

Village Religion in Huizhou: A Preliminary Assessment

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Abstract: If any late imperial Chinese local society can be thought of as representing the transformation of society in accord with the neo-Confucian principles, Huizhou would be it. It therefore represents a particularly interesting test case of how deeply these principles actually reached into the inner workings of that society: to what extent were other religious forms marginalized? The author relies on fieldwork to try to answer this question. While it would appear that Buddhist and Daoist specialists did frequently have a lower social status than in other parts of China, reliance on their rituals would seem to have been just as widespread as elsewhere, and the society as a whole continued to be structured around local temples, even if magnificent lineage halls came to play a dominant role in village architecture. Also, the place of the *shuikou* in structuring village space was just as important as in other parts of South China.

Key words: Huizhou, village religion, ancestor hall, local gods, geomancy.

The present paper will sketch some of the most significant features of Huizhou village religion as we have learned about it over the past four years of fieldwork and collecting local reports.¹ Among the cults to which I will pay particular attention are those of Wang Hua 汪華, his sons, Wuchang 五猖, Guanyin 觀音, Zhang Xun 張巡/Xu Yuan 許遠, and the earth god 社. As much as possible, I will place their worship in spatial and temporal context, for where and when gods are worshiped is just as important as how.

Fieldwork in Minxi and Huizhou

But before looking at the gods, a word must be said about the conditions and nature of our Huizhou fieldwork. Before even starting systematic fieldwork, I was warned that, first, there was “nothing left to see” and, second, “there is a local literati tradition.” Both warnings proved prescient: while such things are hard to measure, after four years of visits to three Huizhou counties, it is indeed my impression that destruction of temples, halls, and ritual traditions was even more thorough than in Minxi 閩西, and their restoration much slower, indeed, in many places, non-existent.

In Huizhou, as in Minxi, we worked together with county governments—especially cultural affairs and local monograph offices—and our goal was the same: to find local authors to write about local customs according to our template, which puts emphasis on “social content” 社會內容, that is, the organization of local lineages and festivals. But, whereas in Minxi the only prior literature of the kind was collections of local stories and the occasional article in the *Wenshi ziliao* 文史資料, in Huizhou our work has coincided with a “tourism fe-

1. The Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation funded research on which this paper is based has been conducted together with professors Wang Zhenzhong 王振忠 (Fudan University), Puk Wing-kin 卜永堅 (Chinese University of Hong Kong), and Bian Li 卞利 (Anhui University), with whom I have worked, respectively, on Shexian 歙縣, Wuyuan 婺源, and Jixi 績溪. As this is primarily an ethnographic report, its temporal horizon is Republican-era Huizhou.

ver” 旅遊熱 that has produced rafts of books on villages being touted for “intangible cultural heritage” 非物質文化遺產 status. The preferred emphasis of such books is famous sons and beautiful buildings. While, as the reader will discover below, some of these books also contain valuable information about local customs, the very existence of this prior model has made it extremely difficult to convince local authors to focus their attention on the features of local society of interest to us.

But we have also encountered other more subtle difficulties, namely, what I will call “a residual anti-superstition stance” and an overwhelming preference for written, as opposed to oral sources. This latter is characteristic of thriving “Huizhou studies” 徽州學 generally and is at least partly attributable to the fact that no area of Chinese regional studies enjoys such a wealth of unofficial written material of local origin. But might it not also be due, at least in part, to traditional literati attitudes, like the anti-superstition stance? While this point of view has on several occasions been expressed to me forthrightly and even vigorously, my sense is that it now more frequently expresses itself as a matter of simple disinterest: why bother? With rare exceptions, we have not succeeded in infecting our local Huizhou authors with a sense of the urgency—let alone the pleasure—of writing about long-defunct festivals. As a result, one of the most staggering differences between our fieldwork results in Minxi and Huizhou is that we have found no one in the Huizhou counties willing to investigate and write on county seat festivals. Famous festivals like that on 4/8 in Wuyuan have virtually disappeared into an historical black hole, a truly tragic loss.

Religious Specialists

Another glaring difference between Huizhou and Minxi is the social status of religious specialists. In a word, what we have heard over and over again is that they belonged, in Huizhou, to “little surnames” 小姓, and were in effect the bondservants of the “big surnames” they worked for. They were of course by no means alone in being confined to such humble status—this was a well-known and typical fea-

ture of Huizhou society, applied even more universally to musicians. One of the most striking expressions of this form of social differentiation we have encountered was in the village of Wangfenkou 汪汾口 in Shexian. As we walked under a pavilion that bestraddled a village path, we were told that indentured servants rung the bell there on the last day of the year in order to alert their own dead: “Even after death, you must still help guard the gate of the landlord.” Thus servitude was conceived of as an ontological reality that extended into the other world.²

The first time we heard that Daoists were a part of this group of virtual outcastes was in the Zhou-lineage village of Zhoubangtou 周邦頭 (Shexian). The Zhous, who had grown extremely wealthy from their trade in varnish (the patron saint of which was Zhuangzi 莊子!), had recourse for ritual services to Daoists living in a “Daoist village” 道士村 some eight kilometers distant—way up in the hills—from Zhoubangtou. Excited by the idea there was a Daoist village to be visited—I had first heard of such things from Xu Hongtu, who had found them in Zhejiang—I asked for more information, and got this, to me at that time, shocking answer: “They were purchased.”—“Purchased?”—“Yes, purchased: when you have a lot of money, you can buy anything,” replied this village Howard Hughes. “They were like sedan chair carriers.”

This conversation took place on August 21, 2007. Three days later, we were in Zhaitan 宅坦, Jixi, Hu Shi’s 胡適 home village. There it was not Daoists but Buddhist monks who were purchased, when young, and placed in the Upper Temple 上廟, where they were trained to do whatever rituals the Hus required. The following year, on April 30, we visited the Daoist village associated with Zhoubangtou. Most of the tamped earth houses were locked and empty. We did find one old Daoist on his death bed, being fed gruel in a dirt floor hut. One old man, Wang Rongfu 汪榮富, 76, who said he himself was

2. Our visit took place on April 29, 2009. Cf. Qitao Guo, *Exorcism and Money: The Symbolic World of the Five-fury Spirits in Late Imperial China*, pp. 97–98, where Guo notes that musicians and ritual specialists were at the bottom of the totem pole.

not a Daoist, explained that all surrounding villages were “Daoist,” that is, required Daoist services. They had once been divided into *pian* 片, sectors, with each sector being served by a Daoist family. His own father had been in charge of the eastern sector, which included some 20 villages. His father had many manuscripts for each “Pusa-welcoming” 接菩薩 ritual: “Whichever Pusa you welcomed, you did the corresponding *jiao* 醮.” *Jiao* were thus common and Pusa-specific. The longest lasted twelve days and nights. His father could do up to eight days and nights. Every ritual had both military and civil components; civil rites went together with “old music” 古樂, and “whenever there was old music, there were Daoists.”

Zhou Liangrong 周良榮 of Zhoubangtou, 53, added further information: Prayers for rain and prayers for a son both came in “small” 小求 and “big request” 大求 form. The small forms could be done at home; big forms required a Daoist. Requests for sons 求子 were addressed to Guanyin, for rain 求雨 to a dragon. So if it was a big request for rain, the villagers had to go with the Daoist to “wherever there was a dragon.” Locally, they went to Xiakeng 霞坑, whose dragon was especially *ling* 靈. The dragon had to be awakened so he would go to heaven and request rain for a specific place. Daoists were not needed for healing rituals, but the relevant Pusa had to be welcomed to the house of the sick person. If a woman was having difficulty giving birth, King Li was invited and made to “dance” lightly on the pregnant woman’s belly.

On May 17, 2009, we visited the village of Zhuli 竹里 in Jixi county. A village map in a 1912 edition of the local Zhou lineage genealogy showed an earth god and a Guandi temple, together with a Dashige 大士閣 (for worship of Guanyin), all at the village *shuikou* 水口. According to 88-year old Zhou Guangxi 周光熙, a retired teacher, there had once been an Yunlu’an 雲露庵 in the village as well (destroyed in 1958). It had “many Pusa” and seven or eight monks, who had been “purchased from outside” (Zhejiang) and whose names he still recalled. They did *daochang* 道場 and Mulian opera 目連戲, which he had seen in 1946. In the middle of the seventh month, they did a festival to feed the orphan souls 施孤會. For marriage, prayers for longevity, and making vows, people went to the Guanyin Pavilion

觀音亭; for a medical consultation, they went to the Guandi Temple 關帝廟, where there was a special locust tree 槐樹. A Temple of the Princes 太子廟, built in front of the founding ancestor's grave, was still standing; it contained a Daoguang 12 (1832) incense burner. On 8/24, the villagers went there to worship and parade the three Pusa in "beautiful sedan chairs" throughout the village.

My last example will be Longwei 龍尾, in Wuyuan County. A large village inhabited by the powerful Jiang lineage 江姓, Longwei is literally surrounded by satellite villages of small surnames who specialized in specific services: the people living in Qiaotou 橋頭 (Bridge) took care of bridges; other small surnames tilled the land; and the Yaos of Yaojia 姚家村 (Yao Family Village) performed Daoist rituals. In their village, which we visited a first time on May 23, 2009, there used to be a *fatan* 法壇, a Daoist ritual arena which, according to our guide and later author Jiang Mingliang, was in fact a large building facing south built on the site where the first Jiang had settled in the late Yuan. Said to have been built by the founder's grandsons in the early Ming, it was at once a temple for Xuantian shangdi 玄天上帝 and a founding ancestor hall—a remarkable feature to which we will return below. Here, suffice it to say that, according to Jiang, the Yaos first tried to take over the *tan* and then built a building that blocked its view, with the result that the Jians countered in 1602 by turning the *tan* into a two-story building. Such tales are typical of relations between lineages and Buddhist monks originally engaged to take care of the family or lineage dead in a merit hall *gongde tang* 功德堂 and then converting it into a Buddhist temple.

Before leaving the subject of ritual specialists, however, I will mention one case that is quite contrary to the ones evoked above. On August 23, 2009, we visited Taibai 太白 in southeastern Wuyuan, near the border with Dexing County 德興縣 in Zhejiang. On our way to Taibai, a former river port, we passed through the village of Yutan 玉坦村 and, having seen what looked like an active temple by the side of the road—a very rare occurrence in Huizhou—we quickly had the driver pull over to allow us to investigate. It was in fact a whole cluster of very small temples, with the principle temple, basically run by a women's group, dedicated to Grandpa Immortal Water 仙水老爺. We

learned they were planning to do a *jiao* later that fall, and to invite Daoists from Dexing to do it. Puk Wing-kin went back to observe the *jiao*, together with Liu Yonghua and Wu Nengchang, and a full report will be published eventually. For the moment, what it enables us to point out is, first, that not all Daoists (and Buddhists) were bondservants and, second, that Wuyuan stands out in the larger Huizhou region not only for having been “cut away” from Anhui and given to Jiangxi, but also for the unique place of Daoism in Wuyuan.

The reasons for this are no doubt complex, but one fact is of particular importance: Qiyunshan 齊雲山, a Daoist mountain now in Xiuning County 修寧縣. Because of events that occurred under the Jiajing emperor, this mountain gained national stature, and its history may be investigated as a part of the official record of Chinese religion.³ But what I will propose here is a local account of these events:⁴

Qiyunshan was run by Wuyuan people, who used to go there every year, and before 1949, it was in Wuyuan. We went there in the 7th month, every village, with sedan chairs and eating vegetarian food for three days. First, the whole village had to be cleaned, and then the lineage head and 20–50 men went to worship and bring back the god. All along the way there was percussion and music, right to the foot of the mountain, from where they continued, doing three steps and a bow. In the mountain-top temple, they procured a “god tablet” 神位, which they put in a sedan chair and then, once back in the village, placed for seven days in the ancestor hall, after which the tablet was burned in the hall’s incense burner. Daoists did rituals for the pilgrims on the mountain, but did not go back to the villages with them. This began in the Jiajing era, when the Jiajing emperor successfully prayed for a son on Qiyunshan. At that

3. This story has recently been told by Richard Wang in a paper given at a conference on Zhenwu held on April 2–3, 2010, at Rutgers University: “Qiyunshan as a Replica of Wudangshan and the Religious Landscape of the Ming Empire.”

