

# The Evolution of Landscape Layout Concept of Lingnan Taoist Zuting Temples in the Qing Dynasty

Chaohui Lin

School of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Huizhou University, Huizhou, China  
Email: 446757605@qq.com

**How to cite this paper:** Lin, C.H. (2023) The Evolution of Landscape Layout Concept of Lingnan Taoist Zuting Temples in the Qing Dynasty. *Natural Resources*, 14, 121-133.  
<https://doi.org/10.4236/nr.2023.148009>

**Received:** August 7, 2023

**Accepted:** August 28, 2023

**Published:** August 31, 2023

Copyright © 2023 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

---

## Abstract

The replacement of Lingnan Taoist Zuting Temples from Lingbao Sect to Quanzhen Sect in the Qing Dynasty has led to the change of the layout of Taoist temples on Luofu Mountain. Through literature review, field research, image comparison and other research methods, the paper explores how the layout of the Taoist temples on Luofu Mountain evolved from the Four Taoist Temples in the Gehong period to the Five Taoist Temples in the Qing Dynasty under the influence of different Taoist ideologies, aiming to explore the cultural implications of the evolution of the layout of Lingnan Taoism Zuting Temple in the Qing Dynasty.

## Keywords

Luofu Mountain, Taoist Temple, Taoism, Layout Concept

---

## 1. Introduction

When Taoism leaves the society, it chooses to hide in the remote mountains, and when it enters the society, it chooses to conceal in the streets and markets. The site selection of the Taoist temples in the remote mountains is full of immortal consciousness. The interpretation of the word “Mountain” in Mountain Explanation of Term Explanation reads: “Mountain, meaning production, that is the production of all things.” [1] The interpretation of the word “Immortal” in Shuo Wen reads: “Immortal (仙), meaning the appearance of people on the mountain, that is becoming immortal.” [2] Taoist temples and cultivation places are mostly set in the mountains, which can be indoor or outdoor, being able to set heaven and earth and feel the four seasons, feel fulfilled and avoid emptiness, and unite the way of three powers. Therefore, the overall layout of Taoist temples is deeply

rooted in the principles of studies of Chinese ancient civilization and is closely related to the Feng Shui pattern of Taoism. The architectural complex of the temples is often combined with the mountains and integrated into a part of the earth landscape. Therefore, for the overall protection of the Lingnan Taoist Zut-ing Temples in the Qing Dynasty, namely Taoist Temples on Luofu Mountain, it is even more necessary to start from combining its deep historical and cultural connotations.

## **2. Penglai and Dongtian Layout Style Formed along the Trend**

The layout style of traditional mountain Taoist temple can be classified into Kunlun, Penglai, and Dongtian. The famous Taoist mountains in the north are high and exhibit the Kunlun style, such as the Taoist temple complex on Wu-dang Mountain, overlooking the mountains and showcasing the concept of openness, recklessness, and indulgence in nature [3]. In the meanwhile, the famous Taoist mountains in the south are gentle and full of caves, such as the layout of the Taoist temple complex on Qingcheng Mountain in Sichuan Province, where layers of mountains and peaks diminish. For another instance, the whole scale of the Taoist temple complex on Sanqing Mountain [4] in Jiangxi Province is centered around the valley of Sanqing Palace Valley at an altitude of 1500 meters, forming a landscape of triple Taoist temples [5], as half the Taoist cave (Dongtian).

As the mountain terrain decreases from north to south, the layout of the Taoist temple complex shifts from a vertical Kunlun style layout to a horizontal Dongtian style layout. The layout of Lingnan Taoist temples is characterized by the layouts of Dongtian and Penglai, with Luofu Mountain as the most representative.

Luofu Mountain, located in a scenic city—Huizhou, is composed of the magnificent Mount Luoshan and the beautiful Mount Fushan. The main peak of Luofu Mountain is Feiyun Peak, which inclines to all sides and is surrounded by about 432 mountains of all sizes, presenting a radial mountain area [5]. Mount Luoshan and Mount Fushan are surrounded by the Dongjiang River, and between them are the branches of the Dongjiang River, Luoshui and Fushui River, forming a steamy fairyland. Corresponding to the “Penglai” described in ancient books such as Du Bao’s *Miscellaneous Notes on Daye of Suixiyuan*, Su Yijian’s *Academy of Scholars*, Zeng Gong’s *Story of Daoshan Pavilion*, and Ji Cheng’s *Yuanye*: “As a mountain floating in the water, covered by misty waters, leaving the temple on the mountain ethereal and remote.” Chen Lian’s *Annals of Luofu Mountain in the Qing Dynasty* described Luofu Mountain as: “Mount Fushan is an island of Penglai, which was floated by the flood during the Yao Dynasty, and ended up merging with Mount Luoshan...” [6] Although the legend is absurd, it does not damage Luofu Mountain as the symbol of Penglai in Lingnan. It is difficult to verify the legend of “floating of Mount Kuaiji”. According to the first

Taoist, An Qi, who was born in Langya, Shandong Province, the legend of “floating of Mount Kuaiji” originated from the Book of the Later Han Dynasty: Annals of Prefectures and Nations [7]. Thus, it can be speculated that the legend originated from the introduction of Zhongyuan Taoism along the sea road through the water road in Kuaiji, Jiangnan.

