

天主教輔仁大學英國語文學系學士班畢業成果
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, FU JEN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
GRADUATION PROJECT 2018

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真善美聖

Yue Lao - The Matchmaking God

SANCTITAS BONITAS

PULCHRITUDO

VERITAS

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Chinese Culture Through Foreign Languages

Prof. Gretchen Lee

Learning Outcome Demonstration

<https://yettalinmian.wixsite.com/yuelao>



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Motivation

“What can be a representation of Taiwanese culture?” This is the question professor led us to consider in the first class of Chinese Culture Through Foreign Languages. I couldn’t give an answer to which I myself am satisfied with. Several things popped into my mind. I thought of the Santaize, the night market, the Matzu temple, and the aboriginal traditional clothes. However, as I try to fill in the blank of this sentence “___ represents Taiwanese culture” with the above options, none of them suits as the correct answer. Astonished was I that being a Taiwanese, I can’t give an answer to that simple question. Hence, I googled it. Google gave me a website listing ten things that can serve as representation or characteristic of Taiwanese culture. The ten things included Santaize, motor cycle, friendly people etc. Identical to what I can think of, these answers did not satisfy me. As our learning outcome demonstration, professor wanted us to choose one thing as something to introduce to foreigners that can better present Taiwanese culture in our own opinion in the third class of the course. My partner and I had struggled through different choices, including the ten things listed on that website. It dawned on me after brainstorming for a few days that, instead of seeking for one specific thing that symbolizes Taiwan, we can pick one that the foreigners may be more unfamiliar with or one we are more familiar with. Therefore, at last, we picked Yue Lao culture as our topic.

The reasons behind us selecting Yue Lao as our graduation project is that we find Yue Lao temple attracted to both local people and foreign tourists. Every year, nearly eight thousand pairs of couples were paired by Yue Lao. Many of them visit the Xiahai City God Temple, the most well-known Yue Lao temple in Taipei. Nevertheless, little do they know about the history and stories that lie behind Yue lao culture. Thus we wanted to show foreigners this piece of Taiwanese culture through a simple way that can be accepted to most people. Finally, we decided that we create a website demonstrating the origin, the folk stories, the meaning of Yue Lao culture and how to correctly praise Yue Lao.

Furthermore, each Yue Lao temples in Taiwan created their websites in introducing the God their temple praises, however, we did not see a website introducing the culture as whole. Therefore, we want to choose Yue Lao as our topic and create a website to share the stories behind the “God of Love” not only Taiwanese but foreign visitors praise for love.

Introduction to the project (+ reference)

While entering the website, a golden icon of Yue Lao floating above a pink city occupies your vision. That is the home page of our website. We tried several kinds of designs, the traditional ones like bride and groom dressing in Chinese wedding dress holding hands with the typical “Xi” character and the back of the picture, and a Japanese style (as Japanese are the most foreign visitors) with white as the theme color and hands holding together with red lines connecting the two couple. We asked for classmates’ and colleagues’ opinion and ask for any improvements to be done. Many of them said that they recommend a revision of the first image we give visitors as they enter the webpage with an innovated Home page if we would like to boost the viewership and share this piece of culture worldwide. Besides, as mentioned above, most Yue Lao temples created their own websites but all of their sites were in traditional design. To stand out, we make an amendment on the theme of our Yue Lao webpage by adding elements such as POP word style and a pinky warm, fashion filter for the background. On top of that, in quest of our production being seen, we asked our friends for suggestions as well as them sharing our website to more people on the internet.

The Intro Page introduces the origin of the Chinese “God of Love”, “Yue Lao”, the folk tales of “QiXi” and the Yue Lao temples in Taipei including a map and individual stories of each temples. We inserted Google map so that by simply a click, visitors can be transferred to Google map and look for the route to get to each temples.

After reading the stories or history of Yue Lao, we teach webpage viewers the instructions of praising the “God of Love”, things to prepare, and the the Taboos to bear in mind before taking a step to Yue Lao temple. My teammate and I visited the Longshan Xia Hai City God temple several times to collect information and record videos of correct procedures in praising Yue Lao. It requires correct sequences of steps. Before really visiting Yue Lao temple, I am unaware of all of the instructions of praising Yue Lao. Prayers not only cite wishes to the God of Love, but other Gods in the Xia Hai City God temple. Without praising the other gods, it may be seen as disrespecting. Hence, with the aid of our videos, people can easily understand clear steps of praising Yue Lao.

Visitors can always raise a question by leaving a message under the “Let's Chat” box. We designed the activity page to create a two-way communication between visitors and us. We can acquire the requirements and questions of them and make improvements or answer them via email. We did receive a request of launching activity for single visitors so that they can get a chance of knowing each other and can visit the Yue Lao temple together. Additionally, we inserted a cast diving web page for viewers to make a wish and cast a divine in seeing the reply from the God constantly from our webpage. We hope to make our site both functional and amusing.

We added a third person story to the site to increase authenticity in our Love Stories Page. Three of our classmates provided us their love stories of them entering a relationship after visiting the Yue Lao temple. In protecting their identity, we asked them to send us pictures that didn't expose their face. We hope that our website visitors can relate themselves to the couples in the stories and expect a relationship after praising the “God of Love”. What's more, we anticipate that those who visit our page and take action can really meet their beloved, and furthermore share us their lucky story within the Members section under our Love Stories page.

Last but not least, we introduce ourselves in the About Us page and left our emails and contact information for further contact. Without an essay explanation of why we created the website, we simply put three lines in stating what influence we hope to give through this website and wish that the visitors can find out the answers in the process of the journey in our website.



Reflection

Frankly speaking, I never believed in the Yue Lao mighty of really connecting single men and women since I grew up in a family which never lit incense or pray to Chinese gods.

However, after staying single for 3 years after entering college, most of my friends suggested me to try praising Yue Lao. After a never give up convincing, I finally paid a visit to the Taipei Xia Hai City God temple. Despite the fact that I did not sincerely state my criteria of partner while praising Yue Lao, I saw tens of visitors bowing sincerely to the “God of Love”. I then started to vary my view toward Yue Lao and consider it to be a significant piece of Taiwanese culture.

In the process of collecting visual supports of our website and information, we met a Taiwanese prayer in front of the temple. She told us her story of meeting her beloved after praying Yue Lao and recommended us to pray to certain temple and that there will be different results if we visit different Yue Lao temple. It is really a news for me and I am grateful to have met the person even though we did not get the chance in getting her contact information. The visits to each Yue Lao temple after that encounter, I pay conscientious study as if I am an archeologist. The Yue Lao culture became a fascinating piece of art to me and I really want foreign visitors to know this aesthetic culture of us.

It is exciting to me by seeing visitors of our websites giving us feedbacks and telling us where to improve after releasing our production. Little by little, we make progress to our Learning Outcome Demonstration and felt more and more satisfied as it is more and more complete. I am certain that if we collaborate with the Taipei Xia Hai City God temple, we can infuse them with new spirits and bring more foreign visitors to the temple. However, as a graduation project, we did not consider a commercial involve to our production. We only expect that by the boosting on social media, we can tell this Yue Lao story to more and more people around Taiwan and around the globe.