4. The origin of this information is Sun Zhaoduo 孫兆鐸, a retired official from the Cultural Affairs Bureau who was 68 when we interviewed him on May 21, 2009.

time, there were many Daoists on the mountain, which was 100 *li* away, one day's walk. One Wang Hong defeated the Portuguese and so was liked by the Jiajing emperor. Wang then recommended the Zhenwu 真武 of Qiyunshan as good for sons, and the emperor was pleased and decided to go there. When he got there, the Daoists were scared and all ran away. In the kitchen, he found a cook: Wang Hong asked him whether he could do a *daochang*?—No.—Do you know how they do it?—Yes.—So the cook pretended, and the emperor had a son: How can I thank you?—Give Qiyun to Wuyuan (where Wang Hong was from). “So this mountain is still ours.”

While the assertion the mountain was on Wuyuan territory is inaccurate—it is in Xiuning, we have since learned that it was indeed controlled by Daoists from Wuyuan. Our first glimpse of this came on May 14, 2010, when we encountered a 48-year old Daoist named Wang Shoufu 汪壽福 and watched him perform the end of a *chaodu* ritual. From Xiaozhuang 曉庄 village in Duanxin 段莘 township, northern Wuyuan, and himself the son of a Daoist who had died in 2002, he had heard that his clan was descended from the cook who did the ritual for the Jiajing emperor. Of the 90-odd families in the village when he was small, many could do Daoist rites, and in the 1980s, about ten who could play music and do rituals went to live on Qiyunshan.⁵

5. Wang Shoufu supplied us a good deal more information on the rituals he does, and we subsequently visited Xiaozhuang and related villages, as well as Qiyunshan itself, where we met the present head of the mountain's Daoists, Zhan Heping 詹和平, 37, and his father Zhan Dali 詹達禮, 63, head of the Anhui Daoist Association and previous head of Qiyunshan. His father, Zhan Yanfu 詹嚴福, son of a famous Qiyunshan Daoist, had been the last head of the mountain's Daoists before 1949. The Zhan family hails from Wangxi 汪溪 village, likewise in Duanxin township. This information was gathered on August 14, 2010, during a visit to Qiyunshan in the company of Wang Falin 汪發林, a childhood schoolmate of Wang Shoufu who has now completed a major essay on the Daoist traditions of northern Wuyuan.

Chengkan 呈坎

On August 20, 2007, together with Wang Chiu-kuei, Wang Zhenzhong, and Bian Li, I paid my first visit to a Huizhou village, the famous Luo 羅-lineage village of Chengkan. At that point, I was under the impression from what little reading I had done that Wang Hua, or Wanggong dadi 汪公大帝 as he is most frequently called, was the most widely worshiped god in Huizhou. But from my first encounter with him, on that August day, I began to have doubts. In Chengkan, we were told, there were once two Daoist abbeys at its *shuikou*, called respectively the Upper 上觀 and the Lower Abbey 下觀 (they were in fact located at upper and lower *shuikou*).⁶ At the edge of the village, right near a bridge, a beautiful earth god house *shewu* 社屋, called Earth God of Eternal Spring 長春社, still stands, and on the hill across that bridge there was once a Dragon Hill Temple 龍山廟 for Wang Hua, as well as temples for Guangong 關公 (“just behind that for Wang Hua”), Prince 太子, and Dutian 都天 (Xu Yuan). There was also a Wenchangge 文昌閣 at the first *shuikou*, part of a larger Daoist complex. On Upper Prime Day 上元日 (1/15), in the past, Guangong and all the other Pusa were paraded through the village and then deposited in the earth god house. Wang Hua alone was carried to the ancestor hall.

According to this oral presentation, made by Luo Huiding 羅會定, then 66, there were three moments in the Chengkan year for opera: 1) rice rain opera 穀雨戲, which lasted three days, was done in honor of the Great Emperor of Dongping 東平大帝, Zhang Xun 張巡; 2) opera for preserving tranquility 保安戲 was performed 6/12–15 for all

6. While I have encountered multiple *shuikou* in Hakka parts of Fujian, in Huizhou they seem to be very frequent, especially in rich villages like Chengkan. These successive *shuikou* are always tightly packed with temples. Not infrequently, moreover (not in Chengkan), “upper” means upstream and “lower” downstream. Such villages, which are often strung out along a river, a road, or both, are thus protected by the gods at both ends from *gui* and strangers passing through.

Pusa, who were carried to the earth god house for the occasion. First, on 6/12-13, glutinous rice cakes were made, and all were told to clean their houses. On 6/14, the Pusa “came down from their altars” 下壇, and the opera began; 3) opera for Guanyin 觀音戲, on 9/15-19, in the ancestor hall. Organizational control of these rituals was rotated from year to year among five directional “associations” 會.⁷

One of the multitude of books about Huizhou villages that are pouring off the presses is called “A harmonious rural community: Chengkan village,” by Ma Yonghu.⁸ With respect to earth god houses, Ma says they typically contained statues of anthropomorphic gods and gods of nature, together with a tablet for the earth god, called Shegong 社公. Usually one floor high, they had two round windows called “eyes of the gods” 神眼 to either side of the single door. “Unlike ancestor halls, which were built in the center of the village, earth god houses were built on the village edge. Indeed, most frequently they were situated at the *shuikou*, which represented the village boundary. But they could not be outside the *shuikou*, so they often formed a scenic spot at the *shuikou* together with the stream, a bridge, a pavilion, and trees.”⁹ The Eternal Spring Earth God house of Chengkan was one of two owned by the Luos, one for the “front” and one for the “back” Luos (two Luo segments said to derive from two brothers). This, the “front Luo” 前羅 earth god house, is said in a 1566 inscription for its repair to have been “moved to the present site at the time of the Song restoration,” that is, the beginning of the Southern Song. According to Ma, there were two stone altars 石壇 inside the house, one for the earth god, referred to as Tudi pusa 土地菩薩, and one for the god of grains, called Shegong pusa 社公菩薩. In front of the house there was a large open area where opera was put on dur-

7. On this widespread feature of Huizhou festivals, see the contribution by Wang Zhenzhong in this volume.

8. *Hexie you xu de xiangcun shequ: Chengkan* 和諧有序的鄉村社區：呈坎, by Ma Yonghu 馬勇虎.

9. *Chengkan*, p. 113.

ing festival time.¹⁰

Ma also gives an account of “religious architecture”, starting with the Dragon Hill Temple on Dragon Hill. It was built for Wang Hua in the Wanli era (1573-1619) by Luo Xiaohua 羅小華, of the 22nd generation of the Front Luos: “By the Ming, Wang Hua had already become the territorial protector god of villages throughout Huizhou.”¹¹ Before that, in the Hongzhi era (1488-1505), Luo Mida 羅彌達 of the 19th generation of the Front Luos, had built a major stone bridge, called Bridge of the Ascension 隆興橋, across the river separating Chengkan from Dragon Hill. To the north of the bridge, a Dutian Temple 都天廟, for Xu Yuan, was built and, to the south, facing the river, where the “hill’s mouth formed” 結山嘴, by Luo Biduan 羅必端 of the 23rd generation of the Back Luos, in the Jiajing era, a Chan Buddhist temple named after the bridge 隆興禪院. Also south of the bridge, but up a 100-step stair that led to the top of Guanyin Hill 觀音山, Luo Zhen-sun 羅震孫 of the 20th generation of the Front Luos built the Abbey of the Ascension 隆興觀, also called Upper Abbey, in the Hongzhi era. In the same era but farther downstream, Luo Misi 羅彌四 of the 19th generation of the Front Luos built the Happy-Crossing Bridge 樂濟橋. Near this bridge, at the mouth of Dragon-Roiling Hill 龍盤山, the Front and Back Luos together built the Abbey of the Female Perfected 女貞觀, also called Lower Abbey, in the Jiajing era. This abbey contained a Wenchang Pavilion 文昌閣, a Hall for the Great Saint 大聖堂, and another one for the Prince 太子殿, a Guandi Temple, and a number of other buildings.

While Ma Yonghu gives no sources, the precise dates and generational information he supplies means he is most probably quoting a lineage genealogy. Assuming his account to be accurate, it means that, after the earth god house, the first religious building in Chengkan was

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–15. Normally the god of grains is called Shennong 神農 (or Wugu 五穀), so I suspect Ma Yong is mistaken. But because the Tudi and Shegong are often distinct gods in Huizhou, he may in fact be right, locally.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 55. The paragraphs on religious architecture are found on pp. 55–56.

Daoist (Hongzhi), followed by Buddhist and Daoist temples in the Jiajing era, and only then by a separate temple for Wang Hua, in the late Ming. Clearly, the Ming status of Buddhists and Daoists was nothing like that alluded to above, as virtual bondservants; nor was Wang Hua the most important local god.

Ma Yonghu also describes succinctly the “playing with the Pusa” 戲¹² 菩薩 festival of the first month. On 1/14, “said to be the birthday of the gods of earth and grain,” the Luos went to their respective earth god houses to “congratulate” the gods. All day long and well into the night, every elder person who was celebrating his own longevity in the new year offered a pair of large red candles to the God of Longevity. That evening, they shared in a longevity banquet and wished long life to the gods of the earth and grains. The next day at dawn, the earth god statue was placed in a sedan chair and carried to the main lineage hall. As soon as the chair had entered the hall, the main gate was half-shut, but left ajar just enough for one person to squeeze in. At that moment, everyone, male and female, old and young, pressed to enter the narrowed door. Those who managed to get in were given a pair of longevity peaches made of flour. That evening, the Luos put on a great lantern festival, with dragon dancing and parading of the gods. Each sedan chair had sixteen large red candles arrayed on it. This was called “the dragon lanterns escort the gods back” 龍燈送神. The parade went through the entire village. Each time it came past the house of a new bride, the chair was set down while the bride accepted a pair of red candles from the porters and brought them into her bedroom, then came out with a red envelope for the porters. The porters also stopped at a house with a newborn son: the family placed thirty-four red candles in the sedan chair and put on a banquet for the porters and members of the lineage. Toward midnight, the earth god was sent back to his house.¹³

12. 嬉 is the more standard character used here, whence my translation.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 116. In a number of villages during May 2010 fieldwork we were told that the ball of the dragon lantern 龍球 was a prize much coveted by newlyweds, and either money or lots decided who would get it.

Qiankou 潛口

Later on the same day, we paid a visit to Wang Dadao 汪大道, a retired teacher then aged 84. What he told us proved to be a digest of the book he gave us, called “Qiankou: an old village of Huizhou culture” 徽州文化古村：潛口.¹⁴ According to this book and a subsequent visit on June 3, 2010, in addition to some 30 lineage halls on “lineage hall street” 祠堂街, Qiankou boasted Upper 上廟 and Lower temples 下廟 dedicated to Zhang Xun 張巡 and Xu Yuan 許遠, two wealth god temples 財神廟, a Tiandu Temple 天都廟, a Perfect Warrior Buddhist Temple 真武寺 that protected the *shuikou* and its (still-standing) pagoda, a number of nunneries 尼姑庵, and four Prince temples 太子廟. These last, said to be dedicated to Wang Hua’s ninth son, were positioned in the four directions, two of them in temples and the other two on the upper floor of “pavilions.” Wang referred to them as “village gates,” all under Wang control. Daoists lived in the Jade Emperor Pavilion 玉皇閣 on Purple Cloud Hill 紫霞山, also known as Guanyin Hill, and in the Daoist village of Zhuwu 竹塢 some 2.5 kilometers from Qiankou (Wang seemed to consider the Hu lineage of Zhuwu to be “small”). As in Chengkan, wealthy families needed alternately Daoists and Buddhist monks and nuns for their funeral rites.

Purple Cloud Hill, which is just outside Qiankou, is linked by legend to the alchemical practice of the Yellow Emperor 黃帝 and Ruan Ji 阮籍, but it was above all dedicated to Guanyin Dashi 觀音大士, who was worshiped in a cliff cave. At her foot there was a spring-fed pool, and pilgrims who came to the hill, having first purchased an image of Guanyin, would fill a gourd with spring water and then return home carrying the image under an umbrella.¹⁵ Pilgrims coming there to pray for rain or sons were particularly numerous from the “southern rural area” 南鄉 of Shexian—a fact confirmed by the account of Baiyang 白楊 below.