According to the Daoji Ching of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, “Five Mountains and famous mountains all harbor caves.” Zhuming Dongtian on Luofu Mountain ranks seventh among the Ten Dongtians. The river system of Luofu Mountain is in compliance with the geographical view of “Dongtian” in Wei Shu: the caves in the mountain are like acupoints that connect with vitality, helping Taoists practice Taoism and maintain health. The flat land surrounded by the mountain is like a mother’s body, communicating with the vital energy of heaven and earth. The “Cave” scenery is enclosed by mountains, where scenic spots composed of cultural landscapes, historical relics, and mythological legends were left behind by the diligent cultivation of ancient Taoists. There is also a “Hutian” with only one entrance to the Dongtian in the mountains, also known as “Huzhong”.

Luofu Mountain, with the momentum of Penglai, stands tall on the banks of the Dongjiang River in Lingnan. The palaces and temples distributed within the mountain are mostly arranged in Dongtian layout, forming a Taoist landscape. As time passes, due to the entry of different Taoist sects, changes have occurred, with the evolution of the Eastern Jin and Qing dynasties being the most representative.

### **3. The Evolution of the Layout of Taoist Temples on Luofu Mountain from the Eastern Jin Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty**

The famous Taoist temples on Luofu Mountain are distributed on Mount Luoshan [8]. The Taoist ancestors Ge Hong in the Jin Dynasty and Zeng Yiguan in the Qing Dynasty had the greatest relationship with the layout of the existing temples. Luofu Mountain has the theory of “Four Taoist Temples” and “Five Taoist Temples”. The theory of “Four Taoist Temples” originated from the fact that Ge Hong in the Jin Dynasty chose Zhuming Cave, Huanglong Cave, and Shi Dongtian as the address of temples and Dongtians on Luofu Mountain with Feiyun Peak as the center, and thus built the Southern Taoist Temple—Duxu (now Chongxu Taoist Temple), the Western Taoist Temple—Guqing (now Huanglong Taoist Temple), the Eastern Taoist Temple—White Crane, and the Northern Taoist Temple—Suanlao. Afterwards, the number of Taoist temples in the mountain continuously changed, and at its peak, there was a saying of “nine Taoist temples, eighteen Taoist temples, and twenty-two Taoist temples”, many of which lack of coordination. The theory of “Five Taoist Temples” was formed when Quanzhen Taoist Zeng Yiguan in the Qing Dynasty once stationed in Luofu and served as the abbot of Taoist Temple Chongxu, Huanglong, White

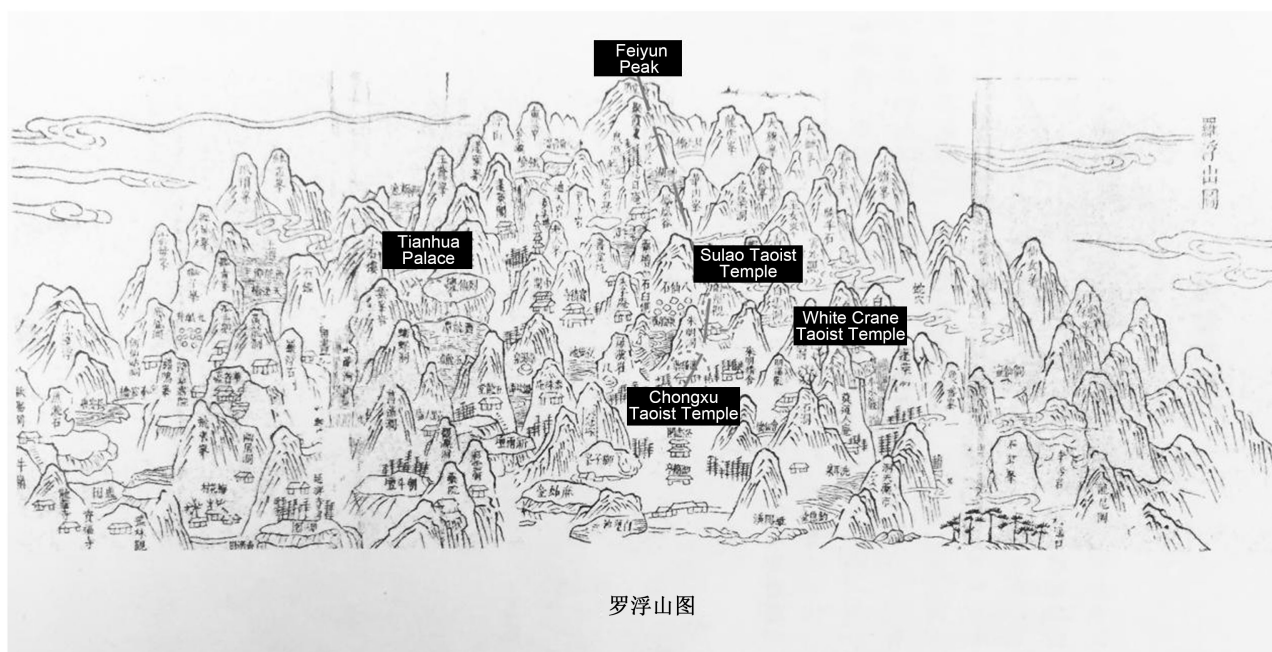
Crane, Jiutian, and Sulao. He adjusted the position of the four Taoist temples based on the former site of Gehong Four Taoist Temples and the traces of Taoist ancestors. He relocated the Sulao Taoist Temple to Sulao Dongtian, and merged with Chongxu, Huanglong, Jiutian, and White Crane Taoist Temple to form the Luofu Five Taoist Temples. The Five Taoist Temples pattern proposed by Zeng Yiguan has been adopted up to the present.

