

Affiliation and Transmission in Daoism

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Transmission Ritual of Local Taoists in Southeast China

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Introduction

Our fieldwork in northern Guangdong from 2000 to 2004 tells us that one of the most popular forms of Taoist ritual practiced in villages of northern Guangdong is that of the Lüshan school, also known as *Furen jiao* (The Three Ladies teachings). A distinct marker of the ritual of the school is the use of a metallic horn as a major ritual implement and a ritual dance during which ritual specialists have to dress up as women, thereby turning themselves into Lady Chen Jinggu, a main female deity of the Lüshan tradition. The ritual specialists of the school are married Taoists who pass on their ritual methods along master-disciple lines of transmission, mostly within their families and each of them identifies himself as belonging to an altar with a specific name. Northern Guangdong is a mountain area made up of three cities including Shaoguan, Qingyuan and Heyuan. We later find that the Lüshan ritual tradition is also widely seen in the Longyan city of northwest Fujian, and in the Ganzhou city of southern Jiangxi as well as in the Wanzai county in northwest Jiangxi. While our coverage is not exhaustive, based on our survey, the extent to which this form of Lüshan ritual has an influence already covers a total area of 112,000 km². The area of our survey coincides with the area of Hakka settlement. Lagerwey has, therefore, named the Lüshan Taoism as a Hakka religion¹. One perplexing question, however, has been that some of the ritual specialists, like those in northern Guangdong, do not usually identify themselves as Lüshan Taoists. Also, the ritual form in the above-mentioned Hakka areas that we find today usually exists as a mixture of different ritual forms, for example Lüshan mingled with Pu'an (1115-1169) Buddhist ritual to form a local ritual. Are we then looking at cases of non-Lüshan Taoists performing Lüshan rituals?

1 John Lagerwey, "Taoism Among the Hakka in Fujian," *Di'yi jie keji xue guoji yantao hui lunwen ji* (Acts of the First International Conference of Hakka Studies), eds. Hsieh Jiann et Chang Chak Yan (Chinese University of Hong Kong, Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies), 311-344.

Have they forgotten about their affiliation in the course of migration or in the process of integrating with other ritual forms? The best way to answer these questions is to examine the transmission ritual of ritual specialists in these Hakka areas to find out what kinds of ritual method are consciously transmitted from a master to his disciple. Transmission ritual is also a showcase of basic rituals of a ritual tradition. Besides allowing us to learn more about the affiliation of the local Taoists, the transmission ritual itself is important as it is rarely practiced, usually once per generation in the case of local Taoist tradition which is only transmitted within a family. A study of their transmission ritual will be able to tell us more about (1) what and how the ritual methods of the local Taoists are transmitted, (2) how different ritual traditions become integrated into local ritual and (3) what the role of Taoism in general and Lüshan Taoism in particular plays in the process of generation of local ritual system.

This paper studies two such transmission rituals carried out in southeast China, namely, Yongfu of southern Fujian and Wanzai of northwest Jiangxi. Yongfu in Zhangping is an important Lüshan transmission centre for the five neighboring counties situated in western and southern Fujian². Transmission ritual was stopped during the Cultural Revolution but re-assumed in Yongfu during the 80s and 90s. The most recent one, which this paper will study, was performed in April of 2011. The ritual tradition in Wanzai, however, is a mixture of Buddhist and Lüshan Taoist rituals. A study of transmission ritual in Wanzai will allow us to see more clearly how the two ritual traditions, Pu'an and Lüshan, integrate to form a local ritual.

Transmission ritual in Yongfu

The Transmission ritual in Yongfu was performed by the Taoist Chen Fuzhang (1961-) for the ordination of his son as a Lüshan Taoist. Chen belongs to the Xianling Altar which he claims to have been transmitted for eight generations. This traces back the history of his altar to 1811 (the 16th year of Xiaqing in the Qing) if we count one generation as consisting of 25 years. The eight brothers of the grandfather of Chen were all Taoists, making the Xianling Altar one of the most famous ones in Yongfu. A ritual

2 See Ye Mingsheng 〈閩西南道教閩山派傳度中心永福探秘〉(To explore the mystery of Yongfu, the centre for transmission of the Lüshan school in southwest Fujian) in 《民俗曲藝》*Journal of Chinese Ritual, Theatre and Folklore* May (1995):165-206 and his 〈永福閩山教建旛傳度儀式中的幡科簡述〉 in *Proceedings of the International Workshop on the Comparative Ethnography of Local Daoist Ritual* (Hong Kong University MB-R218, April 21-23, 2011), no page number.

manuscript for offering known as *Gongtou ce* 供頭冊 dated 1885 (the 11th year of Guangxu) gives a whole list of the ancestors of Chen who were Taoists. These Taoist ancestors have to be invited and presented with offerings whenever Chen performs Taoist ritual. Since the list of names is given in a continuing manner, only with the help of Chen could we divide them into nine generations. Collaborative evidence for the relatively long history of Lüshan Taoism in Yongfu comes from a grave dated back to 1600 (the 28th year of Wenli in Ming) discovered in 1992³. It was reported that inside the grave, a mummy dressed in Taoist robe with a fan in his hand and a Taoist crown on his head was found in Yongfu. This supports the general claim of the Taoists in Yongfu that their history could be traced back to the Ming dynasty. Chen asserted that their Xialing Altar never performed the funeral ritual which was taken care of locally by Buddhist ritual specialists. This suggests that the Xianling Altar, unlike other places where Buddhist ritual has been integrated with the Taoist ritual, preserves ‘pure’ Lüshan exorcistic ritual. This claim could be substantiated in our detailed study of the transmission ritual below. Another Taoist, Cai, who is 68 years old also attended the transmission ceremony performed by Chen. He acted as one of the witnesses needed in a transmission ritual. Cai himself belongs to another Taoist altar called the Xianchang Altar that has been transmitted for 19 generations. This traces back his altar to 1536 or the 13th year of Jiajing in Ming. Cai possesses a lineage register *Cuanshi pu* 傳師譜 that gives the names of his Taoist ancestors. The long history of Taoism in Yongfu helps to explain why it has become an ordination center for local Taoists in the neighboring counties.

