Daoist on Top or Host on Top?: The Relationship between the Daoist Liturgical Framework and Local Cults in the *Jiao* 醮

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Abstract

Communal religious festivals (e.g., temple festivals, the *jiao* 醮) are best seen as a form of hosting (all kinds of spirits and humans). One of the useful applications of hosting as a cultural form is to help resolve a debate that arose in the study of the role of Daoist liturgy in communal religious festivals. Scholars who have studied communal festivals in southeastern China (Fujian and Taiwan) proposed that Daoist priests and their liturgical framework play a dominant role in structuring the entire festival. They argue that local deities and the sponsoring community itself are put in a subordinate position by the Daoist priests and the Daoist high gods they invite to the scene. Hymes has teasingly called this perspective the "Daoist-on-top" perspective (i.e., from the Daoist priests' lofty perspective); meanwhile, he proposed an alternative "Daoist alongside" interpretation. In this article I argue that since the Daoist liturgies are framed within the larger hosting structure, with the local deity and community as hosts, *the hosts are on top*.

Keywords: hosting, cultural form, *jiao* 醮, local cults, Daoist priests, Daoist liturgies, Daoist liturgical framework, temple festivals, communal exorcisms

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Introduction: The Hosting Form in Chinese Religious Life

In this article I attempt to examine Chinese religious life (primarily popular/communal/local religion and liturgical Daoism,[1] i.e., the use of Daoist rituals in communal festivals) through the lens of hosting. Broadly speaking, I try to argue that a significant amount of the attraction of Chinese religious activities for the Chinese derives from their *employing the cultural form of hosting in enframing ritual actions*.[2] More specifically, I argue that the hosting form is a useful interpretive model for understanding the relationship between the Daoist liturgical framework and local cults, thus resolving a long-standing disagreement in the field.[3]

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1 Scholars of Daoism distinguish three aspects of the Daoist tradition: 1) philosophical (e.g., What is Dao? The teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi), which is often taught in philosophy or religious studies departments as examples of "Oriental Thought"; 2) self-cultivational (e.g., trying to attain "immortalhood" [note: not physical immortality] through various techniques); and 3) liturgical (e.g., performing funeral rituals or communal exorcisms, especially by householder Daoist priests of the Zhengyi Heavenly Master Order).

2 I am working on a book manuscript elaborating upon this argument: Adam Yuet Chau, *The Sovereign Host: China, Ritual, Theory*.

3 On the Daoist liturgical framework and various responses to its conception, see Kenneth Dean, *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion, and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Kenneth Dean, "Alternative Approaches to Chinese Ritual on Robert Hymes' *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion, and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China*," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 31 (2003): 151–66; Zhang Chaoran 張超然, "Zhuanjiao chou'en: jindai daojiao wei minjian xinyang suo tigong de yishi fuwu" 專醮酧恩：近代道教爲民間信仰所提供的儀式服務, in *Jingdian, yishi yu minjian xinyang* 經典、儀式與民間信仰, ed. Hou Chong 侯沖 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2018), 259–93. In this article, local cults refer to the social organization of worship around a deity or a set of deities (usually with one main deity) within a particular locale with a particular body of historically transmitted divine lore (stories about the origins of the deities, miracles, etc.) and social practices (temple festivals, pilgrimages, relationships with other local cults, etc.) (see Adam Yuet Chau, "Ritual *Terroir*: The Generation of Site-Specific Vitality," *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions*, forthcoming). For a more elaborate treatment of hosting as a cultural form, see Adam Yuet Chau, "Hosting as a Cultural Form," *L'Homme* 231-232 (2019): 41–66.

This article is divided into several sections. The first section introduces "hosting" as an analytical concept based on Chinese sociocultural practices. The second section examines the hosting form in terms of "moral-economic event production." The third section highlights hosting as an expression of sovereignty, whether of the household (e.g., a funeral) or the community (e.g., a temple festival). I introduce the concept of "household sovereignty" in this section. These three sections are important contextualizing sections, underscoring the enframing function of the hosting form in key domains of Chinese sociocultural life.

The next three sections relate to the central arguments of this article. The fourth section looks at how the hosting form is transposed onto Chinese religious life, as households and communities host deities, on domestic altars and during temple festivals. The fifth section presents the curious phenomenon of deities hosting one another during temple festivals, using the Mazu 媽祖 pilgrimage network in Taiwan as an illustration. The sixth section makes the core argument of this article, suggesting that we can better understand the relationship between the Daoist liturgical framework and local cults through the lens of the hosting form. The last two sections are concluding sections. The seventh section puts the Chinese hosting form in a comparative perspective, foregrounding the analytical potency of the concept due to the widespread deployment of the hosting form in many societies, especially in Asia. The eighth and last section explores the implications of the prevalence of the hosting form and this form of orthopraxy in Chinese religious practices.