14. Published by the Huixue yanjiu zhongxin of Anhui University, 2001.

15. For this paragraph, see *Qiankou*, pp. 92–100.

Wang also describes briefly the main festivals in Qiankou.¹⁶ The lantern festival is called locally “playing with dragon candles” 嬉龍燭. The dragon’s head, tail, and second section were all “managed publicly”; the remaining sections were produced by individual households. Each section had five lanterns on it, and dragons ranged from ten to 100 sections long. Percussionists preceded each dragon, while *suona* 唢呐 players and Pusa-chairs 菩薩轎 came behind. The 15th day of the first month was “Smallpox King candle” 痘王燭 night, with one dragon each from the Upper and Lower temples. The 18th was “Wangong candle” 汪公燭 night (two dragons),¹⁷ the 19th “nine dragons go to the earth god” 九龍上社 night (nine dragons), the 28th “Prince candle” 太子燭 night (four dragons)—no doubt one for each of the Prince’s temples—and 2/2 was “earth god candle” 土地燭 night (one dragon). This last festival, organized by the Cheng lineage and funded by merchants with shops on Mainstreet was particularly *renao*, with three sites for “lantern-singing sheds” 唱燈棚, one at the Earth God Hall 土地堂, the other two at the two wealth god temples. Two local groups did the singing, one composed of lay persons, the other of Daoists.

Every year on 3/7–9 “Qiankou street led all villages in a huge and impressive ‘playing with the little official’ 嬉小官 festival.” The festival was organized by rotation among eight separate groups, six Wangs, one Hu, and one Fang. It was paid for by merchants and a male head tax. Early on 3/7, the heads of the various groups went to the Literati House 文會館¹⁸ to welcome the gods. The heads of the Upper and Lower Wang lineage halls led the worship,¹⁹ which was performed by

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 79–84.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 90, says this was done in the Wang Jinzi Hall 汪金紫祠 built in 1592 and referred to locally as Lower Hall 下祠堂. This was the hall to which Wang Dadao belonged.

18. This building was located at the “village tail” 村尾 and served for poetry meetings of the local literati, and even as an examination center; see *Qiankou*, p. 99. Associations of this kind are frequently called “this culture of ours association” 斯文會. For information on their vital social functions, see the essay by Wang Zhenzhong in this issue.

19. The Upper Hall, “expanded” in 1523, was called Wang Dunben Hall 汪惇本祠; *ibid.*, p. 87.

eight Buddhist monks. After the invitation of the gods on the first day, two monks went from house to house along different routes to post yellow papers representing the gods and burn a paper person, “in order to put the gods in place and ensure peace” 安神保平安. On the last day, after sacrificing to the boat 祭舟, they “played with the little official.” First, the monks returned to remove the images of the gods, which they placed in the paper boat. That afternoon, all gathered at Double Loyalty Temple 雙忠廟 (Upper Temple), from which a huge parade of some 150 participants—among them 16 monks and 14 “little officials” carrying or servicing incense burners—set out, following a fixed route through the town and back to the temple. The little officials were young lads under ten years of age from the Wang, Hu, and Fang lineages. Each wore a Prince’s cap.

This was clearly a variant of the Tranquility Festival described below.

There were Guanyin festivals on 2/19, 6/19, and 9/19, occasions for “the faithful from all around to repay their vows and worship” on Purple Cloud Hill or on nearby Shukou’s Guanyin Hill 蜀口觀音山. Purple Cloud Hill invited a troupe for three days and four nights of opera during both the sixth and ninth month festivals. Out of gratitude to the Wang, Fang, and Cheng lineages for having restored the Guanyin temple in the Tongzhi era (1862–74), after destruction by the Long Hairs 長毛, the temple gave a bowl of vegetarian noodles on the morning of 6/19 to anyone from those three lineages who came to the temple.

Of all the Tranquility festivals 保安會²⁰ done in Qiankou township, that on 6/2–4 on Qiankou Street was the most *renao*. On the day of the Duanwu Festival already, the paper images of Big King 大王 and Little King 小王—Lei Wanchun 雷萬春 (Lei Wanxing 雷萬興) and Nan Jiyun 南霽雲 (Lan Fenggao 藍奉高)—had to be prepared. A stage having been set up facing the Lower Wang Hall, seven sets of Peking opera were performed in the presence of the two kings, placed at ei-

20. As the name indicates and the content proves, this is a local version of the festival described in Wang Zhenzhong’s paper in this volume.

ther end of a large paper boat. On 6/2, after a *daochang* and vow-repaying in the morning, a huge parade was put on in the afternoon. In addition to the two kings, twelve Pusa on horseback brought up the rear of the parade. The route was the same as that of the third month, but when the parade returned to Upper Temple, the twelve horses were raced down Mainstreet, one after the other. On 6/4, all the paper Pusa and the paper boat were carried to Pure Pond Hill 澄塘岭 for burning. The same festival was held in Tangmo 唐模 village on 4/8, in Zhuwu 竹塢 on 5/16, and in Pure Pond on 7/13.

The Thunder Ancestor Festival 雷祖會 on 6/24 was done on a small scale in the Lower Wang Hall in Qiankou, but in a major way on Magic Mountain 靈山: “Pilgrims from all six counties of Huizhou had to go to Magic Mountain to make and repay vows, and worship the Thunder Ancestor pusa.” Because pilgrims from Jiangxi, Qimen 祁門, Yixian 黟縣, Xiuning, and Tunxi 屯溪 all had to pass through Qiankou on their way to Magic Mountain, the Lower Wang Hall served as a kind of vegetarian kitchen and overnight inn.

The two main Wang lineage halls also alternated putting on “fire-preventing opera” 禳火戲: “fire-preventing talismans” 禳火符 were pasted on each household’s door, and several water dragons 水龍—water pumps for putting out fires—were carried out to watch the opera. One of these pumps was kept in the earth god house on Midstreet 中街.

Before leaving Qiankou, it is worth noting that in this Wang-dominated town—they represented about 50% of the population and more than half of the lineage halls—the worship of Wang Hua was limited to the Wanggong “candle” rite on his birthday and a further offering on the day of the winter solstice. Both were done in a two-room hall 汪公殿 located inside the Lower Wang Hall behind the main altar. This altar bore an image of the local founder, Wang Shu’ao 汪叔敖, and the two-room hall had one of Wang Hua.²¹ In front of the lineage hall stood a stone arch built in honor of Wang Hua 越國世家石坊

21. Ibid. pp. 90–91. Wang Shu’ao is said to have come from Tangmo 唐模 in the year 1117: *ibid.*, p. 181.

in the Jiajing era.²²

Jingzhou 荊州

Located in the far northeastern corner of Jixi County 75 kilometers from the county seat, the Jingzhou township seat of Upper Hu village 上胡家 has a population of some 3000 living in eleven natural villages. It occupies the central of the three sections 上中下節 of the long narrow valley that constitutes Jingzhou. At both its “head” and “tail” Upper Hu had earth god temples. The earth god was represented locally as an old, compassionate man: people respected but did not fear him. When a death occurred, it had to be reported to the earth god, a rite called “reporting to the temple” 報廟.²³ While larger villages in the township also had temples for the Prince, Guandi, Guanyin, and Wang Hua, the Anbang 安邦 or New Temple 新廟 was the most important local temple. Located across the river from the *shuikou* of the Central Section, facing south with a hill behind it, it was built in the Daoguang era and was the biggest building in Jingzhou, with its own stage and many two-meter high Pusa. During the *danianhui* 大年會 festival, each of five “sectors” 隅 had its own office in the temple.²⁴

The Big Year Festival, found throughout Jixi and beyond, is a festival carried out in every year that contains an intercalary month (hence the term “big year”). It also goes by the names “guarantee of peace” 保安會, Big King 大王會, and Dragon Boat Festival 龍舟會. It is dedicated to the worship of Zhang Xun and Xu Yuan. As they are thought to have died on 1/9, the Big Year Festival began on that day

22. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

23. This is a rite I first encountered in west-central Hunan, in Anhua County.

It would seem in fact to be quite widespread in central China and is a particularly noteworthy example of the “archival” role of the earth god: he was in effect in charge of population registers.

24. This account is based on Wang Hanshui 汪漢水, *Jingzhou yiyun* 荊州遺韻 (published locally, 2009), pp. 90–99. On the five sectors and this festival in Huizhou, see Wang Zhenzhong’s essay in this volume.

in a place called Jixitian 績溪田, now in Lin'an County 臨安縣. Next it came to Jingzhou, then in the second month to Kantou 礪頭, in the third to Hujia 胡家, in the sixth to seventh to villages including Fuling 伏嶺 and Shangzhuang 上庄, in the seventh to four villages including Zhentou 鎮頭, in the ninth to Yangqi 楊溪 and Dashimen 大石門, and at the end of the ninth/start of the tenth month to Dakengkou 大坑口 (Longchuan 龍川). In most places the festival lasted three-five days, in Fuling seven, in Jingzhou and Shangzhuang ten, and in Dakengkou half a month. It seems fair to say that no festival was more central to Jixi identity than this one.

Villages prepared for the festival by cleaning the streets. The whole community ate vegetarian food for the duration of the festival, lit lanterns daily in the temple, and employed monks for a sequence of fourteen rituals. The Jingzhou festival, which began around 1/15, involved the 19 villages of Upper and Lower Hu villages, which were divided for the occasion into the five sectors mentioned above. The “chief manager” 總管 was appointed jointly by all five sectors and was charged with preventing tensions from getting out of hand. The organizing committee had people from each of the five sectors. As these sectors rotated responsibility for raising the necessary sacrificial animals, in the year of a festival, on 1/3, the sector that was to have that responsibility for the following festival went to the Temple of the Prince to draw lots and decide on the names of twenty “vegetarian officers” 齋官. On 1/6, these officers went to Little Jiuhua 小九華 to draw slips and decide which six of the twenty would be in charge of raising 1) a pig, 2) a goat, 3) a rooster, 4) a fish, 5) a duck, and 6) a *xiaofu* pig 消福豬. Animals 1-5 were all sacrificed during the festival, while the “pig for good fortune and elimination” [of disaster] was eaten on 1/3, 1/6, and 1/9, when the organizing committee met in the New Temple to prepare the festival. This pig had to be very fat, and it took one thousand *jin* of corn to raise him. He was treated like a god: if he broke out of his pen and fell into a cesspool, the terrified owner washed him, burned incense, and kowtowed, begging his forgiveness. The goat also enjoyed special treatment: he was left to wander, with a sign hung on his neck so that, wherever he wandered, he would be fed and sent back. It was considered lucky for crops if he ate them.

When it was festival time, he would come back spontaneously. The five sectors usually raised a total of ten pigs, and there was competition to raise the largest.

The ritual took place about every third year. Every male had to give some money, especially 30–40-year olds. Merchants abroad had to send back money and return to participate if their sector was in charge. This sector had to make the dragon boat, while the eastern sector made paper images of Guanyin and the Third Prince, the southern of Little King Nan Jiyun, the western of Zhang Xun, the central of Xu Yuan, and the northern of Big King Lei Wanchun. Next 40 persons had to be chosen to “Pusa-hop” 跳菩薩. After the harvest of the preceding fall, each sector placed a 20-kilo bundle of wood in the fields for the barefoot young men to practice; at the end of the year the best were chosen. From then until the festival, they had to sleep in the ancestor hall, watched by elders, to make sure they did not have any sexual relations. There was also competition to produce the best Pusa, and the papier-mâché artisans, most of whom were from Upper Hu, began work at the beginning of the twelfth month. The boat was six meters long by five feet wide. In it were placed either twelve or 24 Pusa, among which a two-faced Guanyin—one male, one female face—carrying the Third Prince. It is explained that Zhang Xun and Xu Yuan were not the only persons to die at the battle of Suiyang 睢陽: many tens of thousands died and became solitary souls 孤魂, and Wu Zixu 伍子胥 was asked to request enfeoffments for them from the emperor. But when Wu Zixu died, he couldn’t even get his own soul back, so Guanyin had Li Shimin’s 李世民 third son’s soul replace Wu’s. This is why there must be a Guanyin carrying the Third Prince. Five epidemic spirits are also placed in the boat, with Big King in the prow, Little King aft, and Zhang and Xu in the middle. The five epidemic spirits were from Yao’s time, with the spirit associated with autumn being Zhao Gongming 趙公明. The emperor is said to have set up a shrine for them and enfeoffed them as generals. One day Kuangbu zhenren 匡埠真人 came to the shrine and took them under his command. Twenty-four people were needed to carry the boat and rock it.