The transmission ritual in Yongfu in April of 2011 lasted for four days. For the sake of simplicity, we only highlight the main events of each day here in order to find out the gist of the ritual. The ritual started at four o’clock in the afternoon when a big talisman was pasted on the roof of the Taoist house with the help of a ladder. After an invitation to the gods was performed, there was a dinner break. An offering was made to the gods after dinner followed by offerings to the spiritual troops known as the ‘rewarding of troops’. These two kinds of offerings could be easily differentiated by the fact that offerings for the gods were placed on the altar table while those for the spiritual troops were put on the floor. There were no actions performed in the case of the latter and the Taoist simply beat his drum for some time. This shows the comparatively low status of the spiritual troops. A protective ritual known as

3 See the report by Luo Yisheng 〈漳平發現明代道士古屍〉 in *Renmin zhenxie bao* 《人民政協報》 (Beijing: 21 February 1992)

hiding or *cangsheng* 藏身 was carefully performed for the protection of the Taoists before the spiritual troops from five directions were invited outside the Taoist home. This indicates the dangerous character of the spiritual troops. We could examine more closely these spiritual troops by looking at the ritual manuscript used. It is known as *A Newly Written Ritual Manuscript for Raising Flag, Transmission Ritual, Invitation for Fire (from a head temple) and Praying for good Harvest* (新撰建旛傳度請火祈熟通用科儀). The manuscript carries only passing remarks on many of the ritual procedures and detailed instructions can only be found on selected items. One prominent item is the instruction to the Taoists on how to visualize themselves as deities to suppress the baleful ones. These deities include the familiar Laojun, the Three Ladies of the Lüshan school, Pangu (creator of the universe in Chinese mythology), Asura (power-seeking deities in Buddhism) and other not so familiar deities such as Zhang-Zhao er lang, Zhaohou sanlang and many other immortals (such as the immortal nine phoenixes). The Taoist can, by a meditative visualization technique, turn himself into a big tree that grows in front of Laojun's palace which is for blocking the entrance of ghosts. He can also turn himself into the thunder of the four seasons that crashes evil masters under heaven. All the ritual implements used in the ritual also have to be visualized as something else. The drums represent thunder can destroy evil masters and ghosts, the gong as a deity that feeds on evil masters and ghosts, the horn as the commander of soldiers, and the bell as the bell hanging in front of the palace of Laojun for destroying deities and ghosts. All these complicated visualization procedures are for the purpose of exercising control over evil deities and ghosts and to turn them into spiritual troops at the Taoist's disposal.

The concept of spiritual troops is not new in Taoism. In both the Celestial Master tradition and the Lingbao tradition, the Taoist is equipped with spiritual troops. Although the *Zhengyi fawen falu buyi* 《正一法文法籙部儀》 talks about soldiers formed by the ethnic minorities (*yiman rongdi* 夷蠻戎狄), they are led by the 36 heavenly generals. In the Lingbao text *Shanqing lingbao dafa* 《上清靈寶大法》, it talks about the soldiers (*bingma* 兵馬) of the heavenly immortals, earthly immortals, flying immortals, True Man and so on indicating that they are heavenly generals and heavenly soldiers⁴. Under the section on dispatching troops in the ritual

4 See 李豐楙 Fong-maoLee 〈「中央四方空間模型：五營信仰的營衛與境域觀」〉 (“A cosmic model of ‘one center, four regions’: the concepts of defense in the worship of five camps soldiers”) in 《中正大學中文學術年刊》 *The Chinese Annual Academic Journal of the National Chung Cheng University* June (2010):33-70.

manuscript we collected from Yongfu, a list of the spiritual troops is found. They consist of a different type of troops which are different from the Celestial master and Lingbao: troops of wounded bulls⁵, troops of black tigers, troops of Chinese unicorn (Qilin), troops of lions, troops of wasps, troops of cormorants, troops of hairy kings, cave kings, ghosts with cangues (an instrument of punishment consists of a heavy wooden collar enclosing the neck and arms) and many kinds of *Dhuta* (Buddhist term for ascetic monks). The dangerous force consists mainly of the spirits of strange animals, ethnic minority tribes and mystical ascetics which are remarkably different from the troops in both the Celestial Master and the Lingbao tradition. Local gods are known often to appear in the guise of an animal, especially that of a tiger and a snake⁶. Animal spirits could, however, also be represented by the concept of ghosts. Although the most common conception of ghosts is that they are the spirits of deceased humans, Chinese believed in the existence of spirits of animals and even inanimate objects such as trees and rocks. Lu Xun (1881-1936) in his *Guxiaoshuo gouchen* 《古小說鉤沉》 talks about tree spirits, jade fairies, spirits of a pillow and a shoe⁷. Poo Mu-Chou (1952-) suggested treating both human spirits and non-human spirits as one category of ghosts given their interaction with human beings and their anthropomorphic nature in general⁸. An early Taoist text composed probably during the Six dynasties, the *Taihsang zhengyi zhongui jing* 《太上正一咒鬼經》, mentions the ghosts of the army camp, ghosts of the prisoner...ghosts of those killed by weapons...ghosts of the Qiang and Hu barbarians, ghosts of the Manyi

5 There is a general in Taoism known as the ‘General of Nine Bull for ground breaking’ 九牛破土大將軍 in Taoism used in a talisman for ground breaking (i.e. start of a building project). The idea of nine bulls probably comes from the idiom: strength of nine bulls and two tigers, mighty force 九牛二虎之力. See Fong-mao Lee, “A cosmic model of ‘one center, four regions’: the concepts of defense in the worship of five camps soldiers” in *The Chinese Annual Academic Journal of the National Chung Cheng University* 《中正大學中文學術年刊》 June (2010):43. The concept of wounded bull, however, is never heard of but is probably related to the idea of the coarse and wild strength released when a bull is wounded.