The Hosting Form and "Categories of Thought"

I am proposing "hosting" as an analytical concept. It is based on the Chinese cultural practice of inviting, banqueting, and then sending off guests on important occasions. The prototypical case is the way a household hosts guests during a wedding or a funeral. In the religious realm, the prototypical case is the temple festival, in which the local deity is hosted, but at the same time he or she acts as a host, with the help

of the temple community, in relation to visiting deities and people from other cult communities. The Chinese, or at least those who have been properly socialized, are consummate hosts. However, even though there are a lot of protocols as well as barely articulated rules regarding how to host, the Chinese have not theorized about hosting systematically. Similarly, even though there is a rich vocabulary used in the practice of hosting (e.g., words such as inviting, banqueting, sending off, etc.), the act of hosting itself does not have an umbrella term other than the prosaic "inviting guests" (*qingke* 請客) or "being hospitable" (*kuandai* 款待). Using the word "host" / "master" (*zhu* 主), I have constructed a neologism for the purpose of characterizing all occasions of hosting: hosting (note: not hospitality), which can be rendered into a Chinese neologism *zuozhu* 做主 (which differs in meaning from the usual Chinese usage, which is "deciding on behalf of someone else, usually a social junior/inferior").

When studying Chinese religious life scholars necessarily are drawn to examining various indigenous as well as imported categories of thought. I understand "categories of thought" as comprising the following multitudinous intersecting dimensions:

1. Interested, practitioners' and doers', perspectives (the so-called emic perspectives, which may or may not be self-reflexive)[4]
   1a. What categories have the Chinese (traditional or modern, elite or commoners, specialists or lay) used in *doing religion*?[5]
   1b. What categories have the Chinese (traditional or modern, elite or commoner) used in understanding their own religious life?
   1c. What categories have traditional and modern religious elites and specialists

4 I see practitioners are people who regularly engage in religious practices, especially of the personal-cultivational kind, whereas doers can include those who only engage in religious or ritual activities when the need arises.

5 On "doing religion," see Adam Yuet Chau, "Modalities of Doing Religion," in *Chinese Religious Life*, ed. David A. Palmer, Glenn Shive, and Philip Wickeri (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 67–84; Adam Yuet Chau, *Religion in China: Ties That Bind* (Cambridge: Polity, 2019).

used in understanding Chinese religious life (including practices in religious traditions that are not one's own)?

1d. What categories have Western spritual seekers (e.g., New Agers) used in understanding Chinese religious traditions as a fount for creative appropriation (e.g., "Spirituality," "Taoism (Daoism)," Zen (*Chan* 禪), "yin and yang" 陰陽, *taiji* 太極, *fengshui* 風水, Buddha statues, *qigong* 氣功, "body, mind, spirit")?

1e. What categories have Western missionaries used in understanding Chinese religious life?

2. Disinterested (at least supposedly), analytical perspectives (the so-called etic perspectives, though more often than not they are hopelessly entangled with Euro-American and historically contingent emic categories)

2a. What categories have early modern Western intellectuals (e.g., Enlightenment philosophers, philologists, "Orientalists," sinologists, comparativists) used in understanding Chinese religious life?

2b. What categories have scholars (in religious studies, anthropology, sociology, history, literary studies, etc.) used in studying Chinese religious life?

Of course there must have been religious experiences and ways of doing religion that have somehow escaped discourse. As scholars who are interested in understanding Chinese religious life, we should attend to all these different dimensions of analytical, conceptual, practical, and experiential categories and see how each dimension is influenced by, and in turn influences, other dimensions, and how each category affords as well as hinders a better understanding of Chinese religious life.

The key Chinese term denoting the host is *zhu* 主. It also means master, boss, chief (adj.), etc. A wide range of Chinese terms reflects the importance of the host/master status: *zhuren* 主人 (the master of the household), *shenzhupai* 神主(牌) (spirit tablets of deities or ancestors), *tizhu* 題主 (dotting the spirit tablet), *junzhu* 君主 (the sovereign, the king, the emperor), *ruzhu zhongyuan* 入主中原 (assuming sovereignty and control over the Central Plains, i.e., China proper), *zhuquan* 主權

