

Deciphering Chinese Calligraphy as the Architectural Essence of Tao Fong Shan Christian Center in Hong Kong

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Abstract—Many buildings in Hong Kong are graced with enchanting works of Chinese calligraphy. An excellent example is Tao Fong Shan Christian Center founded by a Norwegian missionary, Karl Ludvig Reichelt (1877-1952) in 1930. Adorned with many inspiring works of Chinese calligraphy, the center functions as a place for the study of Christianity where people of different religions can meet to have religious discussions and intellectual exchanges. This paper examines the pivotal role played by Chinese calligraphy in creating a significant context for the center to fulfill her visions and missions. The methodology of this research involves stylistic and textual analyses of works of calligraphy, in particular through an examination and interpretation of their extended meanings in terms of architectural symbology and social and cultural contexts. Findings showed that Chinese calligraphy was effectively used as a powerful vehicle for a purposeful development of contextual Christian spirituality in Hong Kong.

Keywords—Chinese calligraphy, Hong Kong architecture, Hong Kong calligraphy, Johannes Prip-Møller, Karl Ludvig Reichelt, Norwegian missionary, Tao Fong Shan Christian Center, traditional Chinese architecture, contextual Christian spirituality, Chinese arts and culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

TAO Fong Shan Christian Center is a traditional Chinese building complex designed by a Danish architect, Johannes Prip-Møller (1889-1943). Decorated with many beautiful and meaningful works of calligraphy, the center was assessed as a grade-two historic building by the Hong Kong Government. This paper is an in-depth research on the works of calligraphy embedded in various parts of Tao Fong Shan Christian Center.

Previous research of the development of Hong Kong calligraphy includes the following works. The pioneering effort to document the works by Hong Kong calligraphers is *Hong Kong Calligraphy* [1]. Ma's study was basically a compilation of short, independent biographies of 169 Hong Kong calligraphers from the late Qing to the post-1949 periods [2]. A similar approach was used in Li's essay in which he presents an overview of the development of Hong Kong calligraphy through a brief description of the activities and styles of quintessential artists [3]. Mo and Chen's work was a systematic compilation of information relevant to Hong Kong calligraphy in the first half of the 20th century [4]. The two scholars' earlier publications focused on the subtle relationship between the development of early Hong Kong calligraphy and the cultural

atmosphere. They explored this evolving relationship in studies such as [5]-[7].

Zhang examined the calligraphy of the so-called "yilao" (the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) left-over scholars) and various other calligraphy groups in her works "Calligraphy of the Qing Dynasty Left-over Scholars in the Republican Period" [8], "Cantonese Left-over Calligraphers from Qing Dynasty and the Early 20th Century Hong Kong Calligraphy Scene" [9] and *A Study of Hong Kong Calligraphy and Painting Groups* [10].

Working from another perspective, Mo and Deng try to understand Hong Kong calligraphy of the recent decades through their discussions in the Hong Kong Art Biennials. Their essays included "From the Traditional to the Modern: Thoughts on Calligraphy in Hong Kong Art Biennials" [11], "Hong Kong Art Biennial and Hong Kong Calligraphy" [12] and "Looking into 30 Years of Hong Kong Calligraphy from the Biennial Awardees" [13].

Mo used his own method of categorization to generate what he calls "modes of creation" in his essay [14]. He also comments on the works of active calligraphers in "Heritage and Innovation: Shizhai zhiyou Calligraphy Exhibition: Preface 1" [15].

