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## When Technology Encounters Culture: A Closer Watch on Dajia Mazu Patrol and Pilgrimage in Taiwan

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### ABSTRACT

Mazu, a protective sea God, has been worshipped by residents of Taiwan and southeast coast of mainland China as well as overseas Chinese around the globe for hundreds of years. The number of people around the world under her influence of religious belief and moral culture can reach up hundreds of million. Every year in lunar March, the over- one-week long Mazu patrol and pilgrimage held by Jenn Lann Temple in Dajia County of Taiwan attracts millions of pilgrims and tourists around the world to participate in one of the biggest religious events in the world. To keep track of the entire patrol and pilgrimage, Jenn Lann Temple has been cooperating with GIS Research Center, Feng-Chia University since 2008, setting up a GPS receiver, a digital camera, and 4 video recorders on Mazu' s palanquin. Both real-time position of the palanquin and live videos on the scene along the way of pilgrimage were published on the Internet, providing pilgrims, tourists and viewers around the world with an open access to observe the entire event. This paper details this initiative of introducing spatial technology to large cultural events. The study collects the historic tracks of Mazu' s palanquin during the pilgrimage from 2008 to 2010, analyzes their spatial-temporal attributes, and elicits several interesting facts behind the figures and maps. It also explores how spatial technologies can help organize large-scale events and even accelerate the dissemination of culture.

### KEYWORDS

Mazu Culture, Pilgrimage, GPS, WebGIS

### Cite this paper

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