6 James Robson reminds us that early Buddhist biographical collections are filled with tales of Buddhist monks subduing and preaching the precepts to local spirits that appear in the guise of an animal, usually snakes and tigers. See his, “Buddhist sacred geography” in John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi ed. *Early Chinese Religion Part Two: The Period of Division (220-589 AD)* vol. 2(Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp.1386.

7 Lu Xun, *Guxiaoshuo gouchen* (Taipei: Tangshan, 1989 reprint), p.134, 146, 192 and 394.

8 Mu-chou Poo, “The Culture of Ghosts in the Six Dynasties Period” in Mu-chou Poo ed. *Rethinking Ghosts in World Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp.237.

barbarians...ghosts of animals⁹. This list from the *Zhougui jing* is of the similar type to that of our manuscript in Yongfu. To follow suit with Poo, we could designate the spirit troops of the Lüshan Taoist as ghost soldiers. They represent groups of fierce and unrestrained spiritual forces turned into troops of the Lüshan school to be led by spiritual generals and commanders, another form of ghosts. Lu Xiuqing 陸修靜 (406-477) in his *Lu xiansheng doamen kelue* 《陸先生道門科略》 states that the leaders of the ghosts “are the dead generals of defeated armies, the dead soldiers of the disarrayed troops, those men who called themselves generals, and those women who called themselves ladies”¹⁰. The *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing* 《太上洞淵神咒經》 mentions great ghost-lords who were historical figures and under their command were numerous ghost soldiers.¹¹ As we could find out from the ritual of interrogation of ghosts below, the purpose of summoning the spiritual troops led by the spiritual generals is to control other ghosts. The idea is to use stronger ghosts, that of fierce animals, ‘uncivilized’ mountain tribes and mystical ascetics, to subdue ordinary ghosts that cause troubles. This is to fight evil with evil, to cure ills with poison, as an old Chinese idiom states.

In the middle of the performance of rewarding of troops on the first night, the venue of the ritual was moved from the home of the Taoist to an outdoor shed. We were told that a makeshift shed would usually be built outdoors in the field away from the Taoist’s home. In order to save money, however, a permanent shed built next to a Tianhou temple in a nearby village was borrowed for the purpose of this year’s transmission ritual. The use of a temporary outdoor shed to deal with the spiritual troops that consists of fierce and unrestrained spiritual force seems to be reasonable (that is, not allowing them to stay permanently). Inside the shed, the Taoists continued to reward the spiritual troops by offerings which concluded the night’s program.

9 *Taishang zhengyi zhougui jing*, DZ1193 (Daozang numbering according to Concordance to the Daoist Canon by 陳耀庭 Chen Yaoting 《五種版本道藏通檢》 (Concordance on five versions of the Taoist Canon)(Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubianshe, 1996); translation by Mu-chou Poo in his “The Culture of Ghosts in the Six Dynasties Period”, pp. 248

10 *Lu xiansheng doamen kelue* DZ 1127; 24:779 (in 三家本：北京文物出版社、上海書店、天津古籍出版被，1988); translation by Mu-chou Poo in his “The Culture of Ghosts in the Six Dynasties Period”, pp.247.

11 “The Dao says, all these people (also known as ghosts kings) used to be great generals and men of important positions; after they died...there are hundreds of ghosts attached to them.” See *Taishang dongyuan shenzhoujing* DZ 335, 6:25 (in 三家本：北京文物出版社、上海書店、天津古籍出版被，1988); translation by Mu-chou Poo in his “The Culture of Ghosts in the Six Dynasties Period”, pp.249.

The second day started early in the morning at six o'clock with purification, offerings and a presentation of memorials to the gods. It was followed by the offering, rewarding and settling down of the spiritual troops. By now, we can see that the Lüshan School pays a lot of attention to their spiritual troops. At about ten o'clock, a ritual called 'interception' was performed at the five directions of the temple (east, south, west, north, middle) during which the crest of a rooster was ripped apart to drip its blood into six bowls of rice wine as offerings to the spiritual troops. Five written announcements to the spiritual troops from five directions were burnt to them. A reading of the relevant section within the ritual manuscript helps us understand the meaning of this ritual. It is to dispatch troops to the five directions to intercept the entrance of any unauthorized local gods and ghosts. A prison was made out of 72 bamboos tied together at the top forming a triangular structure and a 16-step knife-ladder was made and consecrated before lunch. The bamboo prison is closely related to a ritual called *Kaoduan* (拷斷) of interrogation of local gods and ghosts which was not performed for the transmission ritual. Since this *Kaoduan* ritual tells us a lot about the role of the Taoist in the local community, we will proceed to analyze this important ritual by reading the relevant section of the ritual manuscripts.

The *Kaoduan* is a ritual drama played as a court hearing in which the prosecutor is the Lüshan Taoist. With the help of spiritual troops, local deities were brought one by one to the court to be interrogated on the negligence of their duties that led to the sufferings of the people. (1) The first to arrive was the local god of the territory known as Benjing zunwang. He was interrogated on why he allowed a group of 'slave' ghosts to enter into the village to disturb the villagers. The local god explained that he was too old and his troops were too weak to fight against the ghosts. The Taoist then promised to submit a petition on the god's behalf to the Jade emperor to expand his military power. (2) Next the general of the five directions was brought for trial and he was interrogated on the same question. The general gave a similar answer. The Taoist, this time, granted ten strong warriors to each of the five directions. He added a reminder that the general should look for the red seal of the soldiers who were from the Celestial Masters to distinguish them from the invading ghosts. This remark is revealing. It shows clearly that the spiritual troops of the Lüshan Taoist and the ghosts who create trouble belong to the same species. It also indicates that the Lüshan Taoist in Yongfu has a strong sense of being related to the Celestial Masters. (3) Next came the gods and goddesses of the rice field who were interrogated on why they allowed harmful insects to nibble away the products of the farmers. The gods and goddess protested their innocence for the same reason of their being equipped