Finally, there were the Five Emperors 五帝, with wooden or clay

heads and arms and legs of straw that could move. In Jingzhou, the emperors bore the names of the Eastern Han apocrypha 讖緯,²⁵ but people said they were five important personages who fought under Li Shimin when he was engaged in his “eastern campaign”, with Taizong in the center, Xue Rengui 薛仁貴 in the west, and so on. Each sector made one of the emperors, who had each a different mount and was tied to an iron pole. The festival began on an *yin* 寅 day, the Pusa were placed in the boat on a *wu* 午 day, and a sacrifice to the banners was done on a *xu* 戌 day, for a seven-day, eight-night cycle.²⁶ “Monk plays” 和尚戲 were performed on stage throughout the festival. On Day 2 in the morning, the Five Emperors were carried into the New Temple, and then each sector sent its strong men carrying the Pusa to begin two days of “Pusa-hopping” competition. On Day 4 there was a vegetarian fast for the Five Emperors, with Buddhist rituals done by monks from Little Jiuhua. On Day 5 there was a parade with the boat and more Pusa-hopping, after which the Pusa entered the boat. This was a representation of the Suiyang battle, and Guanyin was added to ensure merciful dealing with the Suiyang dead and to ensure the boat not flip over. As soon as all were in the boat, “Five Emperor-hopping” began—in fact a running competition done by the men who carried the Five Emperors. First there was a short ritual on stage, then a monk did a rite and issued an order, after which men carrying the emperors burst out of the temple and handed them to the competitors, who started racing along the river. The fastest took one hour. The western sector, which had the most people, was usually the fastest; the central sector had the fewest people, but also the privilege of carrying Li Shimin. Sometimes, when people from the western sector saw the central sector lagging too far behind, they would send people to help,

25. While this could be the result of some local literatus having fun, it could also signify something much deeper, namely, the link between the Five Emperors and the Five Camps (see below, note 51). As I pointed out long ago, this system was “described with great clarity already by Ssu-ma Ch’ien” in his “Wudi benji” 五帝本紀 in the *Shiji* 史記; see Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History*, p. 34.

26. As we will see below, the festival did in fact last ten days.

like Xue Rengui going to succor his sovereign. Pusa-hopping continued through Day 8. On Day 9, a Settling the Five Emperors 安五帝 was performed: each sector invited its own Pusa back to a place at their village entrance 村口 for worship, then sent it back in the evening. Flag worship was performed by the Five Emperors on Day 10 at a *tan* 壇 behind the temple. Then, after circling the *tan* three times, all ran to the central sector's border, to Five Emperors Lake 五帝湖 near a temple, to burn the Five Emperors. It was during the sacrifice to the flags 祭旗 that all pigs were sacrificed while a monk recited, and their blood was smeared on the big flag to worship the gods of heaven.²⁷ From each pig, a bowl of blood was rushed inside the temple and dumped in the boat. Each village, hearing the main pig squealing, killed its own; some even dumped the blood in the dragon mouth of the boat. When the sacrifice was finished, each corner rushed its flag to Five Emperors Lake for burning. That night, there was a huge banquet, with “overseas dishes” made by chefs from Shanghai and Wuhan. Offering tables were set out in front of Zhang Xun to console him for dying of hunger. At midnight, the gods were sent off and the dragon boat carried to percussion to Five Emperors Lake for burning. Big villages then put on three days and nights of plays.

Wangchuan 旺川²⁸

Although the word *yu* 隅 for “sector” is also known, Cao Jian uses the word *peng* 朋. The five *peng* of the eighth district 都 of Jixi, which included Hu Shi's home village of Zhaitan 宅坦, worshiped Big

27. As the same term is used, it seems fairly clear that this is borrowed from the “military rituals” Paul Katz calls “banner worship rites”; see Katz, *Divine Justice: Religion and the Development of Chinese Legal Culture*, pp. 66–69.

28. This section will be primarily based on an unpublished manuscript by Cao Jian 曹健, as well as *Wangchuan gujin* 旺川古今, of which Cao Jian was the chief editor (published locally by the Old People's Association of Wangchuan, 1999), especially pp. 156–60, written by Cao Shangrong 曹商榮 (abbreviated as CSR in the text below).

Prince 大太子, whose face was red and who had a beard; the six *peng* of the sixth district worshiped the black-faced, short-bearded Second Prince 二太子; Wangchuan, which belonged to the seventh district, worshiped the Third Prince 三太子, who was white-faced and had no beard. The sixth and eighth districts did their Prince Festival 太子會 in the first and seventh months respectively; the seventh district called their festival “good” 善會.²⁹ Before 1645, Wangchuan belonged to the western sector, and the central temple was that of the Three Sovereigns 三皇廟, in the central sector. The year before the festival, an organizing committee composed of one “vegetarian official” from each sector was put in place, but with each sector rotating overall responsibility. Each sector had to train its own percussion, strings, and singing groups, as well as players of “local opera.” Monks, Daoists, and opera troupes had to be invited from outside. The festival was paid for in part from land rents and a male head tax, but also through voluntary contributions and a tax on gambling tables that operated during the festival.

Because fighting broke out between the various participants during the 1645 festival, the festival ceased for over two centuries, when Wangchuan restored it on its own as a lineage festival, with the main Cao ancestor hall as the central temple and sector (*yu*). Wangchuan did its festival in the sixth month of every year with an intercalendary month.³⁰ As in Jingzhou, it involved making papier-mâché representations of Guanyin and all the protagonists of the Suiyang battle, but also of the five epidemic gods and an “ugly demon” 惡鬼: Zhang Xun had sworn that, if he could not destroy the rebels while alive, he would come back as an “untended dead” person, *ligui* 厲鬼, to de-

29. According to Cao Shangrong, p. 156, the festival is also known as the “sixth month,” “Guanyin,” “Prince,” “protection of peace,” and “boat festival.”

30. Cao Jian says the day was selected. According to Cao Shangrong, p. 157, festival preparations began on 6/16–18, and 6/19 was the *zhengri*. Cao Shangrong says the last festival took place in 1935.

stroy them; the fierce demon was his *huashen* 化身.³¹ It also required a “divine goat” who was selected one year ahead of time and nourished while wandering freely. He would be sacrificed just before the “sendoff of the saints” 送聖. A ritual arena *daochang* 道場 was created in the main court of the ancestor hall, with a five-level wooden tower as its centerpiece. On the lowest level were opera figures like Guo Ziyi 郭子儀; on the second, all the immortals; on the third, the Buddha; on the fourth, the eighteen Luohan and eight divisions of dragons; and, on the top, Guanyin. All the most extraordinary offerings, many of them made of glutinous rice, were arrayed before this “pantheon”.

For three days before the festival (CSR [Cao Shangrong] 6/16–18), the Prince was carried out from “the old house” 老屋 (CSR) throughout the village to “clean the streets.” On the primary day 正日 (CSR 6/19), a huge parade led by the Prince went to welcome Guanyin into the ancestor hall. It included young boys dressed as personages from opera, carts with young girls who sang, stilt-walkers, and (CSR) vow-paying penitents as in a City God parade. Behind them all came the Prince’s palanquin, followed by monks and Daoists. The parade went from the old house to a bridge outside the village, there to welcome Guanyin to take her seat at the back of the parade, which then circled the village before going to the ancestor hall (CSR). Once Guanyin was installed in the hall, the monk recited scriptures. That afternoon, the dragon boat was moved to the river bank for the rite of “entry into the boat” (CSR). But first the youths had to “seize the Big King” 搶大王, who weighed some 70 *jin*. Strong village youths entered the ancestor hall to grab the Big King (CSR) and circle the area in front of the hall thrice. Then began a struggle to seize the Big King and bring him to one’s own sector: “If you succeeded in grabbing the Big King, you would prosper and have many sons; the more you

31. Cf. Guo, *Exorcism and Money*, p. 129, where he refers to a late-Ming opera about Zhang Xun and Xu Yuan, *Double loyalty*, which has the dying Zhang vow revenge as a *ligui* in an *yinbing* 陰兵 underworld army to defeat An Lushan.

grabbed, the more you prospered.” By the end of this struggle, the Big and Little kings were both in tatters. The two kings having been carried to the river bank, a monk animated them (CSR; or all the Pusa) with the blood of a cock’s crest. From then on, monks performed rituals and made confessions for individuals, and the boat was paraded nightly through the village, stopping at each open space to dance, with the monk holding the dragon’s whiskers. Meanwhile, opera was performed on a stage in front of the ancestor hall. After five days of this, on 6/25 (CSR), it was time to see Guanyin off with a morning parade as massive as that to welcome her. At noon, the villagers began to eat meat. That evening, after “seeing the saints off” on the opera stage, a monk dressed as Guo Ziyi banqueted Zhang Xun and Xu Yuan, after which another monk announced: “I am the messenger from Wenzhou 溫州府來的使者.³² Will all the gods please return to their places.” While the messenger ate in the hall, the monk threw the divining blocks to obtain permission to depart. Then the boat was covered in flammable paper and carried out by sixteen youths led by a monk in black who cleared the way. The boat was carried to the riverbank, set afire, and thrown into the river to go down to Wenzhou (CSR) and out to sea.

Baiyangyuan 白楊源³³

The Population

While most of what follows will discuss the Wu 吳 lineage, refer-

32. The apparently incongruous presence of a “messenger from Wenzhou” in a Huizhou rite finds its explanation in a long theatrical sequence described in a Daoist ritual document from Hubukou 胡埠口 (Shexian) quoted at length by Wang Zhenzhong in his contribution to this volume. In this skit, Marshal Wen, after first going to Yangzhou to purchase substitute persons as victims, brings the boat full of epidemic gods to Hangzhou. The divine officials of Hangzhou welcome him to the city but then persuade him to carry on to the ocean.

33. Our information on Baiyangyuan is far richer than for any other village because a local author, Wu Zhengfang 吳正芳, has completed a book

ences will also be made to the Wangs 汪 of Newbridge 新橋, the Pans 潘 of Wang Village 汪村, and the Yus 余 of West Village 西村, together with the Hus 胡 and Chengs 程, as these lineages share a single valley with the Wus. The Upper Village 上村 Wus (population 964) had a main hall built ca. 1720 and six segment halls, of unknown dates but Qing. Two segments also shared an “incense house” (*xianghuowu* 香火屋), said to date to the Ming, where they worshiped the ancestral god and placed their ancestor tablets. The Fangqi 方祈 Wus are divided into the descendants of Honggong 泓公 (pop. 949) and Migong 汨公 (pop. 266): they shared a Ming-era incense house, and Honggong had in addition three segment halls. Between the family home and the segment hall, there was yet another layer, called locally “multitude house” (*zhongwu* 眾屋), for the worship of sub-segment ancestors and Guanyin. They usually had people living in them, but on the last day of the year, sub-segment males gathered there to “welcome Heaven and Earth” (*jie tiandi* 接天地). Whosever turn it was to receive Guanyin would also place her there. The Honggong and Migong segments went first to their common incense house—it contained places for Grandpa Earth God (Shegong laoye 社公老爺), the Incense Pusa (Xianghuo pusa 香火菩薩), and the earth god 土地神—to invite their founding ancestor before going to their respective multitude houses. Right next to almost all main lineage halls there was an incense house, with a small altar for an Incense Pusa that no one can identify but who had to be worshiped at year’s end; this is also where lineage business was conducted.

The relationship between the Wangs and the Pans is particularly interesting: shortly after settling in Wang Village, in 1465, the Wangs discovered the site was not good for them, sold the area to the Pans, and moved, ultimately to Newbridge, next to the main Buddhist temple and across from the “general water exit” (*zong shuikou* 總水口)

manuscript on the subject that has just been published by Fudan University Press: 徽州傳統村落社會——白楊源 (Baiyangyuan: a traditional Huizhou village society). What follows is extracts from my preface to this book. Wang Zhenzhong, who is chief editor of the manuscript, has also written a preface, referred to further below.

of the entire valley. Because the Wangs saw themselves as descended from the eighth son of Wang Hua, they placed Old Eight (Balaoe 八老爺) in their ancestor god temple (and Wang Hua, called locally Sire Wang Old Emperor, Wanggong laodi 汪公老帝, in an incense house next to their main ancestor hall). As they had already done the same in Wang Village, the Pans carried on the tradition, and the Newbridge Wangs went back every year to worship with them in an earth god temple (*sbemiao* 社廟) that also contained Sire Wang and Grandpa Earth God.³⁴

Temples and Their Festivals

Each ancestor god temple is peculiar: if that of the two Wu segments of Fangqi contained their “distant ancestor god” (*bizu zushen pusa* 鼻祖祖神菩薩), Wu Taibo 吳泰伯, it also contained King Li, brought along from Bei’an 北岸. That of the Wangs contained, in addition to Old Eight, King Wen of the Zhou 周文王,³⁵ and the Duke of Zhou 周公. The Wus of Upper Village shared an earth god temple with the Fangs and Wangs, and the earth god temple of West Village contained three distant ancestors of the Yus, starting with Yu 禹 of the Xia (sculpted in 1943), while that of the Hus in Shangqi 上祈 contained the saintly emperor Li (Li Shimin 李世民). Clearly, one of the chief features of local religion was the commingling of earth god and

34. We see here an interesting “confusion” of two institutions, namely, the “ancestor god temple” and the “earth god temple,” a subject I will come back to below.

