: Visitors to the Tsu-shih Temple in Sansia admire the many carvings in the temple, which is also known as the "temple of birds."

Above: Some of the many stone carvings of birds that members of the Taiwan International Birding Association saw when they visited the Tsu-shih Temple five years ago.

PHOTO: TSAI WEI-CHI, LIBERTY TIMES

左上圖：台灣國際觀鳥協會成員五年前造訪三峽祖師廟時，發現廟中有許多鳥類石雕作品。

上圖：遊客造訪三峽祖師廟欣賞眾多雕刻，其實祖師廟也是知名的「鳥廟」。

照片：自由時報記者蔡偉祺攝

### TODAY'S WORDS

#### 今日單字

#### 1. **carving** /'kɑːvɪŋ/ n.

雕刻品 (diao1 ke1 pin3)

**例：** Mom returned from the market with an elegant wood carving of an elephant.

(老媽從市集帶回一座雕工精細的木刻大象。)

#### 2. **realistic** /rɪə'lɪstɪk/ adj.

逼真的 (bi1 zhen1 de5)，現實的 (xian4 shi2 de5)

**例：** The novel gives a realistic depiction of events during the Opium Wars.

(小說中真實描述鴉片戰爭時期的種種。)

#### 3. **copyright** /'kɒpɪraɪt/ n.

版權 (ban3 quan2)

**例：** The newspaper denies breaching the author's copyright.

(該報否認侵害作者版權。)

### LANGUAGE POINT

#### 重要片語

#### snap up

##### 搶購

If you **snap something up**, you buy it as soon as it goes on sale. According to the article, the pictorial books were **snapped up** as soon as they hit the market.

Example: "Fans **snapped up** the World Series tickets as soon as they went on sale."

「snap up」意指搶購。上文中提到，圖鑑一發行馬上就被索取一空。

例如：「世界大賽的門票一開賣，粉絲就瘋狂搶購」。