only with an old and infirm army. The Taoist then promised a promotion of the gods and increased their number of soldiers so that they could protect the products of the farmers from insect-borne blight. (4) Next the insect spirits which were harmful for the crops were brought in for trial. On their denial of the destruction of the crops, the Taoist ordered them to be punished by being beaten forty times. The insect ghosts then pleaded guilty and begged to be reborn as porters in Yangzhou¹² and then lived as recluses in the mountain and never again destroyed any crops. (5) Next the ghosts who brought all kinds of diseases were arrested for trial. They denied the charges and were also punished by beating. They then pleaded guilty and begged to be reborn as porters in Yangzhou and as horse-keepers. (6) Next, animals which preyed on the livestock were brought to trial. When he found out that the predators spoke no human language, the Taoist ordered them to be shot dead. (7) Finally the water deities in the rivers and streams were brought for interrogation as they had allowed the villagers to fall into the water while crossing bridges, thereby became sick. The water deities denied the charges and claimed that it was due to the carelessness of the villagers that they fell into the water and became infected with diseases. The Taoist believed the water deities and promised to submit a request for the promotion of the gods and rewarded them with money donated by the villagers. He asked the gods to give the villagers a helping hand when they crossed the bridge. At the end of the ritual, the Taoist ordered his troops to escort the ghosts to Yangzhou as per their request.

This ritual drama is very important as it reveals to us the role and identity of a Lüshan Taoist in the local community. He acts as an intermediary between local gods and higher gods and between local gods and the villagers. His intermediary role is to oversee the well-being of the villagers, the sustaining of which is the responsibility of the local gods. The Lüshan Taoist has power over the ghosts and even the local gods, he can execute punishment, demotion or promotion. He also makes use of the power of ghosts to control other ghosts.

The afternoon of the second day started with the hoisting of one bamboo flag (which consists of a 8-meter high bamboo pole) on a large raised platform built outside the temple. The Taoist first went to the river to get water for the use of ritual purification. Most of the afternoon was spent on the

12 Yangzhou here apparently refers to the head diocese, Yangping, of the 24 dioceses formed by the early Celestial Masters in Sichuan.

flag platform walking the Star Steps (*Bugang*)¹³ which is also known as ‘Walking the Nine Provinces’ (*Jiuzhou*). Since the nine provinces represent both an ancient administrative territorial division of China and the tour of inspection of the country by the sage king, the ritual of ‘Walking the Nine Provinces’ has the connotation of exercising the power of control to the territories by the Taoist in the same fashion as the tour of the territories by the sage king¹⁴. The Taoist to-be, the son of Chen, climbed to the top of the bamboo flag and the knife-ladder to announce the ordination of the Taoist to immortals on high. The bamboo flag consisted only of one large bamboo branch which was rather difficult to climb. Unable to handle both the bamboo pole and the knife-ladder, the son of Chen had another young Taoist climb the knife-ladder for him. The bamboo flag ascension is, apparently, also a symbolic way to give Chen’s son the status of a Big Flag Master (大幡師) who could perform the Big Flag ritual, the most elaborated kind of Jiao ritual in the Lüshan school¹⁵. The main program for the second night was soul hiding (*cangsheng*) during which a lot of hand signs were performed. The day was concluded by sounding the night watches (*angeng* 安更).

On the third day, Taoist apprentices from the surrounding area arrived one after another. They came in groups of four or more and would take the place of Chen to perform a section of the ritual, mostly invitation of gods locally known as invitation of Buddhas (*qingfo* 請佛). This was the case when the Taoists from Zhangping arrived at eight o’clock in the morning. After the Zhangping Taoists finished their session, Chen got back to the original program to do lighting of candles, invitation of gods, rewarding of spiritual troops and offerings to gods before lunch. The afternoon started by performing “crossing the barriers” for Children (*Guo tongziguan* 過童子關). Many villagers came with their children to participate in this ritual which was carried out in the form of a parade around the village led by the Taoists. A barrier represented by a portable bamboo gate was set up at different

13 See Poul Andersen, “The Practice of Bugang,” *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie* 5 (1989-1990), pp. 15-53.

14 See Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, “Ritual Practices for Constructing Terrestrial Space (Warring States-Early Han)” in John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski ed. *Early Chinese Religion Part One: Shang through Han (1250BC-220 AD)* (Leiden: Brill 2009), pp.595-644.

15 See 劉勁峰 Liu Jingfeng 〈流行於贛湘邊界地區的陽平大幡科儀〉 (“Yangping Big Flag ritual found in the border area of Jiangxi and Hunan”) in his 《贛南宗族社會與道教文化研究》 (*Studies of Lineage Society and Taoism in Ganna*) (Hong Kong: International Hakka Studies Association, Ecole Française d’Extrême Orient, Overseas Chinese Archives, 2000); John Lagerwey ed. *Traditional Hakka Society Series* Vol. 8; pp.264-321.

locations of the village for participants to pass through. This is a revealing part of the transmission ritual. The main deity of the Lüshan school, Chen jinggu, is known for her protection of childbearing and small children¹⁶. Crossing the barrier ritual shows clearly the communal character of the Lüshan transmission ritual as it involves the whole local community rather than just a graduation ceremony marking the end of the apprenticeship of the Taoist to-be. After-all, the villagers are the future clients of the Taoist. It makes a lot of sense to involve the villagers in the graduation ceremony of the Taoist.