### 3.1. The Layout of the Four Taoist Temples of Ge Hong in the Eastern Jin Dynasty

Ge Hong was fond of visiting famous mountains and wrote the Travel Map of the Five Mountains, with his travels scattered throughout lots of famous mountains in Jiangxi and Guangdong Province. In his middle age, he once practiced alchemy with Li Shangshu on Sanqing Mountain where there are still Gedan Well and alchemy furnace left on the mountain [9]. The Sanqing Palace in the center of Sanqing Blessed Land worships Ge Hong beside Shang Sanqing based on the level of Yuhua ancestors. The third layout of the Taoist temples<sup>1</sup> in the center of Sanqing Mountain, of the similar central radial shape as the Luofu Mountain. The third layout of the temples on Sanqing Mountain takes Sanqing Palace as the center, presenting the trend of Five Elements and Eight Trigrams, while Luofu Mountain is centered on the place where Ge Hong and his wife ascended to heaven and became immortal at Feiyun Peak, surrounded by temples. Sanqing Mountain is located at the bottom of the valley at the mountaintop, in the shape of half Dongtian, while Luofu Mountain is centered on the peak to select Dongtian and layout the temples, where Dongtian, Mount Luoshan and Luoshui River present the layout of Penglai.

According to the textual research on the location of the Four Taoist Temples in the Annals of Luofu Mountain by Chen Lian of the Ming Dynasty (as shown in **Figure 1**), Feiyun Peak is located at the top of the dragon vein. Gehong Four Taoist Temples is distributed under the dragon vein Shaozu of Feiyun Peak, adjacent to each other in the east, south, west and north, forming a semi enclosed state on the south side of the Feiyun Peak. Chongxu Taoist Temple in the south represents fire, located in the Zhuming Dongtian; Huanglong Taoist Temple in the west is located on the platform on the hillside of the big and small stone building of Huanglong Cave; Sulao Taoist Temple in the north is located at the foot of Baiyun Mountain; White Crane Taoist Temple in the east is located at the entrance of Zhuming Cave to the east of Chongxu Taoist Temple. Both the Annals of Luofu Mountain and the Annals of Boluo County in the Ming Dynasty recorded that the temple was not built in the Yuan Dynasty, thus the Annals of Luofu Mountain drawn in the early Ming Dynasty should reflect the circumstance of the Luofu Four Taoist Temples in the Song Dynasty.

<sup>1</sup>The first layout of temples has a total length of 1750 meters, with an elevation difference of 700 meters from Tianyi Pool to Jiutian Yingyuan Mansion. The second layout is the central basin, that is the Sanqing Palace, surrounded by peaks.



**Figure 1.** The layout of four Taoist temples in Gehong period.

According to historical records, Zheng Yin preached the teachings of Taoism to Ge Hong in the Quanyuan Blessed Land, and Taoist practitioners generally chose another cave to avoid their ancestor. The main ridge of Feiyun Peak is gentle and passes through various caves lightly, with rich landscape and species diversity. About five miles south of Feiyun Peak is a watershed concave, which is the intersection of Mount Luoshan and Mount Fushan, in line with the Taoist belief that it is a spring originated from the blessed land. Quanyuan Blessed Land is located to the southeast of Feiyun Peak [5], adjacent to Tianhu Lake, which forms multiple waterfalls and springs along the nine ridges of Feiyun Peak. Therefore, Ge Hong chose along the Feiyun Peak, followed the dragon vein, and selected the water cave at the lower edge of the Quanyuan Blessed Land to as the Dongtian for cultivation. There are waterfalls or good underground water sources in Zhuming Cave of Southern Taoist Temple, Huanglong Cave of Western Taoist Temple, Small Water Curtain Cave of Eastern Taoist Temple and Stone Cave of Northern Taoist Temple. Boluo County Annals, Huizhou Prefecture Annals and other books recorded that Ge Hong and his wife were buried together at Yu'e Peak of Feiyun Peak in Luofu Mountain after their eclosion, which is also the origin of Feiyun Peak as the center of Taoist temples on Luofu Mountain.

