

ABSTRACT

The case of the “Temple of 18 Deities” (十八王公廟) is an example which shows that the process of changes in religious culture can be both gradual and sudden. From the first glance it seems that the boom of “Temple of 18 Deities” cult suddenly appeared from nowhere. But the analysis of the temple origin mythology and its symbols shows that the opportunities for such sudden changes were created gradually during the long period of religious culture development when phases of change and conservation were taking turns endlessly in Taiwan societies. Those opportunities trace into more remote times of gradual development of numerous religious cultures which were brought in Taiwan by multitude of migration waves. The “Temple of 18 Deities” cult conserved many stable religious elements which were created in the period of Eurasian cultural unity and bring us to the Neolith and even Paleolithic epoch.

One of the most stable elements in the “Temple of 18 Deities” cult is the symbol of a dog. The geographical area of the former dog’s worshiping cults distribution is spread all over Eurasia with the most western point in the British Isles and the most eastern point in Taiwan. The dog symbol in mythologies of many various peoples all over Eurasia is connected to another stable religious element – an idea of the life after death and underworld. The underworld conception origin also should be dated by Paleolithic epoch, because its stability occurring everywhere spreading. Paleolithic hunting religious ideas should be common all over the world, because all the societies passed this phase of evolution in their history.