35. This is a local identification, no doubt the result of literati superscription. In fact, the many King Zhou temples in the region are dedicated to a healing god. According to Wang Zhenzhong’s preface, pp. 32–33, “Marvelous King Xuan of the Zhou 周宣靈王, called King of Zhou for short, was the most widely worshiped god in the Xin’an-Qiantang 新安錢塘江 river basins. Having begun his career in the lower reaches of the Qiantang river, King Zhou’s cult spread gradually upriver to western Zhejiang and even northeastern Jiangxi. Every person has his own ‘King of Zhou’—a fact which, in a certain sense, reflects the variety and complexity of popular religion.”

ancestor worship in a manner that would seem to be unique.

Distant ancestor gods played a central role in “doing the middle of the (first) month” 做月半. The name of this universally celebrated festival notwithstanding, it was in fact usually done sometime in the first half of the first month: the Hus did it on 1/1, the two Wu segments of Fangqi on 1/4, West Village on 1/8, the Wus of Upper Village on 1/14, and the Pans of Wang Village and Wangs of Newbridge on 1/15. According to Hu lineage rules, the only ancestor god they could invite to their multitude house—which stood right next to their main hall and looked like an earth god house (*shewu*)—was “five-share Guanyin” 五柱觀音 from a local nunnery. Only two of four Hu segments participated. The Wangs went on 1/13, first to the incense hall next to their main lineage hall to fetch Sire Wang, then to the Red Temple 紅廟, their earth god house, for the tablet of Earth God Old Emperor (Shegong laodi 社公老帝). On 1/14 in the evening, they “made a racket with the gods” (*naosben* 鬧神) until midnight, and then celebrated Sire Wang’s birthday the next day. When the men were worshiping, youths and women all stayed away. On 1/17 in the morning, the Wangs sent their gods back and, on the next day, invited a monk from the nearby Temple for the Praise of Loyalty 褒忠寺 to perform a *jiao* in their main hall.

Management of the Fangqi mid-month festival was rotated over five years among four lineage segments: Migong managed it two years running, and the three separate Honggong segments with their own segment halls one year each. Every family in the segment preparing to manage the festival the following year was supposed to raise a mid-month pig and goat. As this was a competition to produce the fattest animals, many raised them for two or even three years. Eighty special offering dishes, paid for from lineage lands, had also to be prepared (in West Village we saw and photographed some mid-nineteenth century plates once used by the Yus for their festival). With the help of an 1875 manuscript, Wu Zhengfang describes in considerable detail the whole complex process of selecting a head, preparing the sacrificial arena (including the contents of the 80 dishes), the hanging of lanterns said by one 92-year old informant to have been bought in Suzhou, and then the festival itself.

For those lineages that did their distant ancestor-related festival in the first month, the sequence was the high point of New Year's festivities. After cleaning out their halls on the last day of the year, the men of the lineage prepared the sacrificial altar for Welcoming Heaven and Earth and then the gods. While the first welcoming ceremony was done differently by each lineage, that of the Pans was the most complex: after putting up their ancestor portraits and eating the "meal of togetherness" (*tuanyuan fan* 團圓飯), one man from each family went to the main hall. Shortly before the midnight welcoming, firecrackers were set off and the hall gates shut. Half an hour later, firecrackers were set off again—the other Baiyangyuan lineages had to wait for this signal before starting to welcome Heaven and Earth—and the gates were opened, with all males standing with lanterns in the outer court of the hall. Paper money having been burned outside the gate, two large red candles were lit and all bowed, facing outwards, before turning round to sit down eight to a table, take three sips of alcohol, and partake of dates 棗 (*zao*: "May all quickly 早 make a profit!"). Each now went to his segment hall, where they repeated the ceremony, without the drinking, and had a midnight snack of *bongsharou* 紅燒肉. Then all went with lanterns to their "ancestor temple" (*zumiao* 祖廟) to "exit the gods" 出神. Talking and laughter were forbidden while they lit candles, incense, and paper money, presented alcohol, kowtowed, and shut the temple gate, sealing it with three red strips that together with the crack between the two leaves of the doors formed the character for "rice" 米. All then went home to welcome Heaven and Earth.

Most lineages brought the gods of the "mid-month" ritual from their temples to their halls on 1/1—all except the Chengs, who did it before the welcoming of Heaven and Earth, around 8 p.m. on 12/30. Why this was the case no one knows, but "no one would have changed it." At dawn on 1/1, all other halls sent men with a large gong (or two) through every street and alley of the village. They made the rounds three times, the first time to summon all and sundry to come eat a vegetarian meal and the second and third times to summon all to Welcome the Pusa. After the first summons, all got up and washed in their bedrooms. Men and boys put on new clothes, while

the wife prepared “morning tea” 早茶. Their first act on exiting the bedroom was to light three sticks of incense and kowtow to the ancestor portraits 祖容. Morning tea was sweetened with dates or honey so that the year to come would be sweet. Children came in to bow to the portraits, then to the family elders and receive from them their red packets. The men of the two Wu lineage segments then went to the main Buddhist temple to invite Four-Share Guanyin 四柱觀音 and her two lads 童子 to come to the multitude house in charge of the ritual that year. From there they went home for a meal of vegetarian long-life noodles before going to the temple to welcome the ancestor gods. This, says Wu Zhengfang, was very *longzhong* 隆重, with each of the five main gods being carried out in a sedan chair. Upon reaching the temple, the lineage head removed the red slips sealing its gates, and a prestigious elder went in to clean the Pusa, who were then clad in armor before setting out, Taibo 泰伯 in the lead and Guangong 關公 bringing up the rear. As the parade neared the hall, the carriers had to run, then race in a circle and burst into the hall. This was called *fajiao* 發轎, propelling the sedan chair. All who participated in this ritual had to be dressed in new clothes and could not sleep with their wives the night before. Typically, the gods were thus carried in on 1/1 and sent back to their temples on 1/18, bringing the entire New Year’s festival to its close. The return parade of the Fangqi Wus was identical to the welcoming parade, except that Guangong went first and Taibo brought up the rear, and that they rushed, circled, and burst into the temple. That night, all involved shared a banquet.

A complex tale explains why the Fangqi Wus failed to participate in the third and successful attempt to steal a famous statue of Guanyin from a temple in Zhejiang.³⁶ As a result, they were excluded from the rotation of this “Five-Share Guanyin” among the multitude houses of

36. As in Hakka parts of Fujian, stealing the statue of a god is not considered theft. In Fujian I was told that gods saw such “theft” as evidence of the ardor of the worshippers who did the stealing, while Wu Zhengfang explained orally that it was like keeping a “borrowed” book: “This is not really theft.”

Wang, Shangqi, Newbridge, West, and Upper villages. Put out, Wu Langshan, a local doctor and son of a *juren* 舉人, who organized the reconstruction of the Fangqi earth god temple in 1922, led in the sculpting of a Four-Share Guanyin for the Wus.³⁷ Both Guanyins circulated from hall to hall (or multitude house), with Four-Share Guanyin returning to its Buddhist home temple only on 12/30, and then being invited out anew on New Year's Day. Five-Share Guanyin was also the focus of an illumination ceremony (*kaiguang* 開光) every fifth year.

The main Buddhist temple of Baiyangyuan was the Temple for the Praise of Loyalty mentioned above. Located just outside Newbridge—on its “arriving dragon” (*lailong* 來龍), Mother Hill (Kunshan 坤山),³⁸ across from the Hill of the Wooden Fish (Muyushan 木魚山)³⁹ just inside the general water exit of all Baiyangyuan—the Temple for the Praise of Loyalty used to have two-meter tall Sanbao 三寶 in its main hall and was inhabited by some 80 monks. In 1949, there were still four monks, and the son of the last monk still does Buddhist rites locally. Curiously, this temple seems to have been managed by the Yus of West Village: a 1922 manuscript which carefully lists gifts to the temple, refers to the founding of the temple in 1138, the construction of a Guanyin Hall 觀音殿 in 1535, and the building of a Guanyin temple in 1556. Down through 1754, many of the gifts have to do with the Guanyin Hall, and all gifts but one are from the Yus. A 1917-18 illumination ceremony in the Guanyin Hall seems to confirm the Yus were completely in charge of the temple.⁴⁰

37. Wu Zhengfang says he was also head of the local mafia 黑社會. Wang Zhenzhong's preface refers to a 1928 contract in which Wu Langshan is one of two leading owners of a gypsum kiln enterprise.

38. The Wangs built their ancestor god temple at the foot of Father Mountain (Qianshan 乾山), on the northeast bank of the Yangyuan River, and their main hall at the foot of the same Mother Mountain as the Buddhist temple, but just inside the village.

39. The “wooden fish,” a round, hollowed piece of wood with an integrated handle, is the standard percussion instrument for Buddhist recitation, filling the function of a drum.

40. Other documents discovered by Wang Zhenzhong and mentioned in his

Guanyin was also the focus of an annual *jiao* done yearly by the four Wu and two Fang lineage segments of Upper Village. Because the Guanyin of Qiankou 潛口 was said to be very powerful, the various lineage segments took turns going to Qiankou to fetch a paper image of her. Having set out on the afternoon of 6/17, they would return the following day as far as Nanyuankou 南源口, carrying the image under a parasol. On 6/19 at dawn, they would rush to a pavilion at a local water exit, where the group in charge that year would be waiting with other paper Pusa. As soon as Guanyin arrived, she was placed in a paper sedan chair on the back of a unicorn and carried by eight youths to a temporary ritual arena set up in front of the lineage hall of the segment in charge that year. On 6/21, all village males joined in a parade that circled the entire village, with Guanyin being carried by the segment in charge. When the parade returned to the ritual arena, water brought back from Qiankou was spewed into the fields and prayers for timely rain were made. On 6/25, the youths of the segment in charge carried the paper Guanyin back to the local water exit for burning, while the monk did a final recitation. The monk who performed the various rituals was paid not with money but with select offerings taken from the offering bowls.

Of the three most famous festivals of southern She County, one took place in Newbridge on 9/13 (the others occurred in Changqi, in the seventh month,⁴¹ for Old Eight, and on 8/1 for King Li in Bei'an). Done to celebrate King Zhou, it was organized by rotation among the eight Wang lineage segments. As elsewhere, the most arduous prepa-

preface show, however, that a similar contractual relationship existed between the Wangs of Newbridge and the temple: we are always prisoners of our documentation.