(sovereignty), *zhuqi* 主器 (eldest son of the emperor who is in charge of the ancestral worship vessels), *zhujia* 主家 (the host household), *zuozhu* (deciding on behalf of a junior person), *dizhu* 地主 (traditionally not meaning "landlord" but "host"), *yijia zhizhu* 一家之主 (the head of the household), *dongdaozhu* 東道主 (the host, the one paying for the meal/banquet), *zhurengong/weng* 主人公/翁 (traditionally the same as *zhuren*, master of the household), *zhuxi* 主席 (traditionally not meaning "chairman" but "banquet master"), and *luzhu* 爐主 (the rotating yearly host of the incense pot in Minnan communal religious culture).[6] Unlike the more intellectualized discursive categories such as "religion," "ritual," "ancestor worship," "belief," "liturgy," "worship," *li* 禮, or *ji* 祭, the hosting form I discuss in this article barely belongs to group 1a listed above, i.e., a cultural form the Chinese use to *do religion*; I say "barely" because the Chinese, to my limited knowledge, seem to have so taken this cultural form for granted that they have not theorized about it in any elaborate way (not even the Neo-Confucians!).[7] Through embodying the roles of hosts and guests on countless social occasions (religious and non-religious), most Chinese act out the hosting form without conscious reflection on it; the form becomes part of their "habitus."[8]

Hosting as Moral-Economic Event Production[9]

Hosting is the delineation of a time-space for one or more social actors to welcome, feed, and entertain one or several other social actors (these actors can be deities and spirits). The host and the guest are both social roles that are enacted on occasions of hosting, and the individuals involved can switch roles, as the guest in one hosting

6 See Stephan Feuchtwang, *Popular Religion in China: The Imperial Metaphor* (London: Routledge, 2001).

7 Even if ritual manuals from early China onward have always featured the prescribed positions, orientations, and actions of "host" and "guest" prominently.

8 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

9 I first developed some of these ideas in Adam Yuet Chau, "Hosting Funerals and Temple Festivals: Folk Event Productions in Contemporary Rural China," *Asian Anthropology* 3 (2004): 39–70.

event becomes a host in another. The hosting event usually takes place at the host's home base, be it home, village, city, or nation (usually metonymically represented by the national capital). Spatially speaking, the host does not move whereas the guest travels to where the hosting takes place. The guest is invited to travel to the hosting venue. Indeed, the very act of traveling renders a social actor into a guest who is in need of hosting. The labor and trouble of traveling (traversing long distances, possibly over difficult topographies, and frequently encountering unsavory strangers) is usually built into the understanding of host-guest relations; the harder and more distant the travel, the higher the demand upon the host to treat the guest well.

In terms of the timing of hosting events, there are culturally prescribed calendrical times for hosting (e.g., Lunar New Year, temple festivals), key life-course moments (e.g., weddings, funerals, a baby's full month), and other special occasions (e.g., promotions, house-warmings). Though a hosting event is not quite a rite of passage in the van Gennep sense, it is an organized social event that is laden with material and symbolic significance.

Hosting is at its core a moral-economic event production and a form of sociality.[10] Hosting is a moral event production because a recognition and acknowledgment of social worth is communicated between, and co-produced by host and guest, and the hosting event always entails morally inflected judgments of all the details of the whole event (behavior, utterances, gestures, level of courtesy, politeness and generosity, etc.). By being host, a social actor or a group of social

10 For an exposition on the concept of event production see Chau, "Hosting Funerals and Temple Festivals"; Adam Yuet Chau, "Efficacy, not Confessionality: Ritual Polytropy at Chinese Funerals," in *Sharing the Sacra: The Politics and Pragmatics of Inter-Communal Relations around Holy Places*, ed. Glenn Bowmann (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012), 79–96. An event is commonly understood as a one-time occurrence and it usually "happens" rather than being consciously produced (e.g., the death of Derrida), whereas an event production is a socially produced occasion that follows certain conventional, culturally sanctioned patterns and forms (e.g., Derrida's funeral). I define sociality as social co-presence. It is more fundamental than sociability, which presumes an amicable or friendly atmosphere that might or might not occur in all situations of social co-presence.

actors is putting his/her/their status and reputation on the line. A well-hosted event production maintains or augments the host's status and reputation, while a badly-hosted event production can drastically drain the host's store of social-relational goodwill and affect his/her/their social standing.