Largely through the methodology of stylistic analysis, the works mentioned above examine calligraphic works in conventional media such as ink on paper or silk, and in the traditionally stand-alone formats such as hanging scroll and handscroll. Stylistic studies of Chinese calligraphy usually focus on the aesthetic and stylistic dimensions of calligraphic works which cannot effectively explain how calligraphy embedded in public venues can transmit broader cultural meanings and values to society. In view of this limitation, this paper examines the social and cultural implications of various works of Chinese calligraphy embedded in Tao Fong Shan Christian Center through an integrated methodology that examines 1) the intrinsic elements of calligraphy (i.e. literary contents and the stylistic choices), 2) the architectural symbology (i.e. the interpretation of the symbols used, including the integral elements of calligraphy, decoration, name, Christian iconography, ritual layout and design models) and 3) the social and cultural contexts involved in the production of the calligraphic works. Through an analysis of the historical context of Mainland China in Karl Ludvig Reichelt's time; his role as a liberal Western theologian who followed the contemporaneous trend to explore the synthesis of Christianity, Chinese culture and Eastern religions; his special mission to Buddhists; and his conscious visions of a Chinese

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indigenous Christianity, this paper sheds light on the harmonious incorporation of Chinese calligraphic expressions of Christian doctrines into the traditional Chinese architectural complex of Tao Fong Shan Christian Center.

II. CONTEXTUAL CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY IN CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY

Built on a tableland called Tao Fong Shan and located east of Shing Mun River in Shatin, New Territories, Hong Kong, Tao Fong Shan Christian Center has a paradoxical appearance of a traditional Chinese Buddhist monastery that often triggers the curiosity of many hikers. The name Tao Fong Shan (subsequent Romanization [*pinyin*]: Dao Feng Shan) is even more perplexing as the three Chinese words *tao*, *fong* and *shan* (literally mountain of the Way [or the eternal truth] and the wind) carry strong Taoist overtones, and hence are popularly used to name Taoist monasteries. Many people wonder why this Christian monastery is identified with the seemingly mismatched Asian religious elements, rather than more conventional European architectural models of Christian monastery, and more common naming or dedication such as St. Paul's or St. Peter's.

Interestingly, the center founder and Superintendent, Karl Ludvig Reichelt, who belonged to a Scandinavian mission called Christian Mission to Buddhists, explained that his mission aimed to provide the religious people in the Far East (Buddhists, Taoists, Confucianists, etc.) with an opportunity to study the Christian religion under "the best possible conditions" [16]. In his previous missionary experience which was started in 1922 in Nanjing, China, Reichelt saw that the monks seldom went to Christian chapels, and even if they came they felt too uncomfortable to blend with the people there [17, pp.160-161]. Hence, he endeavored to create a venue where religious people might "feel at home" [17, p.161]. To achieve this, the Christian monastery in Shatin was deliberately designed in the style of a Buddhist monastery by the Danish architect, Johannes Prip-Møller, who had conducted extensive study in Buddhist architecture in mainland China. Moreover, Reichelt carefully maneuvered literary style and a special choice of words, names and rituals that can spark the interest and appreciation of the religious people of non-Christian religions [17, p.161]. For instance, the original Chinese designation of Tao Fong Shan Christian Center (*Daofeng shan jidujiao conglin* 道風山基督教叢林) contains the special Buddhist vocabulary *conglin* (literally forest), which is a well-known classical name for a traditional Buddhist monastery that offers a system of residency for education and training in Buddhism for monks and lay Buddhists. Instead of using other Chinese words that have a more direct meaning of training center, Reichelt's choice of the Buddhist vocabulary *conglin* vividly captured the spirit of a Christian residency program modeled after the Buddhist way of monastic life. This warm, welcoming name was complemented by a visible wooden plaque inscribed with the Center's Chinese designation in stunning calligraphic expression that was hung outside the main entrance (Fig. 1).

Since works of calligraphy have been widely used to decorate Buddhist and Taoist monasteries, when seeing them non-Christian visitors might feel at home. Rendered in clerical script, this work is characterized by its squat-structured characters and the flaring horizontal and diagonal strokes. Despite the calligraphic composition's overall stability, the dramatic elongation of the horizontal and right-descending diagonal strokes offers a strong sense of movement and rhythm (Fig. 2). Moreover, the expressive effect of the brushwork is nuanced by the contrast of thick and thin at the beginnings, centers and ends of most strokes, thus furnishing an additional sense of buoyancy to the calligraphy (Fig. 2). In a sense, the overall brushwork's fluidity is flamboyant enough to be likened to the mobile nature of the visitors who are mostly Buddhist pilgrims and other spiritual seekers and wanderers participating in the Center's residency program.