41. In fact, according to what we learned in Changqi on August 21, 2007, this was also a Zhouwang temple festival and, if it contained additional days for the worship of Zhuangzi 莊子 (varnish saint) and Guanyin, its *zheng-ri* 正日 was also 9/13, in honor of Zhouwang laoye and Balaoye. Pusa gathered from all around, we were told, and many worshipers came to make or repay vows and kill a chicken. Zhouwang is identified in Changqi as Zhou Chu 周處.

rations concerned the 80 special offering dishes, which were similar to those of the Wus but included more *zongzi* 粽子 and chicken dishes (King Zhou was said to like chicken blood). Already on 9/11 the ritual arena was prepared in the lineage hall, and an opera stage set up. On the morning of the next day, the 80 bowls and the whole pig and goat were sent to the hall for display, and that afternoon all Wang youths went to fetch the gods—King Wen of Zhou, Old Eight, and the Duke of Zhou—with special chairs carried on their backs. That night, lanterns were lit and, at 11 p.m., red candles. After joint worship by all males, the three gods were carried by torchlight back to their temple. On 9/13, at dawn, every village family, but also the faithful from 10 *li* around, came with a rooster to the temple. The slaying of the sacrificial victims, which went on until noon, was done by lineage males in front of the temple. That afternoon, all village males over the age of 10 came to fetch the Pusa from the temple. The gods, dressed in new clothes and with new shoes on their feet, each astride a wooden lion, were placed in separate palanquins and carried to the hall (the gods brought up the rear of the parade). Eight opera players dressed as the eight immortals stood on the water exit bridge to welcome the gods, who were then carried to the Wang hall for a solemn sacrifice. As the sacrifice came to an end, a butcher chopped off the head of the pig, and weighing of the meat began for sale to butcher shops in the area. That night, the lineage head invited all *lisheng* 禮生 to a nine-course banquet, and the segment in charge sent two glutinous rice *zongzi* and a bowl of pig tripe soup to each family (*bu* 戶) of the segments not in charge that year. Opera now began, with four plays per set: the first had to be auspicious and “civil”, the second “military”, the third focused on singing skills and civil, and the last a “big military opera.” Each set ended with a “togetherness” (*tuanyuan* 團圓) rite in which couples from families of three generations living together bowed to the spectators. Often thereafter there was a series of humorous skits. For three days running there were two opera sets per day, sometimes, as in 1936, with *duitaixi* 對台戲, two opera troupes competing for spectators. Throughout this time, there was a thriving market in agricultural products, with numerous artisans and food stands as well. Finally, on 9/16 in the afternoon, all males,

dressed in new clothes and carrying incense, brought the three gods back in a massive parade to their temple.

As noted above, the Temple for the Praise of Loyalty occupied a strategically important place in Baiyangyuan, just across from and facing the general water exit. That it occupied this site, according to Wu Zhengfang, is to be explained by the fact “locals really believe in Buddhism.” The Green Dragon Hill 青龍山 to the left of the water exit is long and has its head in the clouds, while the White Tiger’s 白虎山 Wooden Fish Hill undulates, and the Yangyuan River 楊源溪 meanders. When viewed from in front of the temple, it is like a monk reading scriptures while tapping on the wooden fish, and the river is like a playing carp. The inner water exit is at the foot of Wooden Fish Hill, where rose a camphor tree 樟樹 requiring four pairs of arms to encircle it, and whose leafy crown seemed to embrace the whole valley. Wu Zhengfang recalls fondly going to play there when a child, and jumping in the water (as he remembers giving a wide birth to the terrifying Red Temple of hell).⁴² At the foot of the tree there was a dam that diverted the river water to the temple’s stone wheel mill, making music together with the temple bell. One of many local tales tells of a saintly “little monk” 小和尚 who, during a huge storm, fought off a venomous serpent with a tamed scorpion and so saved all. A stone mill was built on the site of the battle, called Dragon Roil Hill, and when milling was done there at night, a hand would reach out to ask for its share of the wheat flour, said to be the land tax used by the monk to feed the scorpion. When this happened, the flour was always more refined and whiter, and the noodles made from it better, so people liked to come to this mill to grind their wheat.

If the Yus of West Village clearly had a special relationship with the Temple for the Praise of Loyalty, the monks of this temple not

42. When its predecessor temple was destroyed in 1546, only the statue of Sire Wang-Old Emperor was saved, so in 1548 four villages together built the King Wang Temple. Because he had committed suicide by leaping into the water when the emperor suggested he was disloyal even after he had already killed his nine sons, Sire Wang was considered locally to be Yanwang 閻王, the king of hell.

only did an annual *jiao* for the Newbridge Wangs on 1/18, they collected rice throughout Baiyangyuan in exchange for talismans sent out to every house on 5/5. The nuns of Longsheng'an 龍勝庵 did the same. The shaving of the nuns' heads in 1947 was the occasion for a huge festival.

Liwang 李王⁴³

We saw above that the Liwang festival in Bei'an was considered one of southern Shexian's most important. According to Wu Zhengfang, because King Li liked special foods given new mothers, it was felt he was a protector of pregnant women, and those with the means would have a relative bring the statue of King Li to the house. In Xucun 許村, visited on May 30, 2009, we were told that Liwang pusa was small, about 1.5 feet tall, with a penis sticking out.⁴⁴ He liked sex and chicken meat. In case of difficult labor, he would be placed on a bedside table. In Baiyangyuan, by contrast, if labor was long and hard, it was Guanyin who was invited to the house for a *jiao*.

Wuchang 五猖

The subject of Qitao Guo's *Exorcism and Money*, the Wuchang are indeed central to Huizhou religious life.⁴⁵ Found everywhere,

43. Cf. Wang Zhenzhong's preface: "Liwang was a very important god throughout Jiangnan. In the late Yuan, [he] was already widely worshiped among the people and gradually evolved into a god who protected maritime and riverine transport."

44. This sounds like Auspicious Big Brother 吉祥哥哥 in Hakka Fujian.

45. See above, note 2. Guo's basic thesis, repeated frequently, is that the Wuchang were incorporated into local pantheons so as "to enhance lineages' tutelary deities. For lineage elites in Huizhou, as for their counterparts in Guangde, the manipulation of Wuchang..[was a good way to] solidify their social and religious leadership within the kinship community" (pp. 115–16). Perhaps. But one could just as well see this as a local expression of very ancient Daoist hierarchies—Guo virtually says as much on p. 117—to which all, elite and lower classes alike, subscribed. For

their temples are almost invariably placed at the village entrance, either at the *shuikou* or on a path or road leading into the village. In Jizili 杞梓里, Shexian, for example, they are depicted as wealth gods in a pavilion that marks one of the village entrances.⁴⁶ When, on August 21, 2009, we walked with Wang Chengyin 王成蔭 out past the Wuchang pavilion to the *shuikou*, he pointed to the hills across the river (and the Hangzhou expressway) and said that that was where they used to “summon the Wuchang” 呼五猖, indicating thereby what I suspect was in fact the most important function of the Wuchang gods locally, namely, supplying and controlling the armies of fierce soldiers who were summoned during god-illumination ceremonies to protect the village under the banner of the local territorial god.⁴⁷

In the villages of Yecha 擘岔, Lantian 藍田, and Wangfengkou 汪汾口, in Qitou township, Shexian, the Wuchang were found in temples on wall-mounded *shuikou*, in Yecha in a *shewu* shared with the earth god, in Lantian in a temple with separate rooms for the god of wealth, the Prince, and Wuchang, and in Wangfengkou in a large tem-

descriptions of Anhui Wuchang rites, see Mao Gengru, *Xube liang'an de tiao Wuchang*.

46. Jizili is a village strung out along its “old street,” with pavilions at both points of entry: one dedicated to Guandi balances that to the Wuchang. Zhao Gongming 趙公明, usually a separate wealth god, is in Jizili depicted as the chief Wuchang, in the center of the group of five. Thus both pavilions state clearly that Jizili is a merchant village, protected by gods of wealth.
47. For a full account of this ritual in Tonggu county, Jiangxi, on the Hunan border, see Lan Songyan 藍松炎, “Economy and popular religion in Qiping” 棋坪的傳統經濟與民間信仰, in *Traditional economy and customs in Tonggu* 銅鼓縣的傳統經濟與民俗文化, edited by Liu Jinfeng 劉勁峰 and Lai Wenfeng 賴文峰, “Hakka Traditional Society Series” vol. 30 (EFEO, 2006), no. 2, pp. 383–88. Cf., in Wang Zhenzhong’s contribution, p. 173, the reference to “grandly recompensing the fierce soldiers” 大犒猖兵. The term “recompense” is a technical ritual one used by Daoist exorcists to describe payment of the armies mobilized to chase away demons.

ple containing Guanyin, Wuchang, and Jiutian yingyuan 九天應元. In Lantian, the three-room temple which once contained the Wuchang stands at one end of a long *shuikou* mound that constitutes the third or lower *shuikou* 下水口. The mound has a Wenchangge 文昌閣 at the other end, suggesting this village added the protection of the civil, exam-related Wenchang to the military, combative Wuchang.⁴⁸ In Wangfengkou, there is a first *shuikou* followed by a Guandi pavilion 關帝亭, then the Guanyin-Wuchang temple, and, finally, a third, unidentified temple. The fact Jiutian yingyuan was also found in this temple is most remarkable, because we have found him to be a central figure in one of the most widely practiced exorcistic rituals in Shexian, namely, the *gandiao* 趕吊, done when someone commits suicide by hanging, as can be seen from this description in my preface to the Baiyangyuan book already mentioned:

After the burial and an evening banquet, a monk went into the deceased person's bedroom and, behind closed doors, shared a prepared meal with a straw man, till 9 p.m. Then he put on the dead person's clothes, attached a long tongue to his lower lip, and painted himself with a demon face and disheveled hair. When he was ready, he threw down the wine pitcher, the door opened, and two men, one with a pitchfork, the other dressed in armor as the heavenly god Jiutian yingyuan (Response to the Origin of the Nine Heavens),⁴⁹ burst into the room. As the monk rushed out,

48. Such walled mounds are common in this part of Shexian and were explained to us by Ke Lingquan (who guided us through these three villages on April 29, 2008) to be designed to prevent *qi* 氣-energies (= *cai* 財, wealth) from slipping out. According to Ke, only temples to Wuchang, Guandi, or Wang Hua, or *shewu*, can be placed on these rectangular walled mounds.

49. This is a small part of the title of the Daoist god of thunder, but no one would seem to be aware of this locally. An author from the village of Zhoubangtou, however, where Daoist culture is more present, spontaneously identified this god as Leisheng puhua tianzun 雷聲普化天尊 (the Heavenly Worthy of Universal Transformations by the Voice of Thunder).

the man with the pitchfork impaled the straw man and then ran out after the monk, while Nine Heavens went around the room before rushing out as well, chasing both the monk and the straw man. Now a whole group with pitchforks and iron chains, making terrifying noises, with whistles, torches, and hollering, chased after the monk, and the whole village shut its doors. When the monk arrived outside the water exit, he hid; the posse seized the straw man and, together with their torches and brooms, threw him into the river before returning home in utter silence. Once they were gone, the monk removed the dead person's clothes and threw them into the river,⁵⁰ washed his face, and went home by a different route.

In Nangan 南觀 (Jixi) there was a Wuchang next to a Wanggong temple. They were surrounded by big trees, and no one dared walk there at night. In Longwei 龍尾 (Wuyuan), in the small village of Wantan 灣潭, which occupied the first of Longwei's three *shuikou*, there was a Wutong and an earth god temple. Nearby, right along the river, there was a Wuchang temple. These three temples had only "god seats" 神位, no images. Young children whose lives were considered threatened were adopted out, on the advice of a diviner 算命者, to the Wuchang, the earth god, or an old camphor tree at the third *shuikou*. Everyone in Wantan went to sacrifice a rooster to the Wuchang on the first day of the year, and went also to worship them on the "three 15" (1/15, 7/15, 10/15). But the most important function of the

In Hongfei, Shexian, visited on October 11, 2009, there was a Jiutian yingyuan pavilion at the "village head" and a Wuchang temple at the "village tail."

50. During a return visit on June 1, 2010, we were showed by the surviving monk's son himself where this is done, about one hundred meters down-river from the water exit pavilion. The mid-autumn straw dragons, we were told, were also thrown in the river there. In Miantan, Shexian (visited January 10, 2010), likewise, the mid-autumn straw dragons were thrown in the river at a point below the local Wuchang temple considered to be "outside the *shuikou*."

Wuchang was to be driven out with torches when, once every three to five years, a *kaiguang* ritual was done by the Daoists of nearby Yaojiacun. This ritual was done in a large temple called a Thunder Altar 雷壇, which was located on a hill upstream from Wantan and contained statues of the Master of Thunder 雷公 and the Mother of Lightning 電母.