Hosting is arguably the most important social activity for Shaanbei peasants (and probably most Chinese peasants).[11] There are two broad kinds of hosting activities. The first kind is the more mundane, small-scale hosting of a few friends, neighbors, or relatives visiting one's home. These minor hosting occasions are numerous and recurrent, and they are crucial to the maintaining of social relations (*guanxi* 關係) and long-term sentimental attachments (*ganqing* 感情).[12]

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11 Shaanbei (northern Shaanxi Province in northcentral China) has been my main fieldsite since the mid-1990s (for an ethnographic study on this region see Adam Yuet Chau, *Miraculous Response: Doing Popular Religion in Contemporary China* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006]). Note that I am speaking of hosting in terms of receiving guests who are known and familiar to the host. This concept of hosting is related to, but very different from what is commonly understood as "hospitality" (receiving and being kind to mostly strangers). For example, see Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality," in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Jacques Derrida and with an introduction by Gil Anidjar (London: Routledge, 2002), 358–420; Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Mireille Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Andrew Shryock, "The New Jordanian Hospitality: House, Host, and Guest in the Culture of Public Display," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, no. 1 (2004): 35–62; Andrew Shryock, "Thinking about Hospitality, with Derrida, Kant, and the Balga Bedouin," *Anthropos* 103 no. 2 (2008): 405–21; Caroline Humphrey, "Hospitality and Tone: Holding Patterns for Strangeness in Rural Mongolia," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18 (Supplement 1) (2012): 63–75; Matei Candea and Giovanni da Col, eds., "The Return to Hospitality: Strangers, Guests, and Ambiguous Encounters," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18 (Supplement 1) (2012); Matei Candea and Giovanni da Col, "The Return to Hospitality," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18 (Supplement 1) (2012): 1–19; Giovanni da Col, "The H-Factor of Anthropology: Hoarding, Hosting, Hospitality," *L'Homme* 231-232 (2019): 13–40; Adam Yuet Chau and Giovanni da Col, eds., "Cumulus: Hoarding, Hosting and Hospitality," *L'Homme* 231-232 (2019).

12 See Andrew Kipnis, *Producing Guanxi: Sentiment, Self, and Subculture in a North China Village* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

The second kind of hosting is the few occasions of highly significant household events (in descending order of significance): funerals for parents (*mai laoren* 埋老人, literally "burying old people," *lao* in Shaanbei dialect also meaning "to die"), weddings for sons (*yin xifu* 引媳婦, literally "bringing in the daughter-in-law"), and weddings for daughters (*jia nüzi* 嫁女子, literally "marrying off the daughter").[13] These occasions are far more important because they are traditionally assigned ritual significance. They are "moments of consequence."[14] Both funerals and weddings have procedures and values theorized by Confucian literati thinkers in the past, and following the right procedures has been an important marker of a Han Chinese identity.[15] James Watson has called this "doing it right" cultural imperative "orthopraxy,"[16] in contradistinction to the relative unimportance of knowing and believing the actual references of particular ritual symbols and procedures (i.e., orthodoxy). Building upon Watson's insight, I suggest that there are actually two aspects of a household event production that the host household has to "do it right": the *ritual-procedural* or *liturgical* (Watson's emphasis) and the *hosting* or *guest-catering* (my focus in an earlier work[17] and in this article).

I argue that the concept of *hosting* is useful in highlighting some of the hitherto neglected elements of event productions due to the overemphasis on the ritual-procedural aspect. Introducing the concept of event production is also crucial

13 The big wedding banquet is hosted by the groom's family in his village. The marrying off of a daughter typically involves a relatively small banquet and ceremony compared to the other two types of major hosting occasions. In fact, traditionally there was hardly any ceremony at all for marrying off a daughter. There are also hosting occasions that lie somewhere in between the minor and major kinds: the first-month celebration of a child, feasting for the helpers and laborers after finishing constructing a house, etc.

14 Anne Meneley, *Tournaments of Value: Sociability and Hierarchy in a Yemeni Town* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

15 James L. Watson, "The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites: Elementary Forms, Ritual Sequence, and the Primacy of Performance," in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, ed. J. L. Watson and E. S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 3–19.

16 Ibid.

17 Chau, "Hosting Funerals and Temple Festivals."

because it allows us to think outside the conventional ritual box and enables us to see beyond ritual procedures and symbolisms and identifying the importance of the hosting aspect of event productions. Redirecting our analytical gaze away from ritual procedure to hosting has important theoretical implications: it complements the traditional anthropological search for meanings behind symbols and symbolic actions with a search for *the cultural basis (cultural logic) of social intercourse and cultural performance*.