Fig. 1 Calligraphic expression of the original Chinese designation of Tao Fong Shan Christian Center. Photography by the author



Fig. 2 Detail of the original Chinese designation of Tao Fong Shan Christian Center. Photography by the author

When entering the Christian Center, visitors will see works of calligraphy with elements of other Buddhist expressions carved on both sides of the archway to the architectural complex. Painted in gold, the two attention-grabbing works of big-character calligraphy contain the Buddhist expressions *jingjie* (Fig. 3) and *daqian* (Fig. 4). The former is often associated with the idea of different realms or stages of enlightenment whereas the latter can be interpreted as the vastness of the universe in Buddhist cosmology.

Executed in standard script, the bold strokes render the characters arresting, and give a great sturdiness to the calligraphy to create a robust style. The works of calligraphy on the archway play a special role of the portal to all calligraphic works embedded in various parts of the whole architectural complex in which an octagonal temple in the center is surrounded by Conference Hall, Pilgrim's Hall, library, guest

hall and other facilities (Fig. 5).



Fig. 3 Big-character calligraphy on one side of the archway to the architectural complex, Tao Fong Shan Christian Center. Photography by the author



Fig. 4 Big-character calligraphy on the other side of the archway to the architectural complex, Tao Fong Shan Christian Center. Photography by the author



Fig. 5 Architectural model of Tao Fong Shan Christian Center, 1:200. Photography by the author

Coinciding with Karl Reichelt's vision to develop contextual Christian spirituality in Chinese arts and culture, Christ Temple (Fig. 6) was designed with traditional Chinese architectural elements. The octagonal structure with a double-eave pointed roof is reminiscent of the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests leading to the Altar of Heaven in Beijing (Fig. 7).

Transforming the popular traditional Chinese architectural elements of roof ridge guardian figures in the form of

auspicious animals and mythological creatures, Christ Temple's roof ridge figurines (Fig. 8) represent pilgrims who come to the Christian Center to study and go out in all directions to spread the Gospel of Jesus [18, p.9].



Fig. 6 Christ Temple, Tao Fong Shan Christian Center. Photography by the author

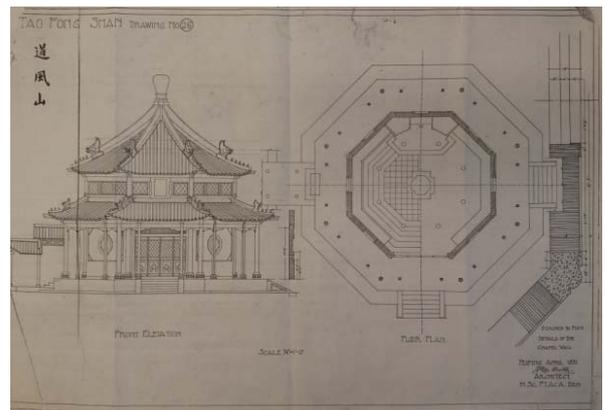


Fig. 7 Johannes Prip-Møller's architectural drawing of Christ Temple, Tao Fong Shan Christian Center. Image supplied by and with permission of Tao Fong Shan Christian Center



Fig. 8 Christ Temple's roof ridge figurines. Photography by the author

The calligraphic work with two big characters "sheng-dian"

(聖殿 literally, holy temple) in gold creates a striking sign for the temple (Fig. 9). Composed of stout and forceful strokes, the characters have well-knit and balanced structures reminiscent of the standard-script style of the prominent Tang dynasty scholar-official calligrapher Yan Zhenqing (709-785). The brushwork's overall squareness gives a sense of uprightness to the calligraphy and intriguingly creates a solemn ambience that might help prepare the hearts of worshipers before entering the holy temple.

