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Chinese temple architecture

(Redirected from [Chinese temple](#))

Chinese temple architecture refer to a type of structures used as place of worship of [Chinese Buddhism](#), [Taoism](#) or [Chinese folk religion](#), where people revere ethnic Chinese gods and ancestors. They can be classified as:

- *miào* (廟) or *diàn* (殿), simply means "temple" and mostly enshrines gods of the Chinese pantheon, such as the [Dragon King](#), [Tudigong](#) or [Matsu](#); or mythical or historical figures, such as [Guandi](#) or [Shennong](#).
- *cí* (祠), *cítáng* (祠堂), *zōngcí* (宗祠) or *zǔmiào* (祖廟), referring to ancestral temples, mostly enshrining the ancestral gods of a family or clan.
- [Taoist temples and monasteries](#): 觀 *guàn* or 道觀 *dàoguàn*; and
- [Chinese Buddhist temples and monasteries](#): 寺 *sì* or 寺院 *sìyuàn*
- [Temple of Confucius](#) which usually functions as both temple and town school: 文廟 *wénmiào* or 孔廟 *kǒngmiào*.
- [Temples of City God](#) (城隍廟), which worships the patron God of a village, town or a city.
- Smaller household shrines or votive niche, such as the worship of [Zaoshen](#) and [Caishen](#).

Gōng (宮), meaning "palace" is a term used for a templar complex of multiple buildings, while *yuàn* (院), meaning "institution," is a generic term meaning "sanctuary" or "shrine". *Táng* (堂) means courtyard or room, and *ān* (庵) means dome or nunnery.

Overview

Shen temples are distinct from Taoist temples in that they are established and administered by local managers, village communities, lineage congregations and worship associations. They don't have professional priests, although [Taoist priests](#), *fashi*, [Confucian lisheng](#), and also *wu* and *tongji* shamans, may perform



Temple of [Guandi](#) and [Yue Fei](#) in [Quanzhou](#), [Fujian](#).



Temple of [Bao Gong](#) in [Wenzhou](#), [Zhejiang](#).



Night view of the [Dalongdong Baoan Temple](#) in [Taipei](#), [Taiwan](#).

services within the temples. Shenist temples are usually small and decorated with traditional figures on their roofs (dragons and deities), although some evolve into significant structures.

Chinese temples can be found throughout Mainland China and Taiwan, and also where Chinese expatriate communities have settled. An old name in English for Chinese traditional temples is "joss house".^[1] "Joss" is an Anglicized spelling of *deus*, the Portuguese word for "god". The term "joss house" was in common use in English in the nineteenth century, for example in North America during frontier times, when joss houses were a common feature of Chinatowns. The name "joss house" describes the environment of worship. Joss sticks, a kind of incense, are burned inside and outside of the temple.

See also

- Jingxiang
- Taoist temple
- Confucian temple
- Chinese ritual mastery traditions
- Chinese folk religion
- Chinese folk religion in Southeast Asia
- List of Mazu temples
- List of City God Temples in China
- List of temples in Taichung, Taiwan
- Tin Hau temples in Hong Kong
- Kwan Tai temples in Hong Kong
- Chinese temples in Kolkata

References

1. R., J (Supercargo) (1822). *Diary of a journey overland, through the Maritime Provinces of China from Manchao, on the south coast of Hainan, to Canton in the years 1819 and 1820*. Sir Richard Philips & Co.

External links

- China Ancestral Temples Network (<https://archive.today/20140502160117/http://zumiao.jguo.cn/>)
 - Chinese Temples in Penang (http://www.peterloud.co.uk/photos/Penang/Cheah/output/Cheah_Ko_ngsi.html)
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Chinese temple incense burner