Hosting important household events such as weddings and funerals is scripted into every peasant's life. But how is a Shaanbei peasant's life scripted? In other words, what is the culturally ideal path for a peasant to pass from birth to childhood, through adulthood, and to death, and what are life's obligations? The answer is obviously different for men and women because of the persistent patrilineal ideologies and patrilocal marriage practices. Simply put, ideally, a peasant man should get married, have sons (at least one son, and maybe some daughters, too), bury his parents properly, get wives for his sons, and marry off his daughters to good families. A woman, on the other hand, should be a good daughter before marriage, and be a good and helpful wife after marriage and assist her husband in fulfilling the above-mentioned life obligations. She is equally implicated in the successes and failures of these household events as the wife of the head of household. A man's (and his wife's) status within the community gradually increases as he fulfills these obligations one by one, and his sense of his identity also consolidates over time. A man and his wife will not feel fulfilled and accomplished until they have buried both of the man's parents,[18] gotten wives for all their sons, and married off all their daughters.[19]

Each of these moments entails hosting an event production: a funeral or a

18 The deaths of the wife's parents are not major events in the household as it is the wife's brothers' responsibility to bury their parents at one of their homes.

19 When there are multiple sons, all of the sons assume responsibility in sponsoring the funerals for their parents. However, the eldest son typically is the chief host, and the funeral event production usually takes place in his courtyard.

wedding. In Shaanbei to stage a wedding or a funeral is called "doing an event" (*banshir* 辦事兒). The household that is hosting the event is called "the host household" (*zhujia* 主家). In "doing an event" the host household is fulfilling a *ritual* obligation as well as a *social* obligation. The traditional ritual procedures for a funeral or a wedding have to be followed. Yet equally important, these are also occasions where the host household has to engage in largely prescribed social interactions with many guests who come to the events to pay respect to the deceased or to congratulate the newly wed. The *zhujia* has to host and hold a feast for the guests well. Successfully hosting these major household event productions most importantly constitutes the personhood and identity of the head of household and by extension establishes and confirms the standing and "sovereignty" (more on this in the next section) of the household in the community.

In the "local moral world,"[20] reputation is a "symbolic capital" that can translate into various other kinds of capital (e.g., social, economic, political, cultural).[21] In Shaanbei, for example, people speak of a reputable household or village as "worthy of social relations" (*you renqi* 有人氣, literally "having human/people *qi*") and a disreputable household or village as "not worthy of social relations" (*mei renqi* 沒人氣).[22] The difference between a reputable household and a disreputable household can translate into serious consequences of various sorts, e.g., good brides coming into the former and no brides for the latter, which in turn translates into a full social life and the continuation of one's genealogical "line" for the former and the extreme social suffering of not "fulfilling" (*chengjiu* 成就, i.e., to get one's son to set up his own household) one's life obligations as well as having one's genealogical line cut off. Social repute of course depends on many things, but an acknowledged history

20 Arthur Kleinman, *Writing at the Margin: Discourse Between Anthropology and Medicine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

21 See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

22 Note the same characters in Japanese (*ninki* 人気) mean popularity. The common Chinese "having a renowned name" (*you mingqi* 有名氣) is related to the Shaanbei concept of *you renqi*.

of hosting well is fundamental to good social regard. On the household level, one can inherit *renqi* from one's parents, though to a limited extent. Most of one's *renqi* is *achieved* through hard work after one sets up one's own household. On the other hand, low *renqi* of one generation can indeed affect the life chances of those of the next generation; therefore, not being a good host is almost considered a "social crime" or "familial demerit" transmittable to one's descendants. A bad name sticks.

Hosting as an Expression of Sovereignty

On key hosting occasions such as funerals and weddings, the "sovereignty" of the host household is the most manifest and celebrated. The household courtyard, during the course of the hosting occasion, is transformed into a kingdom and the head of the household its sovereign. I use the concept of sovereignty to evoke the conceptually analogous connections between the household and the state. My desk dictionary (*Chambers 20th Century Dictionary*) defines sovereignty as "pre-eminence; supreme and independent power; the territory of a sovereign or of a sovereign state." For the state, its "pre-eminence" is most eminent in *stately* state rituals. In late imperial China, two such rituals stood out: the imperial Grand Sacrifice and the imperial guest ritual, analyzed respectively by Angela Zito[23] and James Hevia.[24] Hosting is a prominent structuring and enframing form in both kinds of rituals.