### 3.2. The Layout of the Five Taoist Temples of Zeng Yiguan in the Qing Dynasty

In the Qing Dynasty, when Quanzhen Sect settled in the Southern Sect of Luofu Mountain, Li Qingqiu, the successor of Quanzhen Sect, suffered a lot of resistance. He did not settle in Luofu Mountain until Zeng Yiguan successfully asked

for rain, which marked the transformation of Luofu Mountain from Lingbao Sect Zuting to Quanzhen Sect Longmen Zuting. Meanwhile, Luofu “Four Taoist Temples” transformed into “Five Taoist Temples”, and were once again under unified leadership.<sup>2</sup> During this period, the relocation of White Crane and Sulao Taoist Temple among the Luofu Five Taoist Temples (Chongxu, Huanglong, Suoluo, Jiutian, and White Crane Taoist Temple) is quite significant. The location of Mingfu Cave set by Xu Ziming in the Ming Dynasty is closer to the location of Dong Temple in the Song Dynasty, located in the east of Chongxu Taoist Temple. Mingfu Taoist Temple is the predecessor of Jiutian Taoist Temple. Out of respect for the ancestor Ge Hong of Luofu, Zeng Yiguan defined the Jiutian Taoist Temple adjacent to Dong Temple in the Song Dynasty as Eastern Taoist Temple, while the White Crane Taoist Temple is defined as the Middle Taoist Temple.

Since the Sulao Taoist Temple in the stone cave was once occupied by mountain bandits at the end of the Ming Dynasty, it was as badly damaged as other temples on Luofu Mountain. During the reign of Emperor Kangxi in the Qing Dynasty, Zeng Yiguan explored the landform when stationed in Luofu Mountain, and found that the Sulao Dongtian in the north of Mount Luoshan and south of Mount Fushan formed a pattern of one Yin and one Yang together with the former site of Gehong Four Taoist Temples. Moreover, its location is profound and its water source is excellent, which is considered to be a treasure land for reviving Taoism on Luofu Mountain.<sup>3</sup> In 1716, Zeng Yiguan arranged for his disciple Ke Yanggui to relocate Ziyang Taoist Rites to Sulao Dongtian and built the Sulao Taoist Temple. The final layout of the Five Taoist Temples of Chongxu, Huanglong, Sulao, White Crane, and Jiutian in the Qing Dynasty was formed.

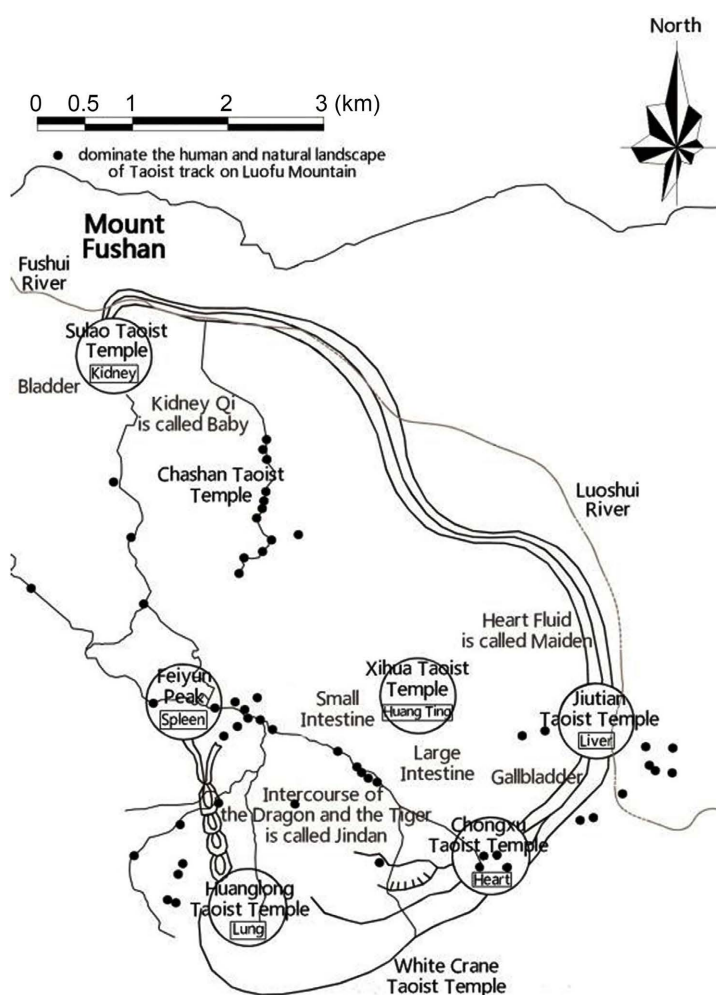
Shortly after the completion of the Sulao Taoist Temple, activities of the Heaven and Earth Society spread and harassment was avoided due to the hidden location, which also confirms Zeng Yiguan’s foresight of the location of Sulao Dongtian. Afterwards, during the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of Chi-

<sup>2</sup>Chen B. T. *A Collection of Taoist Classics beyond Dao Zang*[M]. Chengdu: Bushu Publishing House, 1994, 32: 805 “In the late Kangxi period, Taoist Zeng Yiguan practiced Taoism. The senior official in the province invited him to pray for rain, and it worked. Thus, Zeng Yiguan was appointed the abbot of the Five Taoist Temples, which were namely Chongxu, Huanglong, White Crane, Jiutian, and Sulao Taoist Temple. Zeng Yiguan was a member of the Longmen Sect and the 11th generation of descendants of Qiu Changchun. Nowadays, White Crane, Jiutian, and Sulao Taoist Temples all were classified as Longmen Sect, which were perhaps all partners of Du Yangdong and Zeng Yiguan. Only Huanglong Taoist Temple is a member of the Laoshan Sect, originating from Sun Liqing. Sun Liqing is the 4th generation of descendants of Changchun. Luofu used to be the residence of various immortals of Southern Sect. The seven ancestor of Southern Sect, including Shi Tai, Chen Nan, Bai Yuchan, and Peng Yun, also traveled to Luofu. He became a member of Changchun Sect, probably from that time onwards.”