Returning from the parade, Chen walked the Star Steps on the Bamboo flag platform for one more time before he climbed the bamboo pole with the ritual implements of other Taoist candidates or apprentices. A similar procedure was repeated at the knife-ladder. This reflects the leading role of the Yongfu Taoist in the area. The ordinations of the Taoists from the surrounding areas were reported to heaven by the Yongfu Taoist on their behalf. Protective talismans were also thrown from the top of the knife-ladder for the villagers to fight over. The rest of the afternoon was devoted to the Taoist candidates arriving to take turns performing their session of invitation of gods. It continued after supper. This is the occasion for the young Taoists from surrounding areas to share their experience and learn from each other under the supervision of senior Taoists. They observed each other in their performance of the rituals and commented occasionally on each other. The most important program for that night was, apparently, the signing of the 13 official documents for all the Taoist candidates when Chen danced on the altar table. Ten established Taoists in the area were invited to be witnesses of the ritual and signed one after another on each set of official documents for all the Taoist apprentices¹⁷. Since the 13 official documents of transmission

16 Brigitte Bapandier-Berthier "The *Kaiguan* Ritual and the Construction of the Child's Identity" Center for Chinese Studies, ed. *Proceedings of International Conference on Popular Beliefs and Chinese Culture* Vol. 2 (Taipei: Center for Chinese Studies, 1994), p.533 and idem, "The Lady Linshui: How a Woman Became a Goddess" in Meir Shahar and Robert Wellers, eds., *Unruly Gods: Divinity and Society in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), pp. 105-149. P.

17 The titles for the ten witnesses are: 陽平阜老師 master of Yangping, 通引師 master of leading, 扶橋師 master to support the bridge, 接度師 master of reception, 造誥師 master of title conferring, 兵部師 master of military, 戶部師 master of revenue, 考試師 master of examination, 鑿試師 master of invigilation, 保舉師 master of nomination, 鎮壇師 master of altar guardian, 給度師 master to grant graduation, 親度師 master of personal tutor

are very crucial in the transmission ritual, we should proceed to a close reading of these documents. The 13 documents are¹⁸:

1. Official document for ordination and investiture of the Taoist as a ranked immortal official to drive out evil spirits (known as 驅邪執品仙官). This entitles the Taoist to lead the soldiers of the Three Caverns in Yang (ping) Diocese, the head Diocese of the 24 Dioceses formed by the early Celestial Masters in Sichuan.
2. Register for protection against evil (護身法籙). This register consists of six fascicles of documents that perform different functions : (i) dedicates (merits) to parents, heaven and earth (ii) authorizes control over demon kings of wounded bulls and kings of elephants (spirits of fierce animals) to the Taoist (iii) authorizes power to the Taoist to destroy gods and their temples (iv) authorizes control to the Taoist over seven thousand demon kings (v) authorizes power to the Taoist to exorcise and destroy ferocious forces (vi) offer protection to the Taoist.
3. An Edict from Jade book (玉書正誥) which carries 58 spiritual characters believed to have originated in Laozi which functions as a talisman for subduing ghosts.
4. Public Record of Longevity for Transmission of the Teachings for saving the people by eliminating the evils (傳度除妖救民長生公案). There are two identical copies. One is to be kept in the office of the Southern Section (Bureau of Appointment) in the spiritual world and is sent by burning. The other is kept by the Taoist. There is an important statement on the history of the school at the beginning of this document. It starts by saying that Laozi practiced inner alchemy by burning stones. He aimed at becoming immortal. By cultivating his body, (Laozi) naturally attained the Dao. His body was able to return to the time before the birth of Heaven and Earth, his Dao reached the time before time. Laozi transmitted his method to the descendants of the Two Mountains (Mt. Lü and Mao) and to Zhang Daolin (34-156) who also practiced the inner alchemy by burning stones. The teaching transmitted is called the Teachings of Yangping

18 Ye Mingsheng has collected eight of them and miscounted the 3 diagrams and one short document as parts of the 12 transmission documents. See Ye Mingsheng ed. 《福建省龍巖市東肖鎮閩山教廣濟壇科儀本彙編》(*The Ritual Texts of the Guangji altar of the Lüshan sect in Dongxian town, Longyan municipality, Fujian*) (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 1996), pp.29-40. We have collected all 13 transmission documents plus the 3 diagrams and the one short document Ye had collected

- 陽平法教 (where Yangping was the head Diocese of the 24 Dioceses created by Zhang Daolin).
5. Document for (authorizing) the killing of ghosts (斬鬼公牒). It carries four talismans for protection against the ghosts.
 6. Authorization on military command (管兵公牒). This document authorizes the command of immortal soldiers from the nine prefectures, soldiers led by Tang, Ge and Zhou generals and the soldiers of demon kings of the three caverns. It covers heavenly soldiers and ghost soldiers.
 7. Authorization for destroying temples and shutting down altars by launching spiritual troops (行營公牒).
 8. Authorization for rituals related to land (地理公牒). This document authorizes the Taoist to build graves, houses, perform marriages and funeral rituals and to drive away malignant deities and ghosts that he may encounter in performing the rituals. Listed in the authorization document are a compass and a talisman for protection that suppresses nefarious forces.
 9. Document of sin forgiving and for getting military supplies (解由公牒). This document is to release the Taoist from all sins he has committed so that he can engage in his spiritual journey freely, passing through hell and heaven without hindrance. By the virtue of this document, the Taoist will be protected by four animals (Cerulean Dragon at the left, White Tiger at the right, Vermilion Bird in front and Black Tortoise at the back), a canopy above and attendants of the Immortals below. The Taoist would also be equipped by a palanquin, good horses and riders, an executioner, a sword, flags and a seal that will enable him to get any army provisions and grains for horses that he will need from the city gods of all provinces and prefectures.
 10. Document from the Southern Section (Bureau of Appointment 南曹公牒). This document appoints the Taoist first as the Controller-general of the Liu prefecture, and to be promoted to the Magistrate of the Hua prefecture and finally as the Army commander (統軍使) of 36 prefectures¹⁹.