Functioning as the main space for worship, the interior of Christ Temple is adorned with major calligraphic works that reflect Reichelt's unique theology. The most eye-catching calligraphic works are placed right above the altar where major rituals are performed (Fig. 10). A golden plaque inscribed with the bible verse "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14) hangs over the centre bay, while the altar is flanked by a calligraphic couplet with two other bible verses "The Word was with God, (John 1:1) the wind blows wherever it pleases (John 3:8)." The three-fold nature of this calligraphic triptych (Fig. 10) creates a strong visual manifestation that points to the doctrine of trinity, with the "flesh" pointing to God the Son, and the "wind" a metaphor for God the Holy Spirit.



Fig. 9 The calligraphic work with two big characters "sheng-dian".
 Photography by the author



Fig. 10 Calligraphic triptych with three Bible verses. Photography by the author

The brushwork of this calligraphic triptych is bold and fleshy yet tinged with a sense of pliancy. Whereas most works of standard-script calligraphy in the Christian Center are characterized by the prevalence of square strokes and the sharp edges of stroke-endings, the calligrapher of this piece replaces the common sharp edges of stroke-endings with blunt ones derived from the concealed brush-tip technique. The prevalent round strokes give an untrammelled aura to the calligraphy. Nevertheless, the overall composition is stable and balanced due to the symmetrical structure of the same number of characters in both vertical lines of calligraphy as well as the triangular orientation of the calligraphic triptych. As the literary content of the calligraphic work is taken from the bible, this calligraphic triptych compellingly suggests God's presence. In this light, the calligraphy acts as an artistic sign, reminding the worshipers to seek God and enter into the spiritual, heavenly realm. Meanwhile, the calligraphic triptych bespeaks Reichelt's theology namely his unique "Johannine approach" that emphasizes *The Prologue of John* in the Bible with its "proclamation about the Logos, the eternal truth incarnated in Christ" [19, p.68]. Logos means the Word of God which is originated from the bible verse "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14). In his own liberal approach to missionary work, Reichelt believes that the merits in every religion and in every culture "originates in Christ as the Eternal Logos" [17, p.161]. Hence, the Christian idea of the Logos is embodied in the concept of Tao in Chinese spirituality. Whereas Tao means the Way or the eternal truth in terms of Taoism, Tao shares similar meaning with the Dharma, the Buddhist law [19, p.68]. It should be noted that the Chinese translation of the Word or the Eternal Logos is "tao", or "dao", which is also the same Chinese character and word originally used in philosophical and religious Taoism, or Daoism, and in Buddhism for translating the doctrine of madhyamā-pratipad or the "middle way" into the Chinese characters *zhong dao*. Through these "points of contact which exist in all the greater systems of religion", Reichelt explained to the religious people that their spiritual pursuits may be completed in Jesus Christ, the Eternal Logos [17, p.161].



Fig. 11 Altar table in Christ Temple, Tao Fong Shan Christian Center. Photography by the author

In the Christ Temple, it is little wonder that the calligraphic expressions of the Chinese character *tao* as both a fundamental Christian doctrine and an Asian religious conception are ingeniously interwoven with a thoughtful integration of

Christian and Buddhist iconographies (Fig. 10). For instance, the bizarre union between the cross and the lotus can be seen on the altar table (Fig. 11) and a ritual wand (Fig. 12).



Fig. 12 A ritual wand in Christ Temple, Tao Fong Shan Christian Center. Photography by the author



Fig. 13 Baptismal font in the form of a cross on a six-tiered pagoda. Photography by the author

Lotus is traditionally used as a symbol of purity and enlightenment in Buddhism. Hence the symbol of an integration of the lotus and the cross has been used as the official symbol of the Christian Mission to Buddhists, and it repeatedly appears in the Center's various published books, magazines and articles. Another Buddhist element can be seen in the baptismal font in the form of a cross on a six-tiered pagoda (Fig. 13). This purposeful combination of Chinese religious and cultural symbols with Christian doctrines and iconography vividly strengthens the calligraphic plaque's literary content "The Word became flesh", and consequently reinforces Reichelt's theology of Christ as the Eternal Logos for people from different religious background (Fig. 10). Meanwhile, the big golden cross on the wall at the far end of the aisle is obviously the most important focal point for worshipers