<sup>3</sup>In the fourth year of the Guangxu reign (1878), the Stele Inscription Record of Reconstructing the Sulao Taoist Temple read: “Sometimes, Taoists who meet the standards, like the Shaowei in the sky, the hermit by the sea, drink profusely but find themselves in a difficult situation, shoulder heavy responsibilities but fail to live in seclusion... This is the origin of the Taoist orthodoxy of the immortals, and it is indeed what the prosperity of the Taoist temples that relies on.”

na, the Sulao Taoist Temple became the main temple for Taoist priests in Luofu Mountain to avoid wars, preach and teach, which helps continue the Taoist tradition.

The author of this paper speculates that another reason for the migration of Northern Taoist Temple is that the Internal Alchemy Sect of the Song Dynasty focused on internal cultivation, while Quanzhen Sect enjoyed practicing internal alchemy, which led to the layout of the Five Taoist Temples according to the Five Elements of Internal Alchemy. Referring to the Secret to the Cultivation of Alchemy of Taiqing and the Hunyuan Ching, the encounter of Four Images of gold, wood, water, fire, and earth can breed vitality [6]. The Dongtian where the Luofu Five Taoist Temples lies is connected to the Feiyun Peak. The author of this paper generated **Figure 2** by overlapping the Luofu Five Taoist Temples in the Qing Dynasty and the Internal Alchemy Decision of Real Intercourse of the Dragon and the Tiger. From **Figure 2**, it can be observed that the locations of the four Taoist temples coincide with the positions of human organs and the



**Figure 2.** The coincidence between the Luofu five Taoist temples in the Qing dynasty and the internal alchemy decision of real intercourse of the dragon and the tiger (Owner drawn).

Four Images. The position of the Five Elements that was adjusted by Zeng Yiguan is more consistent with the orientation of the Five Elements of the liver, lungs, heart, kidney, and spleen in the Study of Internal Alchemy Ching [10]. Feiyun Peak corresponds to the spleen, Huanglong Taoist Temple corresponds to the lungs, Chongxu Taoist Temple corresponds to the heart, Jiutian Taoist Temple corresponds to the liver, Sulao Taoist Temple corresponds to the kidneys, and Xihua Taoist Temple corresponds to the large intestine. The Sulao Taoist Temple is connected to the Chongxu Taoist Temple through Luoshui River, as heart and kidney are connected through blood vessels. Modern science further verifies the science of Ge Hong's site selection. The negative ion density of the three Dongtians he selected are about 4500 per  $\text{cm}^3$  higher than the average level of Luofu Mountain, verifying that the layout of Taoist temples on Luofu Mountain is the unification of the Taoist geographical universe view and the paleogeographic pattern of quasi science. From Ge Hong to Zeng Yiguan, the evolution and overlap of the Luofu Four Taoist Temples and Luofu Five Taoist Temples, together with the mountains and river systems, formed the imagery image of internal alchemy.

The relationship between the river system and the mountain is particularly important in the graphics of the Inner Alchemy imagery. In Chinese feng shui, there is a saying of "Dragon Seeking and Acupoints", which is the key to determining the location of the temple. At the same time, it confirms the scientific nature of site selection in ancient China, which often corresponds to the scientific site selection applied in the design of modern architectural site. Therefore, the following analysis is made on the relationship between the site selection of two generations of Taoist temples and water sources.