19 The content and origin of the grouping of 36 prefectures is not clear. A similar idea is found in the Shanqing cosmology in which there is 36 heavens and correlated 36 cavern heavens. References are *Shanqing waiguo fanpin qingtong neiwen* (Inner transmission from the Azure Lad on distribution of foreign lands) (DZ 1373) and *Maojun neizhuan* (Esoteric biography of Lord Mao) cited in *Taiping yulan* 678.4b-5b. See Gil Raz "Taoist Sacred Geography" in John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi ed. *Early*

11. Document for Traveling to the underworld (起程公牒) when the Taoist dies. There is a statement in the document which states “Your disciple on earth now burns the incense and believes respectively that gods would wait for me after a hundred years when I die ...they would supervise to make sure that all transportation for reaching the underworld would be ready and that all bridges and roads would be opened. I would be protected by an auspicious cloud, a canopy above and with thousands of generals and ten of thousands of soldiers by my side on my way to the immortals’ abode with the company of the immortals’ attendants—the golden lad and the jade maiden....”
12. An official document appointing him as the Envoy for killing ghosts (勘合公牒). The Taoist is hereby conferred title as the ‘48 Military Continents of the East Route in the South of the River’ (江南東道四十八軍州內外行營斬鬼大使). This document also enables the Taoist to receive implements such as the seal, an ivory memorial tablet for imperial audience, a treasured sword, immortal clothing and a cap etc. Thirty strong soldiers with their military equipment and salary will also be provided.
13. Document of purification with a Talisman (護身破穢公牒). An official document for the protection of the Taoist against the pollution caused by raw meat (used as an offering in ritual) and birth-giving (that the Taoist may encounter) is given by bestowing a talisman.

These 13 documents are very similar to those used by Taoists in southern Taiwan (Tainan and Gaoxiong) studied by Maruyama Hiroshi²⁰. In fact, five out of the 13 documents from southern Taiwan and from southern Fujian (i.e. Yongfu) are identical (document no. 3, 5, 6, 10, 13). Taoism in Tainan belongs to the Lingbao tradition while that of Gaoxiong belongs to a branch of the Lüshan school called Sanyuan Lüshan. The common link with Lüshan may explain the similarity of the 13 documents in southern Taiwan and southern Fujian. It is, however, interesting to note here that the Yongfu

Chinese Religion, Part Two: the Period of Division (220-580 AD) (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp.1430-1431.

20 丸山宏 Maruyama, Hiroshi 〈道教傳度奏職儀式比較研究—以台灣南部的奏職文檢為中心〉 (“A Comparative Study in Taoist Transmission ritual” in Tam Wai Lun ed. 《中國地方宗教儀式論集》 (*Essays on Chinese Local Religious Rituals*) (Hong Kong: Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese University, Chung Chi College, CUHK), pp.637-658

tradition has tried to link itself with Zhang Daolin, the Celestial Master, and therefore with the Orthodox Unity School of Taoism. The term Yanping (the head Diocese of the 24 Dioceses of the Celestial masters) appears many times in the ritual manuscripts. This association with the Lüshan School probably reflects their desire to trace themselves back to the Orthodox Unity School, which became important after the Yuan dynasty, rather than a real connection with the school. The third day was concluded by sounding the night watches, the same as the second day.

The last day started with the invitation and offering of gods. Most Taoists from neighboring areas started to leave and the program was delayed by their request to take pictures. This indicates that the role of Taoist apprentices from surrounding areas ends here. They participate only in a small part of the transmission ritual, the major part of this ritual is for the host family, the Chen lineage. After the photo session, a reward ceremony for the spiritual troops was performed followed by pasting on the wall an announcement concerning rules for transmission (建旛傳度堂規). The announcement lists the program of the transmission ritual and the names of 18 villagers who are the sponsors of the ritual. The announcement advises:

1. Earth gods and gods of the door that they should clean their places and serve the high gods with tea and snacks as they arrive.
2. Local gods that they should open their roads and bridges and arrange necessary transportation on land and water with provisions for the army
3. Spiritual troops of the Taoist altar that they should have their weapons ready and waiting to be deployed.
4. Taoist witnesses to have all documents ready and warns them not to forge any
5. All onlookers that they should be modest and courteous
6. All sponsors that they should show respect to the gods and supply all incense and water needed for the ritual
7. All the sorceries and spiritual teachers that they should not disturb the ritual
8. All the evil ghosts not to invade to the ritual areas or they will be caught and killed without further warning.

The morning of the last day was ended by a ritual session called ‘the deployment of the teachings’ (出法). It is an action-filled ritual. The ritual implements of the Taoist apprentice were gathered together in a mat which was then drawn up and tied at the top. The ritual implements include a ritual

seal, a whip in the shape of a snake, a stone with talisman inscribed on it (to be put on the altar for guarding), an incense burner with incense and a candle burning on it. These were all put on a bucket full of rice known as a “bucket of soldiers”. It was after a long, rigorous, ritual dance that the implements of the Taoist-to-be were brought out to be consecrated on the altar. The afternoon started by a ritual performed by the apprentice from another place who arrived late. Most of the rest of the afternoon was spent on the flag platform with Chen and his son walking the Star Steps (*Bugang*) and on the preparation of talismans. The afternoon was concluded by a ritual of announcement of the transmission before the dinner break.

At dusk, a transmission ritual was performed on the outside altar surrounded by a red cloth. Only Taoists were allowed to go up the altar. Chen’s son was teased for fun by the senior Taoists by preventing him climbing up to the altar. He was eventually allowed to go on the presentation of red pockets to the senior Taoists. The main part of the ritual was the formal ritual ordination and investiture of the Taoist’s son as a Taoist with his father sitting in front accompanied by two senior witnesses sitting on both sides. The ritual venue was then moved back to the home of the Taoists. While at home, Chen’s son was supposed to receive a mouthful of rice and water spit from the mouth of his father in a ritual of transmission. Chen, however, decided to omit this part because of his son’s strong opposition. The tradition was therefore modified to suite the hygienic standard of the younger generation.