due to their habitual direction of gaze in the axial layout of the temple (Fig. 10). Naturally framed by the three lines of calligraphy on both sides and above as well as the altar table below, the cross, which symbolizes the redeeming power of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, well complements the doctrine of trinity as revealed in the calligraphic work that frames it. Moreover, the symbolic meanings of the colors of the cross resonate with the calligraphic work that encompasses it, and engender even richer meanings for the worshiper. According to Wang, the first ordained Chinese pastor of the Tao Fong Shan Christian Center, black symbolizes darkness, sin and so on, whereas red symbolizes the blood of Jesus Christ that can wash away human sins. Whereas white symbolizes a clean and new life as a result of the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ, gold symbolizes glory and victory [20, p.3-4].



Fig. 14 Zhang Zhuling, *Eulogy to God the Son*. Image supplied by and with permission of Tao Fong Shan Christian Center



Fig. 15 Bronze bell decorated with a calligraphic inscription "Glory to God". Photography by the author

As a visually pleasing element, Chinese calligraphy is all-pervasive in religious rituals performed in the Christ Temple. This can be illustrated by a plaque on the wall that is inscribed with the lyric of *Eulogy to God the Son* [Fig. 14]. When singing this hymn together, worshipers are simultaneously inspired by the magnificent calligraphy by the Reverend Zhang Zhuling (1877-1961) whose personal style of calligraphy is reminiscent of that of the Tang calligrapher Yan Zhenqing. Characterized

by the upright-character composition in a broad-space arrangement, the monumental, powerful and dignified style is perfectly suited for expressing the literary content which describes major deeds of Jesus Christ's dignified life including his crucifixion as sacrifice for all mankind and his miraculous resurrection.



Fig. 16 Bronze bell decorated with the cross-lotus symbol.
Photography by the author

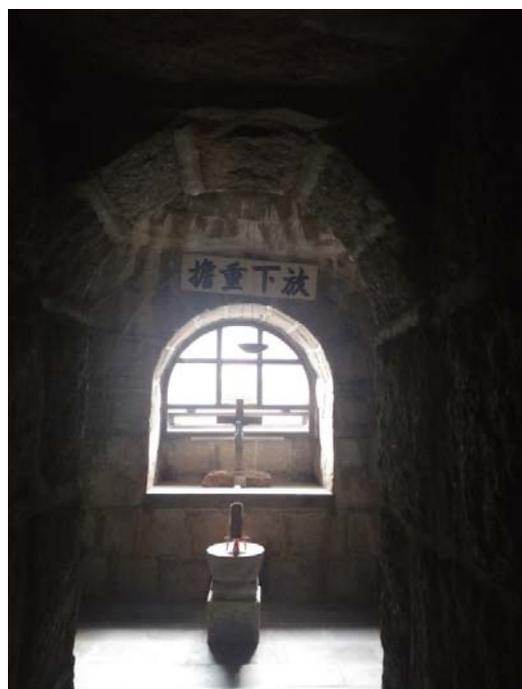


Fig. 17 Interior of Lotus Crypt with a wooden plaque inscribed with a calligraphic expression "Lay down your heavy burden".
Photography by the author

Ringling the large bronze bell outside the Christ Temple is part of the elaborate religious ritual. The bell yields a

wonderful, resonant tone that call people to worship. The bell is decorated with a calligraphic inscription "Glory to God" and a newly coined symbol with the archaic script of the Chinese character *shou* (longevity) enclosed by the Star of David which is a widely recognized symbol of Judaism (Fig. 15). Appearing on the other side of the bell, the cross-lotus symbol resonates with the handsome calligraphy to remind people across cultures and religions to give glory to God (Fig. 16).