The Grand Sacrifice fashioned the imperium through constructing and ritually

23 Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifice as Text/Performance in Eighteenth-Century China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

24 James L. Hevia, "Sovereignty and Subject: Constituting Relations of Power in Qing Guest Ritual," in *Body, Subject and Power in China*, ed. Angela Zito and Tani E. Barlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 181–200; James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995); James L. Hevia, "Imperial Guest Ritual," in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 471–87.

affirming the emperor as supreme host and lord of the realm.[25] The emperor "centered" the entire imperium onto his person as he served as the literal *point* of contact and channeling between the worldly imperium and the blessing-endowing parallel universes of imperial ancestors, Heaven, and Earth. The entire event production took days of preparation, mobilized thousands of people (officials, [w-]ritual specialists,[26] ritual attendants, musicians and dancers, cooks and kitchen helpers, not to mention ingredient procurers, servants, maids, palanquin bearers, etc.), used a staggering number of material objects (tables and chairs, flags and banners, robes and caps, palanquins, utensils, ritual vessels, all kinds of sacrificial offerings, not to mention the Temple of Heaven itself), and involved intricately choreographed ritual moves. The emperor was the chief host, and the imperial ancestors and Heaven were his guests. As a matter of fact, in ancient China these offering rituals to imperial ancestors and higher beings were collectively called *bin* 賓, i.e., hosting.[27]

While the Grand Sacrifice staged a sovereignty-affirming ritual primarily for an implied audience *internal* to the imperium (including the emperor himself, the officials, and the common people), the imperial Guest Ritual on the other hand aimed at an implied audience primarily *external* to the imperium: other "sovereigns" and their subjects.[28] In hosting foreign guests, the notions of sovereign territory (i.e., the space of the host) and its boundary came to the fore. The representatives of foreign sovereigns (i.e., foreign tribute envoys) were received by the host literally the

25 Zito, *Of Body and Brush*, 26–30.

26 This formulation ("[w-]ritual") is based on Zito's play on the homophonic resonance between "rite" and "write" in highlighting the crucial role writing (in the form of ritual texts) played in prescribing imperial ritual performance.

27 Terry F. Kleeman 祁泰履, "You jisi kan Zhongguo zongjiao de fenlei" 由祭祀看中國宗教的分類, in *Yishi, miaohui yu shequ: daojiao, minjian xinyang yu minjian wenhua* 儀式、廟會與社區：道教、民間信仰與民間文化, ed. Lee Fong-mao 李豐楙 and Chu Ron-guey 朱榮貴(Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo choubeichu, 1996), 548.

28 The hosting form was even more heightened because in these situations, hospitality (i.e., what I have defined as the hosting of strangers) became an issue as well.

moment they stepped off their boat (or horse?) and were housed, wined and dined, granted an audience with the emperor, "cherished" with soothing words, and given elaborate gifts until they were seen off.[29] Unlike the modern Party-state leaders, in dynastic China the emperor did not visit other states; the Son of Heaven stayed immobile vis-à-vis the sovereigns of other states, all considered lowly of course.[30] But despite the fact that these other states were considered as lowly "tributary states," the emperor and "China" still needed their regular "tribute visits" to affirm the realness of sovereignhood[31] (of the emperor), sovereignty (of the Chinese empire), and "centeredness" (of Chinese civilization). In a world with a "multitude of lords," "all others [other domains] ought to position themselves with respect to it [i.e., the "central domain"]."[32] In exchange for such continual recognition, the emperor always gave more than he received, as he "cherished" these men from afar.

The prescribed ways in which these important foreign visitors were to be received were codified in each dynasty's ritual compendium as one of the five categories of rites: (imperial) "guest ritual" (*binli* 賓禮).[33] To translate *binli* as "guest ritual" only partially conveys the sense of the rites collected therein. *Binli* did not merely prescribe how the guests should behave once they landed on Chinese soil. More importantly, *binli* prescribed how *the host* should behave in relation to the guests, enframing the guests within the hosting structure. Indeed, the *bin* in *binli* most likely refers to the verb "to host" more than the noun "the guest." Therefore,

29 Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*; Hevia, "Imperial Guest Ritual."

30 For a discussion of the "immobile center" as a political principle in pre-modern Bali, see Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). For more on the emperor and the Christian God as "absolute hosts," see Adam Yuet Chau, "The Absolute Host: When the Host was the Emperor or God" (presentation, "Cumulus: Hoarding, Hosting and Hospitality," Centre for Ethnographic Theory, SOAS, and St. John's College, Cambridge, June 28–30, 2017).

31 "Sovereignhood" is different from "sovereinty." The former refers to the "status/state of being a sovereign," whereas the latter refers to the polity.

32 Hevia, "Imperial Guest Ritual," 474.

33 The other four being "auspicious rites" (*jili* 吉禮), "felicitous rites" (*jiali* 嘉禮), "martial rites" (*junli* 軍禮), and "funerary rites" (*xiongli* 凶禮) (Hevia, "Imperial Guest Ritual," 471).

binli might be more accurately translated as host/hosting ritual, guest-receiving ritual, reception ritual, or hosting/reception protocols.