This statue-animation ritual required (re)varnishing a statue and then placing a live turtle in the hole in its back. Next the *fajie* 發界 ritual was performed: First the Daoist handed command tablets down to five men playing the roles of the Wuchang and made up to look terrifying. These five then rushed off, each in a different direction to pre-designated points, there to drive their tablets into the soil and thus stake out the god's territory. The central direction was the temple itself.⁵¹ In Qingyuan 慶源 (May 23, 2009; also in Wuyuan) we were told the Wuchang had to run to their pre-appointed spots lest they be caught by people chasing them, and that the tablet rite was called *kai lingpai* 開靈牌, animating the numinous tablet (representing the god). This rite is remarkably similar to that described by Paul Katz in the context of the Wenzhou 溫州 festival in honor of Marshal Wen 溫元帥 where, after all major local gods had arrived at the Temple of the King of Eastern Ou 東甌王廟, Daoists brought out the tablets of the Three Pure Ones 三清: "The Taoists then summoned Marshal Wen to receive his orders. He was issued an 'arrow of command' (*ling-chien* 令箭) by the Three Pure Ones, after which he left through the main gate to lead the procession."⁵² It will be noted that all of these rituals were done by Daoists, and all are about marking divine territory. In the Wuchang and Five Camps rituals, they are also about setting up

51. This is clearly identical to the Five Camps rituals done in Taiwan; see David Jordan, *Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors: Folk Religion in a Taiwanese Village*, pp. 50–51, and the indexed pages in my *Taoist Ritual*, p. 355. Cf. Qitao Guo, *Exorcism and Money*, where he cites Barend ter Haar and Tanaka Issei as making similar observations.

52. Paul Katz, *Demon Hordes and Burning Boats: The Cult of Marshal Wen in Late Imperial Chekiang*, pp. 154–55.

fierce gate guardians at all points of entry.⁵³

Fieldwork has also given us glimpses of the exorcistic role of the Wuchang. On August 15, 2010, with Wang Falin we interviewed Zhan Lianfu 詹連富, 83, in Yuantou 源頭, another Duanxin village closely linked to Qiyunshan Daoism. Zhan, who had often participated in Wuchang rites—the last time was in the 1950s—explained that in case of serious illness, a Daoist from one's local *fang* 房,⁵⁴ called a “disciple” (*mentu* 門徒), was invited to do an exorcism. He recounted one such instance when a man, having been diagnosed as having fallen ill because he had “run into” 撞 the Wuchang, was treated by two well-known Daoists from nearby Waicun 外村. After supper in Yuantou, five village men—normally married men—went to a Wuchang temple three li from Yuantou, halfway up the mountain separating Wuyuan from Anhui (“Why was the temple there?” — “Because it protects our village”). There, after some rituals, the Waicun Daoists painted the men's faces to represent the Wuchang, gave to each the appropriate weapon, and told them to stand in front of the relevant Wuchang. The rituals went on till 11 p.m., when incantations and talismans enabled the Wuchang to “ride their horses” 騎馬 full tilt back to Yuantou. Carrying torches and brandishing weapons, the red-trousered and straw-sandled Wuchang hollered shrilly as they ran, *budai-qian* 布袋錢 streaming out behind them, back to the village without stumbling—for to stumble would be *daomei*. Having been met by other villagers, they were escorted to the “village tail,” where a *tan* for gaining release from the Wuchang 解五猖壇 had already been set up. Each of the Wuchang took up his position at one of five tables, with Marshal Zhao 正一玄壇趙元帥 in the center. The last ritual was called “expelling the Chang” 驅猖 and involved chasing the Wuchang, with firecrackers, powder guns, and hollering, out of the village. There, outside, the *shuikou*, they washed off their faces before returning to Yuantou and the sick person's home for a post-midnight

53. I therefore suspect the four Prince temples in Qiankou represent the same idea.

54. All Daoists on Qiyunshan were associated with a *fang*, also called a “Daoist temple” 道院.

snack.⁵⁵

In another of his to-be-published essays, on Tuochuan 陀川, Wang Falin describes a similar ritual done by eight *dafa* 大法 (the standard local name for Daoist exorcists) in time of epidemic or on 7/15, “demon day” (*guijie* 鬼節). The ritual began with a procession beating dragon boat drums along a river to a pavilion in the hills, then down into the valley again and to the Fashitang 法士堂 in Shangwan 上灣 for a 7-day *zhaijiao* 齋醮. For this there were five “real persons” (*zhenren* 真人) whose faces were painted to make them look like the Wuchang, with money hanging behind their ears. The Daoist’s incantations then turned each Wuchang into two, one real, one fake. The real ones could leap onto tables, not the fake ones. If someone happened to recognize one of the fakes, however, he had to pretend not to, for the pretend-Wuchang’s soul could then be snatched by the real Wuchang. Real and fake Wuchang all grabbed pitchforks and chains and entered the lineage hall, then went throughout the village, going in every home’s front door and out the back. People had to be polite to the Wuchang, but not too polite. At the end, all refuse was put in a paper boat and carried to a camphor tree at the *shuikou* for burning.

Wang Hua 汪華

In his work on the evolution of the lineage in the Ming, in which Huizhou is one of three regions studied closely, Chang Jianhua sketches the story of how Wang Hua went from regional (territorial) to lineage god.⁵⁶ While Chang is not interested in what became of Wang Hua as a god, Wang Zhenzhong cites extensively from local monographs to demonstrate that Wang Hua “was the most widely worshiped god in all Huizhou”; he mentions in particular the 2/15 festival of Dengyuan 登源, Jixi, for which twelve villages 社 rotated responsibility.⁵⁷ Recently, a collective volume was published that contains a

55. The full account will be published in Wang Falin’s essay on Wuyuan Daoism.

56. Chang Jianhua 常建華, *Mingdai zongzu yanjiu* 明代宗族研究, chapter 2.

57. Wang Zhenzhong 王振忠, *Huizhou shehui wenhuashi tanwei* 徽州社會文化史探微, pp. 174–75.

number of essays on this “flower day festival” 賽花朝,⁵⁸ one of which quotes in an appendix from Shen Fu’s 沈復 *Fusheng liuji* 浮生六記. According to Shen Fu, the festival took place once every twelve years and involved a “flower basin competition” 盆花爲賽. Already upset by the fact there were neither sedan chairs nor horses to take him the five kilometers from the county seat to Renli 仁里, Shen and his companion, Xu Ceting 許策廷, never found out which god was worshiped, but they did find much to laugh about, including a huge pair of candles carried in by four persons and a pig the size of a male buffalo carried by eight:

Probably he was raised for twelve years before being slaughtered and presented to the god. Laughing, Ceting said: “The pig had a long life, and now the god gets to enjoy it. If I were a god, I would love to taste this.” I replied: “This shows their doltish sincerity 愚誠.”

Xu and Shen then went into the temple and found the flower basins to contain “strange old shapes,” half of them of Huangshan pine. Just then opera began on the platform in front of the temple: “People surged in like the tide, and Ceting and I absconded.”⁵⁹

According to the local authors, this festival was put on for Wang-gong dadi’s birthday, and responsibility for it was rotated among nineteen villages on a twelve-year schedule. In addition to the huge pig, a wandering goat was also raised for sacrifice to the god. Actual worship of Great Emperor Wang took place not in the temple but in the ancestor hall of the sponsoring lineage. What Wang Sengyou recalls most distinctly of the Wang village festival he saw when he was 11 or 12 years of age was the fireworks. He recalls one in particular in which four flower baskets emerged first, then candles in the basket, then four different colored lamps, and finally four young boys who

58. *Jixi qiannian Renli* 績溪千年仁里, chief editor Wang Jungeng 汪俊廣 (Neibu, 2010). A section on “folk customs” 民俗, pp. 181–206, contains four short pieces by different authors on this festival.

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 182–83. According to the article by Wang Shengyou 汪笙友 that follows this excerpt, Shen Fu’s text must date to around 1787.

spun around spraying sparks. This was called “foreign devils peeing.” The author then recalls his disappointment on seeing the first fireworks display after Liberation in Shanghai: “Although it was wonderful to watch, it came nowhere near the artisan’s perfection of the old style of fireworks.”⁶⁰

A second local author, Cheng Zhuoshan, says that the festival was run by nineteen villages divided into eight *sbe*.⁶¹ It was nonetheless a twelve-year rotation because, if several small villages would unite to do the festival together, Renli, being a large village, was in charge three years running. In some villages the festival was held on 1/18, widely recognized to be Wang Hua’s birthday. Whoever’s turn it was, all those living elsewhere, in particular merchants, were supposed to come home for the celebration. Opera—sometimes with two competing troupes 對台戲—began as soon as the sacrifice was completed. The third piece, by Cheng Ganmei, describes the version of the festival held in 1946 in the little but rich village of Seven Pagodas.⁶² Wang Hua, he writes, had a black face and wore a new red dragon robe. He was carried in a sedan chair by four young men “to all the villages around”, in a huge parade led by forty powder gun bearers and including fifteen pigs all slaughtered, bristled, and scrubbed clean, as well as one goat. The sacrifice, done in a Cheng lineage segment hall 支祠, involved 48 masters of ceremony 禮生! “I still remember how, in order to see the festival, I skipped school for three days. When I went back to class, my teacher Yu Jinshan said not a word but just grabbed my hand and slapped my palm hard fifteen times. But in my heart I was still secretly overjoyed: it was worth it.”

Another Wang Hua temple statue that circulated among a number of villages is that in the “central temple” 總廟 said to have been

60. Wang Shengyou, “The Flower Festival and fireworks in the Dengyuan area” 登源一帶的花朝和煙火 *ibid.*, pp. 183–84.

61. Cheng Zhuoshan 程桌山 (1896–1975), “The Flower Festival of the eight *sbe*” 八社花朝; *ibid.*, pp. 181–82. The text was written in 1958.

62. Cheng Ganmei 程干美, “On the fame of the great Flower Festival in Seven Pagodas” 七塔花朝盛會遠名揚; *ibid.*, pp. 184–85.

built by order of the Ming founder on Bamboo Hill 箬岭 in Shexian.⁶³ Dizang 地藏 originally thought to make this “geomantically precious site” 風水寶地 his own, but because Wang Hua had protected Huizhou by holding this “northern gate”, he left it to Huizhou’s patron saint. According to Xu Ji, his ancestor Xu Hongshou 許洪壽 first built the temple at the end of the Yuan, but it is said to have been Ming Tai-zu who designated the perfect number of 108 *she*-earth god territories to participate in Wang Hua’s worship at Bamboo Hill on his 2/15 birthday. Be that as it may, the 1.8-meter high statue of Wangong apparently spent most of its time in a 2.8-meter tall sedan chair, not in his temple but in the main Xu lineage hall some 25 *li* from Bamboo Hill. On 12/24, Xu villagers from Jincun 金村 came to fetch him and bring him to his home temple. On 1/1, Chatan 茶坦 brought him to their village, followed by Zhengling 正岭 on 1/2. On 1/3 he was carried by Jincun to their Xu ancestor hall, Dunmutang 惇睦堂, where he stayed until 1/18. On 1/6, however, he had to go to Huanquan 環泉 because a girl there, having seen him when he came to their village and having expressed the desire to marry someone as handsome as him, died that night and so was thought to have become his wife.⁶⁴ On 1/7, Wangong came back to the Jincun hall.⁶⁵ On 1/12, the people of Jincun went to the Prince Pavilion 太子閣 in Xucun to fetch Third Prince 三太子 so that father and son could together enjoy the lantern festival parades on 1/15-16. A local earth god was also carried

63. The following will be based on an as-yet unpublished essay by Xu Ji 許冀 on his native Xu Village 許村. The chapter, entitled “Welcoming the god Wangong” 接汪公菩薩, is based on his own fieldwork and an unpublished essay by Pan Shengtao 潘聖濤 that Xu found in the local monograph office of Shexian: “Old customs and festivals in northern She” 歙北舊俗許時節.

64. This is another standard tale, told for example of a maid in Zhangjiaying 張家營, Liancheng 連城, when Gehu houwang 蛤蜊侯王 came to her village.

65. According to our 86-year old informant, Xu Wanzi 許萬紫 (May 30, 2009), the Dunmutang hall considered Wangong theirs because they had given the lands around the home temple.

to the hall from his *shewu*. The parade involved carrying giant halberds that had been introduced after the Taiping tianguo slaughter had produced many ghosts: some of them were so high in the air that only these halberds could reach them. Once the parade set out on 1/15, Wang Hua could not be put down till he arrived at the East Branch segment hall of Dabangbo 大邦伯祠, founded in 1522. He and the other gods in the parade, all of whom brought up the rear, stayed in another hall on 1/16. Finally, on 1/18, Wang Hua was brought back to his home temple on Bamboo Hill. In the fifth month, his statue was fetched once again, eventually to be placed in the main Xu hall 總祠 until 12/24. But first, as the aim of this sortie was to “protect the rice seedlings” 保苗 just then being transplanted, the Jincun porters carried Wanggong through their own fields before delivering him to the hall, which was the common possession of the ten *men* 門 of the eastern and eight *men* of the western branch of the Xu lineage. Thereafter, any village that wished to borrow the god for a similar rite negotiated an agreement with the Xus and then carried the god to their own hall or *shewu*.