#### 4. The Outlook of Dragon Seeking and Acupoints on Dongtian

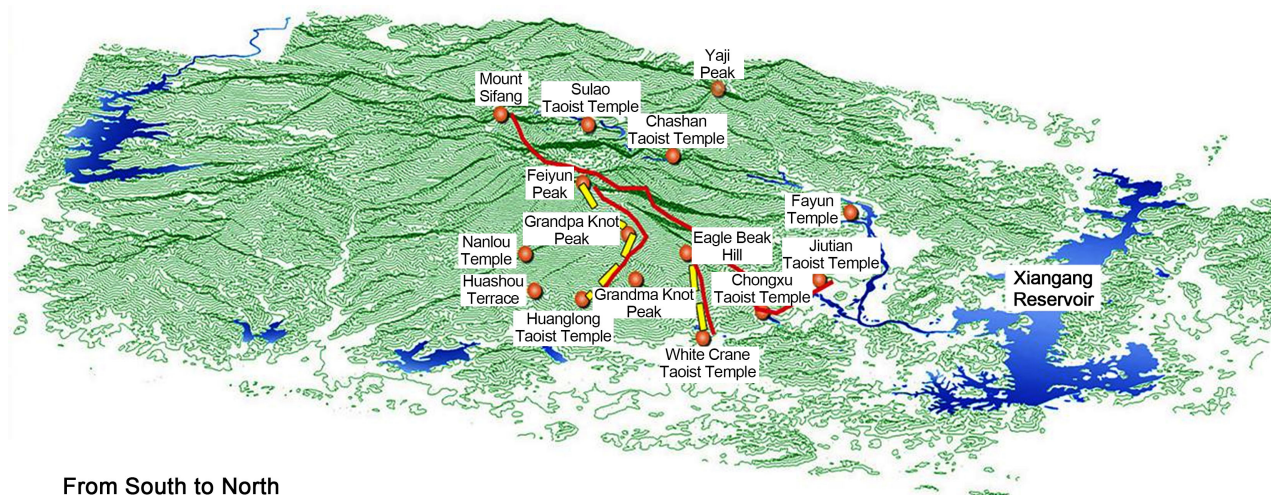
The layout style of Taoist temples on Luofu Mountain takes Feiyun Peak as the center, taking on a trend of Five Elements of Penglai, while the site selection of each temple in the mountain is mostly in the form of a cave. Among the 18 Dongtian wonders in Luofu Mountain, there are 11 Taoist temples and sites: Zhuming Cave, Sulao Cave, Huanglong Cave, Water Curtain Cave, Youju Cave, Guanyuan Cave, Penglai Cave, Lion Cave, Stone Cave, Savage Cave, Butterfly Cave, etc. The air water of Dongtian is gathered and gradually connected to the natural lake on Feiyun Peak. The large drop on the southern slope of Feiyun Peak has led to the formation of multiple waterfalls and springs at the top of the mountain, separated by the Tianhu Lake. Each Dongtian has excellent waterfalls and high-quality springs. The Dongtian water source where the Four Taoist Temples are located is listed in **Table 1**.

The site of Dongtian and temples is located at the end of the main ridge and sub ridge of Feiyun Peak, as shown by the red line in **Figure 3**. The main ridge is the extension of Mount Sifang, Feiyun Peak and Eagle Beak Hill, and there are



**Table 1.** Statistics of the four Taoist temples on water resources (Owner drawn).

Direction	Taoist Temple	Acupoint	Dragon Seeking
Southern Taoist Temple	Chongxu Taoist Temple	Changsheng Well	Guanyuan Cave behind the Temple and Water Curtain Cave with Waterfall
Northern Taoist Temple	Sulao Taoist Temple	Niang Spring	Baishuimen Waterfall
Western Taoist Temple	Huanglong Taoist Temple		The Passage of Two Waterfalls
Eastern Taoist Temple	White Crane Taoist Temple		Located in the Small Water Curtain Cave

**Figure 3.** Analysis of the relationship between the ridge, river system and the temples of the Luofu Mountain (Owner drawn).

three branches branching off from Eagle Beak Hill: Qingxia Valley in the east, Youju Cave in the west, and Zhuming Cave in the middle. The stream flows along the valley concave to the valley. The depression of watershed to the south-east of Feiyun Peak diverts Huanglong River to Huanglong Cave, and then branches into two waterfalls, surrounding the platform of Huanglong Taoist Temple. The main ridge connects the northern and southern Dongtian, and the Dongtian where the Northern and Southern Taoist Temples are located can be connected along the waterway in the mountain depression at the junction of Mount Luoshan and Mount Fushan along the Luoshui River. The old sites of Ge Hong's Taoist Temples are located at the end of the mountain ridge and branch river of the valley, as shown by the yellow dashed line in **Figure 3**. Chongxu, Sulao, and Jiutian Taoist Temple are connected with Luoshui River, surrounding Mount Luoshan. The Jiutian Taoist Temple and Sulao Taoist Temple are located at the entrance and exit where Luoshui River enters Mount Luoshan, with Jiutian Taoist Temple at the exit and Sulao Taoist Temple at the entrance. Due to the collapse of the White Crane Taoist Temple, the site selection of Jiutian Taoist Temple began to replace the position of Eastern Taoist Temple in the Song Dynasty, which coincided with the Five Elements for Health Preservation and the Outlook on Kanyu Geomantic Omen of Luofu Internal Alchemy in the Song Dynasty. The Sulao Taoist Temple is located at the Rosefinch where the Luoshui

River turns to Fushui River, where the water is clear and flows slowly, in line with Professor Cheng Jianjun's analysis of the selection of the river outlet in the Collection of Book: "Those who select the water as the Rosefinch, its decline and prosperity are in line with the shape, avoiding turbulence, is called mourning. The Rosefinch originates from vitality, yet small stream of water is not strong..." [11] Similarly, the waterfall at the corner of Zhuming Cave and Huanglong Cave as well as the White Crane River flows slowly. After Ge Hong, other Taoists mostly selected sites in the Dongtian between the Western and Southern Taoist Temples to build temples, among where there are two types involve Luofu river system.