The general superior symbolic position of the host vis-à-vis the guest can be expressed in the following list of contrasting qualities:

host : guests
active : passive
mobilizer : mobilized
inside : outside
center(ed) : periphery
one : many
giver : receiver
provider/feeder : consumer/fed
yang : yin
superior : inferior

Peasant household event productions such as funerals and weddings are essentially "host/guest rituals." They fashion the *zhujia* (the host household) as a sovereign social unit and the head of the household as the *zhu* (the sovereign or master) of this unit. The host household exudes "pre-eminence" over and above other households. Even though the guests have to be well-treated and respected, it is the *zhujia* that accrues recognition, social prestige, "face," and symbolic capital by being the host.[34] For the brief period of the event production (two to three days), it is as if the whole world revolves around the courtyard of the *zhujia*. The *red-hot sociality* (*honghuo* 紅火 in Shaanbei dialect, *renao* 熱鬧 in Mandarin, *lau-jiat* 鬧熱 in Minnan)[35] produced by the convergence of so many people, noisy firecrackers and

34 Sherry B. Ortner writes about the use of aggressive hosting among the Sherpas: because the host (giver of food and drinks) is morally superior, he or she can ask favors of the guest, who becomes indebted as they receive food and drinks from the host. See Sherry B. Ortner, *Sherpas Through Their Rituals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

35 For more detailed interpretations of red-hot sociality, see Adam Yuet Chau, "The Sensorial Production of the Social," *Ethnos* 73, no. 4 (2008): 485–504; Adam Yuet Chau, "Actants Amassing (AA)," in *Sociality: New Directions*, ed. Nicholas J. Long and Henrietta L. Moore

music, steamy dishes, colorful (even if mournful) decorations, and loud banqueting makes the *zhujia*'s house unquestionably pre-eminent.

I believe a great part of the Chinese peasants' "social suffering"[36] during the Maoist commune period came from their inability to host important household event productions. Even though the Communist Revolution and the Land Reform enabled a huge number of heretofore poor peasant men to get wives and form their own (sovereign) families, the irony is that the Party in turn prohibited them from asserting this newly-gained sovereignty through hosting funerals and weddings (because, the Party said, it was too wasteful and the rituals were superstitious nonsense). Even though the Party said that the peasants had "flipped back up from being oppressed to become their own **masters**" (*fanshen zuo zhuren* 翻身做主人), these new masters could not be **hosts** (*zhuren* 主人). So what the Party did was to host the funerals and weddings on the peasants' behalf! The production team Party secretary would routinely preside over "socialist new style" funerals and weddings with minimal or no banqueting. And because of the severe restriction on travel, the invitation to relatives and friends from outside of the production team vicinities was kept at a minimum, again restricting the assertion of household "pre-eminence." In other words, the Party usurped the peasant families' (sovereign) right to host on the occasions of major family events. For a Chinese peasant, not being able to host on those important occasions was tantamount to but not being fully human. Starving during the Great Leap was severe physical suffering; not being able to host at one's parents' funerals and one's sons' weddings was moral failing and ontological defeat, which partly explains the *jouissance* of peasant hosting in the reform era. The revival of the household-based mode of production enabled the revival of the household-

(Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012), 133–55; Adam Yuet Chau, "Actants Amassing (AA): Beyond Collective Effervescence and the Social," in *Durkheim in Dialogue: A Centenary Celebration of The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, ed. Sondra L. Hausner (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013), 206–30.

36 Kleinman, *Writing at the Margin*.

based mode of event production.[37] If hosting a household event production turns the head of the household into a sovereign-like figure (i.e., a king for two to three days), should anyone fault the peasants for desiring to "host like the state"?

The Household and Community as Hosts; Deities as Guests

The household also plays host on a variety of occasions relating to popular religion. On the more obvious, basic, and prosaic level, the household is host to the stove god,[38] Heaven and Earth (*tiandi* 天地), the immediate ancestors, and perhaps some other common deities found in domestic settings (e.g., the God of Wealth, Guanyin). Usually represented in the form of spirit tablets (*shenzhupai* 神主牌) on domestic altars, these are some kind of permanent lodgers in the home, to be cared for on a daily basis, usually in the form of incense (freshly offered in the morning), red electric lamps in the shape of candles, and offerings that need not be replaced too frequently (e.g., fruits made of wax, biscuits and candies in wrappers). Familiarity has made it unnecessary for the host household members to be overly ceremonious in interacting with these deities and ancestors.[39] Typically the matron of the household (i.e., the wife of the head of the household) assumes the responsibility of this kind of "everyday forms of hosting." These minor yet recurrent hosting occasions mirror those minor social hosting occasions mentioned above (e.g., friends and neighbors dropping by for a visit). At certain nodal points along the lunar calendrical trajectory the family makes more elaborate and special offerings with

37 See Adam Yuet Chau, "Chinese Socialism and the Household Idiom of Religious Engagement," in *Atheist Secularism and its Discontents: A Comparative Study of Religion and Communism in Eurasia*, ed. Tam Ngo and Justine Quijada (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 225–43.