The origin of this practice is said to go back to a year of fierce drought. Wherever Wanggong went, it rained, and people came from all around to invite him to their village. Finally, he ended up in the Lingyin si 靈隱寺 in Hangzhou, which did not wish to relinquish him. They made 100 copies of Wanggong, thinking the people of Xucun would never be able to discern the true from the false. As 12/24 approached and the people of Xucun grew anxious, Wanggong sent the person in charge of the main Xu hall a dream 托夢, explaining that he alone among the multiple statues had a mole on his face. When they got to Lingyinsi, however, they could find no such statue, until suddenly they saw a statue with a black fly on its face that could not be chased away. So they went home with their own statue, having forced the admiration of the people of Hangzhou.⁶⁶

Xu Wanzi recounted to Xu Ji how, in 1956, during a severe

66. This is another standard tale, told for example of Fuhu chanshi 伏虎禪師 when he was stolen by Jiangxi people from his home temple on Pingyuanshan 平源山 in Changting County 長汀縣, Fujian.

drought, he led some Jincun villagers to fetch Wanggong from his temple on Bamboo Hill, where he had been left since 1949. When they carried him out, however, they were blocked by opponents of “feudal superstition” 封建迷信. Xu Wanzi then organized some hundred men to force their way, with the statue, back to their village. No sooner had they brought Wanggong back to their *shewu* after carrying him through their fields than a downpour occurred. In 1966, four cadres dragged the statue down from the mountain and burned it. None came to a good end.

More incidental information was obtained about Wang Hua in a number of other villages that had temples dedicated to him, as in Kengtou 坑頭, Fangkeng 芳坑, and Miantan 綿壇, all in Shexian.⁶⁷ In Kengtou, in addition to temples for King Zhou and the earth god, there was a Yueguogong ci 越國公祠 at the water exit. The Pan 盤-dominated village had an “eighteenth association” 十八會 to organize his birthday celebration and parade on 1/18. Emperor Wang was carried to the ancestor hall for a minimum of three days of opera, and only people with at least a high school diploma were allowed to enter the hall to worship. Wangdi also had an elderly woman spokesperson 巫婆, who was consulted when a child was sick. Miantan is divided into Upper and Lower Wangs, with the Upper in fact being Zhuangs who changed their name to Wang. Each group had its own *shewu* and its own hall. The Upper Wangs owned a Wang Hua temple in nearby Mianqi 綿溪 and lent him out throughout the year. On 1/16, they went to fetch him and brought him to their *shewu*, dedicated to Big Marshal Hu 胡大元帥, to witness “playing with the dragons” 嬉龍. This earth god house had its own stage opposite, where on 1/17 opera was put on. On 1/18, Wang Hua’s birthday was celebrated.

Concluding Remarks

By comparison with the Hakka parts of Fujian which I know best, the following differences stand out: the generally low status of ritual

67. All visited in 2009, on May 25 and 31 and October 11, respectively.

specialists; the systematic destruction of all temples and most ancestor halls; the fact so few rituals have been restored; the difficulties we have encountered in finding people to write about popular traditions; the complex interconnections between halls and temples. All but the last I attribute, at least in part, to the peculiar nature of Huizhou class society in late imperial China.⁶⁸ As few things are more consensual in Huizhou studies than the idea that Huizhou society was built on a merchant/literati alliance with an insistent emphasis on and investment in Confucian orthodoxy, this is hardly a discovery. But if such as Kai-wing Chow have illustrated how late imperial orthodoxy expressed itself as a kind of fundamentalism involving “ritualist ethics and textual purism”,⁶⁹ a cult of widow chastity, and antagonism to Buddhism and Daoism, our studies give unique insight into how this orthodoxy led to the systematic destruction of the people’s religion by what we may call “Confucian Communism”. The destruction of popular culture in the twentieth century can be foreseen in the mode of travel and supercilious commentaries of Shen Fu and his comrade when visiting Renli about the time of the French Revolution. And, I repeat, in this text-obsessed society, it remains difficult to find contemporary literati who are willing to abandon their written sources to do fieldwork.

The complex interconnections between halls and temples is in curious contradiction with this rampant orthodoxy. In Hakka Fujian, I cannot count the times that people have expressed surprise that a temple might be found within the village limits: the main ancestor hall is almost always smack dab in the middle of the village, as in the Pearl River Delta, and “villages lie behind an invisible Maginot line formed by the gods.”⁷⁰ The distinction, in other words, between the centrali-

68. I say “at least in part” because, as we saw above, there are other explanations available as well, such as the sense that the future of this hilly, inland region of once-rich merchants and the beautiful villages they helped create lies in “green and cultural tourism”.

69. This is the title of Chapter 2 in his *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse*.

70. See my *China: A Religious State*, p. 167.

ty of the ancestors—also a mark of late imperial Confucian social engineering—and the defensive or exorcistic role of the gods is clear in village layout and in people’s minds. In what I have seen of Huizhou this is not so. Although I have heard statements to the effect that gods should not have their homes inside the village, and although the *shuikou* is, as in Hakka Fujian, a favored site for building temples, the ancestors do not everywhere occupy the center of the Huizhou village. Indeed, I have encountered a number of cases, as in Longwei, for example, where the main ancestor hall is down near the *shuikou*, and facing inward toward the village like many a *shuikou* temple in Hakka Fujian and Huizhou itself.

What is going on here? – I suggest it is not unrelated to what Chang Jianhua shows of the gradual transition of such gods as Wang Hua from divine territorial defender to ancestor. This is one example of the Huizhou fascination with distant ancestors, or *bizu* as they are called in Baiyangyuan. In Hakka Fujian, lineages which say they are in their 80th or 90th generation are infrequent, and one can usually demonstrate they began thus reorganizing their vision of the lineage around a Zhou-era ancestor sometime in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. In Huizhou, I have the impression that virtually every lineage claims to be in its 100-somethingth generation and descended from Wu Taibo or someone comparable. Such claims are in turn related to another difference: whereas, in the Hakka villages of Fujian, it is rare that local lineage segments not produce a purely local lineage genealogy together, I am of the impression that such segments in Huizhou almost never produce a joint genealogy. In Baiyangyuan, for example, even the Honggong and Migong segments, said to have come in the same year from Bei’an and to have long shared an incense house, did not have a common genealogy, apparently because both segments participated in the higher-order lineage genealogy, the *zongpu* 宗譜, produced in Bei’an.

In Hakka Fujian, villagers do not seem to care about what happened before their local *shizu* 始祖, the one who came to their village, and they tell many tales about first ancestors that present them as hired labor (*changgong* 長工); in Huizhou, villagers care a great deal about the *shizu*, and are especially happy to link him to a Wang

Hua or a Cheng Lingxi 程靈洗 or some other local, historically attested figure, and then to go beyond even these distant heroes to the universal culture heroes of the Zhou. Moreover, these distant ancestors, from whom descent of course cannot be proven, are often treated as gods, or at least quasi-gods. The most obvious example, again, is Wang Hua, who was in fact more a god than a quasi-ancestor until he was turned into an ancestor.⁷¹ But let us take a different case, that of the Pans of Kengtou, a village that claims to have produced four prime ministers (*shangshu* 尚書): if they had a Zhouwang temple in their village, it is because they considered themselves to be descended from King Wen of Zhou. This is also one village where I was told the gods should not be inside the village.

Another example is Changling 長齡,⁷² which has what it calls a *zhongting* 眾廳 or multitude pavilion. Situated at the dividing line between the eastern and western Hu 胡 lineage segments, it had two side rooms in which the dragon heads 龍頭 of the two segments were kept. In the central room, during the New Year's period (1/1-15), a Xianggong pusa 相公菩薩⁷³ was brought in from a Water Dragon Temple 水龍廟 nearby and placed in the center; a Furong pusa 芙蓉

71. The Shanghai Library holds a six-volume text entitled *Yueguo Wanggong cimuzhi* 越國汪公祠墓志 (1852) about the chief state-supported shrine to Wang Hua on Wuliao Hill 無聊山 in the heart of the prefectural seat. A good share of it is occupied by the standard story of a *gongdetang* 功德堂 confided to Buddhist monks whose successors were then attacked by the person's descendents for having turned the "ancestor shrine" into a "temple". A sequel, the *Yueguo Wanggong cimuzhi xukan* 續刊 in two volumes (1884), tries to pick up the pieces after the Taiping tianguo destruction of the previous monograph. It also recounts a court case, but over land use, not ownership: one Yang Liangyu 楊良玉 had earned lineage ire by setting up oil presses too close to Wang Hua's grave. After coming to investigate in person, the magistrate finally forced Yang to agree not to build a press within five *li* of the grave.

72. Formerly in Shexian, it is now in Huizhou District 徽州區. It is about to be wiped off the map for a new high-speed railway. We visited it on June 3, 2010.

73. The name suggests this is one of Wang Hua's nine sons.

菩薩 was carried in from Ningguo County 寧國縣 and placed on Xianggong's left; and the portrait of the (founding?) ancestor 祖容 was hung up on his right. According to our informant, Hu Dagong 胡大公, 76, this building served as the site for discussion of village affairs and for a "temple festival" on 1/15, not for ancestor worship. The main ancestor hall of Changling, built later than the *zhongting*, was situated, together with an earth god temple and a Guanyin pavilion, at the *shuikou*. My hypothesis regarding the unique architecture and functions of this *zhongting* is that it represents an archaic, pre-ancestor hall arrangement: assuming the earth god temple (or a *tan*, as is often the case in Hakka Fujian, where many villages have no temples at all, just an earth god *tan* at the *shuikou*) was "always" there, the *zhongting* would be the place for the congregation of the gods (that is, *zhong* refers to the gods, not the "multitudes") for New Year's festivities. In this context, the founding ancestor was also a god, represented, as in the Song, by a portrait, not a tablet. He represented the unity of the two lineage segments, who did not yet have a common hall, and even less a common genealogy. But in the *zhongting*, he was ranked third, after the chief local god, a son of Wang Hua, and a god imported from afar for the occasion. At some point, the inevitable Guanyin was added at the *shuikou*.

The Changling *zhongting*, in other words, would be a very early version of the *zushenmiao* of Baiyang, more temple than hall, but already associating distant ancestors and the gods. But in Baiyang, whose institutions date to the mid-Ming and later, the distant ancestors and gods not only lived together in an "ancestor god temple", they were carried together into an ancestor hall for New Year's celebrations.

All of this, of course, is intensely speculative, and we will need many more examples of Huizhou village ritual architecture and related practices before we dare to be a bit more affirmative about what we are seeing.⁷⁴ In the meanwhile, we can certainly affirm two

74. In his article in this issue Wang Zhenzhong points out that the term "multitude pavilion" (*zhongwu*) sometimes simply refers to a place where village discussions on matters of public interest were held.

things: 1) Huizhou is very different from everything I have seen in Jiangxi, Fujian (including the very peculiar Zhao'an 詔安), and Guangdong (there are some similarities with Ji'an 吉安, which I will explore at a later date); 2) the ritual repertoire—in spite of the prominence of prominent ancestors!—is pretty much the same as everywhere else, as seen in pilgrimages and prayers for rain or sons, exorcistic *jiao*, *chaodu* 超度, feeding orphan souls 施孤, dragon parades, god parades, geomancy, *shuikou* temples and rites, and so on. That is, for all its “humanistic”, even “atheist” veneer, Huizhou belongs to the “continent of the gods” 神州.

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徽州府的村落宗教：初步的探討

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摘要：假使有一個中國帝國末期的地方社會可以來代表符合新儒家原則的社會轉型，那就會是徽州了。徽州因而代表了一種特別有趣的測試案例，從徽州的案例中可以探知這些原則實際上是如何的深入社會內部的運轉，以及其他的宗教型式又在什麼樣的程度上被邊緣化。筆者仰賴田野調查來試圖回答這個問題。儘管表面上比起中國其他地方，(徽州的)僧尼和道士的確較常處於社會的低階層，但是社會對於他們的儀式的依賴似乎與他處一般的普遍。即使堂皇的祠堂在村落的建築中占據了主要的地位，社會作為一個整體依然持續的環繞着村廟而建構。同時，水口的位置對於建構村落空間也和南中國其他地方一樣的重要。

關鍵詞：徽州，村落宗教，祠堂，地方神明，風水。