#### **4.1. Carry the Yin and Embrace the Yang, Surrounded by Hills and Girdled by River**

Chongxu, Sulao, and Huanglong Taoist Temple exhibit different states of being surrounded by mountains on all sides. Chongxu Taoist Temple is surrounded by Mount Lion, Mount Horse, Mount Elephant, and Mount Mei, as if located within a treasure basin. Chongxu Taoist Temple faces south, with Bailian Lake at the southern end of the axis and Mount Mei at the end of Bailian Lake, and Mount Mei, like a desk, faces the mountain range behind the temple. Behind the temple, there is Lailong (the trend of the mountain range) of the main mountain, Shaozu, and Zushan formed by Yunv Peak, Yu'e Peak, and Feiyun Peak. The Lailong has excellent forms. Lailong and Changsheng Well presented the outlook of Dragon Seeking and Acupoints on Dongtian when selecting the site of Chongxu Taoist Temple.

The corresponding Northern Taoist Temple Sulao also faces south. The temple faces Mount Sifang and Bijia Peak in the northwest of the main ridge of Feiyun Peak, and is surrounded by mountains at the back. The eastern entrance of Sulao Dongtian also passes through the Luoshui River which flows in from the northwest and flows out from the southwest. The Luoshui River, like a placental umbilical cord, coils around the entire Sulao Dongtian. As Cheng Jianjun commented: "The Mingtang is quite good, the Chaoshan and Banshan are both well, with river outlets crisscrossed, but the Lailong is slightly weaker." Lailong refers to the trend of the mountain range. Since the Sulao Dongtian is located between the mountain depressions, and its mountain range is divided into ridges by the Feiyun Peak, it is not as strong as the Chongxu and Huanglong, which are located on the main backbone of the Lailong.

The north of Huanglong Cave is close to the Yunv Peak and the Yu'e Peak, where the main ridge is divided into the eastern branch of Grandpa Knot Peak, Guifeng Peak, Grandma Knot Peak, and the western branch of Hawksbill Peak, with the temple in the cave backed by two mountains. On the east side of Huanglong River is Huanglong Waterfall, and on the west side is Feiyun Splash Snow Waterfall. The two rivers are in the shape of an old-fashioned armchair, surrounding the temple along the mountain terrain.

## 4.2. Waterfall Area

Another layout of Taoist temples on Luofu Mountain is to build a Taoist temple in the waterfall area, among which the most typical sites are Shuzhu Taoist Temple in the Water Curtain Cave, Hexian Taoist Temple, and Chashan Taoist Temple in the Penglai Cave. Hexian Taoist Temple is at the upstream of the White Crane River between Huanglong Cave and Zhuming Cave. The temple faces south and sits on the water channel of the valley, with the Butterfly Valley behind. The Eagle Beak Hill on the east side of the temple is higher than the Grandma Knot Peak, Grandpa Knot Peak, and Guifeng Peak on the west side. The former is majestic, while the latter three are feminine. Below the Hexian Taoist Temple lies the Water Curtain Cave Waterfall Group, which originate from the White Crane River System under Yu'e Peak. During the rainy season, there are often five waterfalls hanging, with the Water Curtain Cave Waterfall being the largest. During the Tang and Song dynasties, numerous tourists came and visited the Water Curtain Cave, leaving lots of inscriptions and stone carvings. The famous Taoist Zou Shizheng of the Song Dynasty wrote in the Record of Luofu: "The waters and stones in the mountains of Water Curtain Cave are the best."

In the late Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty (approximately 1792-1795), the Chashan Taoist Temple was renamed Huangxian Taoist Temple, which was built by Taoist Zeng Fugao and Hu Fu'an behind the Penglai Cave to worship Doumu and Huang Yeren<sup>4</sup>. In the early years of the Republic of China, the temples were renovated through fundraising. Between 1930 and 1932, He Renshan and others of Dongguan once again raised funds for renovation, having planted hundreds of plum blossoms and engraved the inscription of Record of Plum Planting on Tea Mountain. The inscription still exists on the east wall of the Sulao Taoist Temple. Due to its remote location and prolonged disrepair, only the gate of Huangxian Cave remains. Penglai Cave is located at the foot of Tanglingdu Peak, with the Tea Mountain Waterfall inside. The Tea Mountain Waterfall originates from the Baishili Waterfall at the three peaks of the upper bound, with a drop of nearly 200 meters. The first waterfall is relatively short, with a distance of 30 - 40 meters between the second and third waterfall. The third waterfall has a multi-level drop of 70 to 80 meters, impacting rocks all year round. The ancient site of Huangxian Taoist Temple is located under the third waterfall of the Tea Mountain Waterfall, which falls 10 meters from the cliff and forms a water pool in front of the temple. The cliff next to the water pool is carved with the words "Feiqing" in cursive script. Behind the waterfall, a dome shaped cave is hidden for Taoist meditation. The Chashan Taoist Temple is the most immortal among the Dongtians, with towering ancient trees, flying waterfalls and flowing springs, which has the highest content of negative ions.

The high-quality water source and stable mountain structure are the basis for

<sup>4</sup>Boluo County Annals: Character. Huang Yeren is a Dixian loved by people around Luofu Mountain.

selecting the location of each temple and Dongtian. As for the site of the Dongtian, due to the subjective factors of the changes of Taoist health preservation ethics and the objective factors of changes in the era environment, it has evolved into the current layout of Taoist Temples on Luofu Mountain.