Transmission ritual in Wanzai

A Transmission ritual known as the ‘eye-opening’ ceremony 開光點精法事 in Wanzai took place in Zaomu village in 2006 when the 65 years old Taoist Yang Changxiang ordained his 35 year old son Yang Yongming as a Taoist. Yang belongs to an altar named Puzhao 普照 (meaning to illuminate everything) and his self-identification is such that he calls himself a ‘Buddhist’ Taoist. Yang traces back his lineage to a Chan master Bifeng (d.1372) of the Linji school of Chan Buddhism and he is the 25th generation according to a list of 48 lineage characters arranged in the form of a poem. If this is true, his ritual tradition could be traced back to late Song. Apart from the lineage poem, Yang, however, could only trace back his lineage to the 12 generations, the 12th patriarch of the lineage. This 12th patriarch was supposed to have started the Puzhao Altar. This means that Yang’s altar could only be traced back to the early Qing dynasty at most. As far as person’s name is

concerned, Yang could only give the following names of his master and grandmaster who had all passed away:

Xie Hegu → Luo Huiliang → Yang Changxiang²¹

Yang's master Luo Huiliang had 11 disciples and therefore was quite influential in the area of Zhutan town of Wanzai. Yang's altar is younger than the one in Yongfu and it is a Buddho-Taoist school of ritual, mixing the Buddhist Pu'an with the Taoist Lüshan. Yang explained that while most of his rituals were Buddhist, they would use Shamanism of Maoshan in healing sick children. In practicing Shamanism, they would use a horn and a copper knife to invite the four generals of Taoism (which Yang identifies as the Wang, Ma, Yin, Wen). His ritual tradition is clearly related to Lüshan. The 13 documents of transmission we found in Yongfu were not seen in Wanzai. Instead, a different set of seven documents were used in Yang's transmission ritual. The seven documents are:

1. Official Document for Inviting the gods to be delivered by the Generals (差三元五虎將軍請神牒)
2. Traveling papers from the court in Lüshan for Recruiting soldiers (閩山法院招兵關文)
3. Memorials for inviting higher gods on behalf of the faithful (眾信請神表文)
4. Notice to the Kitchen god to purify the food (東廚府君筭文)
5. Memorials of Repentance for causing disturbance to gods during rituals (鼓樂喧嚷謝罪文)
6. Petition for Blessings from the Buddha and Protector deities (乞佛庇佑表)
7. Petition of removing misfortunes by the Buddha and Protector deities (祈佛息災救病護國表)

There is no ordination and investiture of the Taoist as a ranked immortal official nor is there a provision of talismans or a register in the documents. The memorials for invitation of gods, for recruiting soldiers and petition for blessings seem to be used also in any communal sacrifice (*jiao*) and are not

21 See 楊永俊 Yang Yongjin 〈南泉普祖門下的客家香花和尚——江西萬載〉 (“The Hakka Incense and flower monks under Pu'an in Wanzai, Jiangxi”) in TAM Wai Lun ed. 《民間佛教研究》 (A Study on Popular Buddhism) (Beijing: Zonghua shuju, 2007), pp.177-178

exclusive documents for the transmission ritual. Two out of the seven documents we collected were addressed to the Buddha, indicating the strong Buddhist identity of the ritual specialists. When we read the content of the documents we found that in five of the documents, the ritual specialist stated that he had learnt the method from his father, Yang Faxiang, on Confucian, Buddhist and Taoist traditions (從父師楊法祥門下習學儒釋道教法). Despite his strong sense of Buddhist identity, in the program of the transmission ritual below, we were struck by the fact that 11 out of 17 set of rituals performed during the ordination of Yang's son has to do with the Lüshan school:

1. Invitation of masters (2:20 – 2:52 pm)
2. Announcement (3:10 – 3:56 pm)
3. Worship of Buddha (4:05 – 4:37 pm)
4. Welcoming of Gods (4:45 – 5:04 pm)
5. Presentation of Memorials (5:37– 6:00 pm)
- Dinner break -----
6. Walking the Steps of the Stars (7:30 – 8:07 pm)
7. Summoning of Generals and Launching of Troops (8:24 – 8:30 pm)
- ~~~ Break ~~~
- Continuing summon of Generals and Launching of Troops (9:44 –10:00 pm)
8. Pay and Provisions for soldiers (10:15 – 10:26 pm)
9. Recruiting soldiers (10:42 – 10:56 pm)
10. Military parade (11:03 – 11:10 pm)
11. Inspecting the troops (11:17 –11:25 pm)
12. Presenting Documents (11:33 – 12:06 pm)
13. Consecration of the ritual paintings (12:30 –1:15 am)
14. Reporting to Patriarchs (1:50 –2:18 am)
15. Divination (2:55 – 3:05 am)
16. Establishing 36 religious territories and setting up the altar (3:05-3:38 am)
17. Sending off the Patriarchs (3:38 am -)

In the program of the transmission ritual above, program 5, the presentation of memorial was done on behalf of all the sponsors of the transmission ritual. It states that the Taoist has established an altar of incense primarily for the consecration of the ritual paintings and secondly for the well being of the families of all sponsors (立雷壇香火諸神開光點精次祈樂助人

等各家清泰). This shows that the transmission ritual is not only for the Taoist-to-be but also for the villagers who sponsored this ritual. Programs 6 through 17 are all action-filled rituals in which the Taoist had to dance with his horn and knife in hand. The fact that Taoists are able to memorize all the ritual procedure without the help of any ritual manuscript leaves us with no manuscript for analysis. Wanzai is close to Cihua town (about 50 km away) where the monastery of Pu'an (1115-1169) is located. The proximity of Wanzai to Pu'an's monastery has important implication for the configuration of its local ritual system. Although not using the term 'teaching of Pu'an' (*Pu'an jiao*) as in the case of northwest Fujian, Pu'an does play an important role in the local ritual system of Wanzai. The Taoists of Wanzai understand themselves as 'married' monks, sometimes called 'secular' monks (俗僧) but insist that they are Buddho-Taoist. Despite their strong identity of being a monk, 68.7% of their transmission ritual has to do with Lüshan.

Unlike Yongfu, Yang in Wanzai had ten other Taoists, coming from the surrounding area and they took turns to perform the ritual for him. The transmission ritual started at two o'clock in the afternoon with an 'audience tablet' (similar to the memorial tablet held during imperial audience) holding in the Taoist's hand. This tablet had a head of Pu'an at the top as decoration indicating the association of the ritual performing with Pu'an. The memorials submitted in the ritual (program 2 and 5) were known as Buddhist memorial 佛表 and the Taoist called himself a śramaṇa (沙門) or monk in the memorial. Everything changed, however, after the dinner break. Taking off their Buddhist ritual clothing, the Wanzai Taoists picked up their Lüshan horn and knife throughout the rest of the night. Half of the program after dinner had to do with the spiritual troops, be it launching, paying, recruiting or dispatching the soldiers. The memorials presented at night related to the spiritual troops were addressed to Lüshan court (閩山法院). When asked why as a monk, the major ritual methods transmitted were those of Lüshan school of Taoism, Yang replied that they were Buddho-Taoist and that the ritual method of Pu'an Buddhism, mainly consisted of chanting and reciting scriptures, were comparatively easy to learn. It was Lüshan rituals that needed a lot of effort and attention in transmission. The gist of Lüshan ritual in the Buddho-Taoist tradition in Wanzai matches with those in Yongfu, namely on the spiritual troops. The last two programs of the transmission ritual, namely Divination and Establishing 36 religious territories, are significant. For divination, Yang and two other senior Taoists serving as witnesses sat on the altar table, while his son knelt down on the floor. With one foot stepping on the incense burner, Yang threw the divination blocks three times to the ground. The divination blocks consisted of a pair of

semicircular wooden blocks with one flat and one convex surface. When thrown to the ground, there would be three possibilities. One flat side and one convex side means ‘sacred’. Two flat sides mean ‘Yang’ and two convex sides mean ‘Yin’. We were told that when inviting masters in the future, Yang’s son should try until he gets the same sequence of results from the divination blocks (Sacred-Yin-Yin in this case) as he got during his transmission ritual. This would confirm that masters of the lineage had arrived and the ritual that the Taoist performed would, therefore, be effective. This procedure highlights the role of patriarchs in the performance of a ritual by the Taoist. Establishing 36 religious territories was the other crucial procedure in transmission ritual. It was already three o’clock in the morning when Yang and his son performed this ritual. Although it was raining, Yang and his son and all the participants had to go out from his house to 36 places around the village to offer incense. Apparently there were no fixed rules on where Yang should go for the 36 places. The idea was to deploy his spiritual troops to 36 places around the village to defend the village as well as to wait to be summoned by the Taoist. They were the troops the Taoist had recruited and paid earlier in the transmission ritual (procedure 7 through 11).

Concluding remarks

The faithful of the Celestial Master movement admitted to live in one of the 24 or more dioceses formed by the movement were called by the standard histories ‘ghost troops’ (鬼卒).²² When the reformer of the Celestial Master movement, Kou qianzhi (365–448), received a new revelation from Laozi, four new titles were also conferred upon him, and one of them was known as the ‘master of ghost’ (鬼師)²³. The control of ghosts seems to be an important concern of the Taoist tradition. The early text *Zhengyi fawen jingzhang guanpin* 《正一法文經章官品》 of the Celestial master movement also gives a whole list of ghosts to be subdued, so does another early Taoist text composed probably during the Six Dynasties called *Taishang zhengyi zhouguijing* 《太上正一咒鬼經》²⁴. Until today, the Taoists of the minority

22 Lü Pengzhi, “Daoist Rituals” in John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi ed. *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: the Period of Division (220-580 AD)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp.1255.

23 The other three titles were 太真太寶九州真師、治民師 and 繼天師. See 鄭素春 Zeng Suchun 《道教信仰、神仙與儀式》(*The Faith, Immortal and Ritual in Taoism*) (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2002), pp. 186.

24 *Zhengyi fawen jingzhang guanpin*, Daozang 1218 (DZ according to Concordance to the Daoist Canon by 陳耀庭 Chen Yaoting 《五種版本道藏通檢》(*Concordance on*

group Yao, Miao, She are still known as the ‘master of ghosts’ (鬼師). Our study of the two transmission rituals of the Lüshan school confirms that the ritual method consciously transmitted from master to disciple centered on the spiritual troops. It consists mainly of launching, paying, recruiting or dispatching the spiritual troops. The spiritual troops of the Taoist were formed by fierce and unrestrained spiritual forces turned into troops of the Lüshan school to be led by generals and commanders. In Wanzai, the Lüshan ritual was integrated with the Buddhist Pu’an ritual²⁵ to form a local ritual system. In both Yongfu and Wanzai, the Transmission ritual is not meant for the Taoist only. The whole community participated, shared the merit and the cost of the ritual. The efficacy of the Lüshan ritual hinges upon the empowerment from the patriarchs of the lineage, known as masters (shi 師). That is why the Taoist has to make sure his deceased masters have arrived at the altar in the beginning of any ritual which is confirmed by a throwing of divination blocks. Deceased master is another form of ghosts. Lüshan Taoists are truly masters of ghosts.

five versions of the Taoist Canon (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubianshe, 1996); *Taishang zhengyi zhongui jing*, DZ1193

25 For a study of the Pu’an ritual see Tam Wai Lun ed. 《民間佛教研究》(*A Study on Popular Buddhism*) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuji, 2007) , pp.205-243.