More than decorations of objects or signs of buildings, thoughtful works of calligraphy can incisively remind people of specific doctrines in specific architectural settings. This can be exemplified by the calligraphic work on the wall of Lotus Crypt, a small dome-shape stone chamber underneath the foundation of the Christ Temple that was designed for meditation and prayer. Upon entering Lotus Crypt, one can focus on the wooden plaque inscribed with a four-character calligraphic expression "Lay down your heavy burden" (Fig. 17), which is closely associated with the well-known Bible verse "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28). With natural sunlight entering through only a small window, the interior of the small chamber is relatively dark and quiet. Without any distractions from the outside or any other wall decorations, the calligraphic plaque stands out sharply in the plain design of the chamber, thus acting as an effective vehicle to guide people inside the chamber to lay down their worldly burdens and worries and to increase concentration in meditation in a secluded and relaxed ambience. Executed in standard script modeled after that found on steles of the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), the calligraphic brushwork is characterized by the accentuation of sharp edges and squarish beginnings and endings of strokes. The obvious exaggeration of the clear-cut contour lines and angular hooks and turns reveals the anonymous calligrapher's conscious effort to imitate the powerful and intriguing traces of the chiseled surfaces of ancient steles. The bold brushstrokes and dense character configuration incisively engender a style that is vigorous and surprisingly legible even in the dark chamber. Hung right above the exit of Lotus Crypt, another wooden plaque with the calligraphic inscription "Take up the cross" (Fig. 18) reveals one of Jesus Christ's major teachings as highlighted in the Bible verse: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24) Rendered in a style similar to the archaic and forceful calligraphic plaque discussed above, this four-character work of calligraphy acts as a spirited reminder before exit from the chamber and return to the secular world — that one needs to continue to have a committed Christian faith in mundane life after the deep meditative experiences inside the crypt. In the abovementioned bible verse, Jesus explains that true discipleship involves taking up the cross and follow Jesus, which means denying oneself in order to live a life that is led by Jesus.

A small cell in the Lotus Crypt, similar to the sixth-century Buddhist rock-cut chapel in Dunhuang, is marked with the calligraphic expression "repentance place" (Fig. 19). The brushwork's overall tidiness and squareness give a sense of uprightness to the calligraphy, and this calligraphic style is very

suitable for expressing the idea of repentance followed by a renewed and upright life as opposed to the previous disorderly life. Chiseled in intaglio and painted in gold, the calligraphic work transforms into a striking sign that reflects natural sunlight from outside the entrance of Lotus Crypt. In a sense, the shimmering calligraphic brushstrokes that glitter outside the dark cell create a telling metaphor of victory over sin. Thoughtfully designed, the small cell accommodates only one person practising prayer on his/her knees. Echoing the spirit of repentance that can be expressed by a remorseful attitude and the humble body gesture of bending or kneeling, the design of the small cell reinforces the doctrine of repentance which is simultaneously and aptly expressed in terms of calligraphic style and synergistic elements of the gold color and natural sunlight. In a nutshell, the three calligraphic works housed in Lotus Crypt are perfect examples illustrating that there is strong interconnectivity in the chosen styles of calligraphy, religious doctrines and rituals, and architectural layout designs via effective overall arrangements of architectural and non-architectural elements to enhance visitors' religious or spiritual experiences.



Fig. 18 Wooden plaque with the calligraphic inscription “Take up the cross” above the exit of Lotus Crypt. Photography by the author

In contrast, a relatively casual form of Christian fellowship can be held in the Thanksgiving Pavilion (Fig. 20) where Christians can encourage one another while appreciating the calligraphic expressions and the corresponding sections of tile paintings (Fig. 21) depicting biblical narratives with scenes of Jesus Christ dressed in traditional Chinese clothes (Fig. 22). For instance, one particular section (Fig. 22) illustrates the biblical scenario of Jesus Christ teaching Nicodemus on the doctrine of “born again”: “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again” (John 3:3/ Fig. 23). The style of this piece of clerical-script (*lisu*) calligraphy is modelled after the well-known Han dynasty stele *Cao Quan bei* (dated 185). Rendered in thin and highly modulated strokes, this work is marked by the outwardly flaring shape of the horizontal strokes, and the right and left downward slanting strokes. The

brushwork's airy and uplifting aura echoes with the lively lines in the human figures such as the drapery of the clothes (Fig. 22), breathing fresh life into the literary content of Jesus teaching on the doctrine of “born again”.