## 5. Summary

Under the replacement of the source of Taoism, the Taoist temples on Luofu Mountain evolved from the Four Taoist Temples of Lingbao Sect in the Eastern Jin Dynasty to the Five Taoist Temples of Quanzhen Sect in the Qing Dynasty, presenting the Taoist Kanyu Geomancy Omen layout of the Qing Dynasty with Feiyun Peak as the center, and completing the symbolic transformation of Taoist ideas from external alchemy to internal alchemy.

The Taoist external alchemy of Luofu Mountain is represented by Ge Hong of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, which mainly focuses on pharmaceuticals, alchemy, and writing books. By imitating the laws of the universe, it can make “pills of immortality” to consolidate the foundation and cultivate primordial spirit. Taoist practice Taoism relies on the external environment, emphasizes the integration of heaven and humanity, follows the trend to select sites and build the temples, chooses the place where wind and gas are stored, and captures the essence of the sun and the moon. Gehong Four Taoist Temples are located at the end of the dragon vein of Feiyun Peak, with dragon seeking and acupoints, half surrounding and forming a complex of Dongtians in the east, south, west, and north. From the perspective of rational science, build temples in areas with abundant species to form efficient, convenient, and centralized alchemy and pharmaceutical venues. Each Taoist temple and Dongtian corresponds to the modern scientific measurement data such as good water sources and high-quality negative ion density, confirming the scientific nature of the external alchemy, dragon seeking, acupoints and Taoist Kanyu Geomantic Omen.

After the Song Dynasty, the Taoist practice theory of Luofu gradually changed from external alchemy to internal alchemy. The settlement of the Quanzhen Sect in the Qing Dynasty pushed the practice of internal alchemy in Luofu Mountain to a climax. Inner alchemy regards the human body as a “furnace cauldron”, which runs meridians through internal circulation. Under the control of artificial consciousness, it uses Promordial Qi to promote the circulation of vital essence in the body, allowing essence, vital energy and spirit to condense into an internal alchemy. On the basis of Gehong Four Taoist Temples, the Quanzhen Sect changed the position of the Northern Taoist Temple, forming the Zhongxing Geomantic Omen pattern of one Yin and one Yang while the Northern and Southern Taoist Temples and other temples are arranged according to the Five Elements and surround the Feiyun Peak, forming a layout similar to the Internal Alchemy Decision of Real Intercourse of the Dragon and the Tiger, which metaphorizes the pattern of human organs matching the Four Images. The symbol of the internal alchemy, the Five Elements and Dongtian, which is integrated

with the Feiyun Peak, gives the layout of Taoist temples on Luofu Mountain a metaphysical beauty.

The geomantic omen pattern of temples in these two periods represents the different understanding of the Luofu Mountain landform by the two Taoist sects. The Taoist temples on Luofu Mountain have important protection value in terms of history, science and aesthetics, and need to be protected as a whole. At the same time, they can also become an important protection and detection point for Taoist cultural tourism in the tourism planning of Luofu Mountain.

## Funding

This study was supported by the National Natural Science Foundation Project 52978272 (A Study on the Spatial Evolution Mechanism of Lingnan Taoist Temples) and Huizhou Social Planning Project (Base Project) 2022ZX021 (Research on Huizhou Taoist Architecture).

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

## References

- [1] Bi, Y. (1985) Explanation of Name and Syndrome. China Publishing House, Beijing, 24.
- [2] Xu, S. (1988) Annotation to Origin of Chinese Characters. 2nd Edition, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, Shanghai, 383.
- [3] Liu, D.M. (1988) The Complete Collection of Wudang Blessed Land, Biography of the Cave God Department. Shanghai Publishing House, Shanghai, 19, 648.
- [4] Huang, X. (2009) Religious Building. China Federation of Literary and Art Circles Publishing Corporation, Beijing, 115.
- [5] Wang, T. (2014) A Study on the Cultural Heritage of Taoist Temples in Sanqing Mountain. Master's Thesis, Nanjing University, Nanjing, 7.
- [6] Boluo County Chronicle Office (1988) Boluo County Annals. Guangdong Provincial Museum of Literature and History, Guangzhou, 1.
- [7] Fan, Y. (1965) Book of the Later Han Dynasty: Annals of Prefectures and Nations. Proofreader's Copy Version. China Publishing House, Beijing, 3530.
- [8] Wen, Z.T. (2015) Protection and Utilization of Medicinal Plant Resources in Mount Luofu. *South China Agriculture*, **9**, 181-183.
- [9] Li, J.P. (1983) Atlas of Yuanhe Prefectures and Counties: Lingnan Road 1. Proofreader's Copy Version. China Publishing House, Beijing, 893.
- [10] Chen, G.F. (2014) A Study on the Origin of Daozang. China Publishing House, Beijing, 420.
- [11] Chen, J.J. (2014) Sanshui Xujiang Ancestral Temple. China Architecture and Building Press, Beijing, 28.