Fig. 19 Repentance place. Photography by the author



Fig. 20 Thanksgiving Pavilion. Photography by the author



Fig. 21 Calligraphic expressions and the corresponding sections of tile paintings depicting biblical narratives. Photography by the author

Last but not least, to interpret Jesus's completion of his redemption of mankind, signified in his last words on the cross, “it is finished,” the two characters *cheng-le* on the gigantic cross was rendered in Yan Zhenqing's (709-785) calligraphic style, tinged with an upright and steadfast spirit (Fig. 24).



Fig. 22 Calligraphic expressions and the corresponding sections of tile paintings depicting biblical narratives with scenes of Jesus Christ dressed in traditional Chinese clothes. Photography by the author

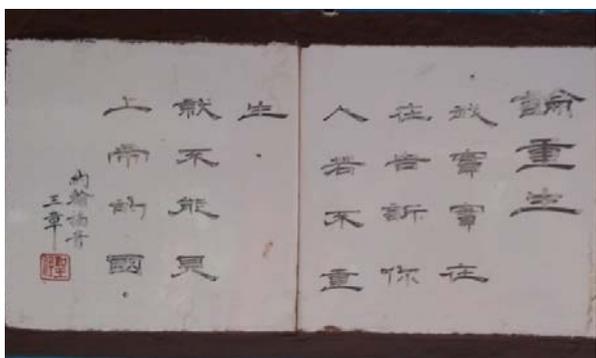


Fig. 23 Bible verses “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again”. Clerical-script calligraphy as inscription of tile painting. Photography by the author



Fig. 24 The gigantic cross overlooking the Shatin valley with calligraphic inscription “it is finished,” Photography by the author

III. CONCLUSION

The works of calligraphy examined above illustrate how deeper and richer meanings in calligraphy can be interpreted through the tailor-made, integrated methodology that combines analysis of the style and literary content of calligraphy with that of Christian iconography, symbols of other religions and architectural symbology in terms of such elements as

decoration, name, and ritual layout and function of particular religious objects and particular sections of the architectural complex.

Coinciding with Karl Reichelt’s vision to develop contextual Christian spirituality in Chinese arts and culture, thoughtful works of calligraphy are purposefully embedded in different parts of the Christian Center, acting as the architectural essence of the building complex that reveals major Christian doctrines and Reichelt’s unique “Johannine approach” to missionary work in Chinese communities.

More than a form of decoration in buildings and public spaces, calligraphic works blend in Christian rituals and traditional Chinese cultural and religious elements in a natural and harmonious way to create an indigenous form of Christian spirituality in Hong Kong. Contrary to common impression that Christianity’s monotheistic conception of the divine is likely to deny other religions’ elements and traditions, there is an extraordinary ambience of inclusiveness and respect for Chinese religions, culture and the arts in the whole architectural complex of the Christian Center, where worshippers and non-Christian visitors are invited to not just appreciate the visually pleasing and inspiring works of calligraphy but also delve into the core Christian faith as expressed in these works. It is crystal clear that Chinese calligraphy has played a pivotal role in accentuating the visions and missions of Tao Fong Shan Christian Center in Hong Kong.

Conventional approaches to Hong Kong calligraphy have revolved around the internal conventions of stylistic analysis, which cannot explain the social and cultural values of calligraphic works embedded in public venues. In this light, this paper is significant in deciphering the close relationship between Chinese calligraphy and its architectural setting through an explication of how calligraphic works embedded in Tao Fong Shan Christian Center in Hong Kong transmit broader religious and cultural meanings to society.

The tailor-made methodology of this research has potential impact in the field of art history as it effectively enhances the understanding of how calligraphy has been transformed from a literati art with a restricted audience into a more accessible and approachable form of visual culture in public venues.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The work described in this paper was supported by a grant from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China. (Project Number: 12610917)

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