38 See Robert L. Chard, "Master of the Family: History and Development of the Chinese Cult of the Stove," PhD diss. (University of California, Berkeley, 1990); Robert L. Chard, "Rituals and Scriptures of the Stove God Cult," in *Ritual and Scripture in Chinese Popular Religion: Five Studies*, ed. David Johnson (Berkeley: Institute for East Asian Studies, 1995), 3–54.

39 See Charles Stafford, *Separation and Reunion in Modern China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

more ostentatious gestures of being the host to these spirits and deities,[40] collectively or individually, e.g., on the first day of the Lunar New Year, on the birthday or death anniversary of an immediate ancestor, on the birthday of one of the deities such as Guanyin (somehow extremely generalized deities such as Heaven and Earth, the stove god, and the God of Wealth don't have birthdays).

The hosting form is most spectacularly used in staging temple festivals. There are in fact two distinct forms of hosting at any temple festival. The *first form* is about the home community hosting their patron deity. Theoretically the host would be the deity himself or herself because he or she resides in the temple and is therefore the *zhujia*. But the situation is a little complicated. First of all, even though the temple is supposed to be the deity's domicile on Earth, the deity might be roaming somewhere in the celestial realm, or, in the case of dragon kings, in rivers, oceans, or springs or on clouds. So in a sense on the occasion of the temple festival the deity becomes an honored guest, invited to come down and enjoy the opera performances and offerings and listen to prayers and praises.[41] The *second form* of hosting at temple festivals is about the home community, together with their patron deity, hosting human visitors and visiting deities from other communities.[42] However, the home-community deities themselves cannot really act to organize the temple festival and to receive guests; as a result the temple associations host the event production on their behalf. For example, at Longwanggou 龍王溝 the temple officers and other volunteers would say that they are "helping out the venerable Dragon King to produce the event"

40 See Feuchtwang, *Popular Religion in China*; Stafford, *Separation and Reunion in Modern China*.

41 In southeastern China an important role of hosting deities on the occasion of a temple festival is often relegated to a troupe of professional Daoist priests, who, on behalf of the community that hires them, invites the Daoist high gods (often the entire Daoist pantheon) to partake in the festivities as well. For an analysis of receiving gods as guests, see Stafford, *Separation and Reunion in Modern China*, 74–77. More on this in sections below.

42 Conversations with Stephan Feuchtwang over the years have helped me clarify this particular argument, i.e., why the home deity can be simultaneously host and guest (see Stephan Feuchtwang, "Welcoming Dangerous Benefactors. Incense, Gods and Hospitality in North-Eastern Taiwan," *L'Homme* 231-232 (2019): 135–50).

(*gei Longwangye ta laorenjia banshi/xianghuo* 給龍王爺他老人家辦事/相伙). As a result, how well the festival is organized reflects on the ability of the temple association and the sponsoring villages; and more importantly, it ultimately reflects on the capability and magical efficacy of the deity. The motivation and enthusiasm of the worshippers to organize an exciting (*honghuo*) festival is supposed to be directly proportional to how well they feel they have been blessed by the deity. There is a Shaanbei folk expression: "people depend on gods and gods depend on people" (*ren ping shen, shen ping ren* 人憑神，神憑人); on no occasion is this principle of mutual reliance between god and people more highlighted than in the organization of the temple festival.[43] The annual temple festival celebrating the "birthday" of the patron deity is the most important occasion for the home community to interact with surrounding communities as members of the latter (humans as well as deities) come as guests. Just like the household event productions, temple festivals help determine the reputation of communities against other communities.[44]

Deities Hosting Other Deities

The Mazu pilgrimage network in Taiwan is one of the most densely articulated temple networks in the world. Typically, the Mazu of lower-ranking temples (e.g., due to historical relationships of incense division) visit those in higher-ranking temples, especially their "ancestral temples," i.e., temples from which they had derived their own deities and their efficacy. But curiously, Mazu pilgrimage is often not about getting to the destination following the shortest route and employing the fastest and most convenient method. In recent decades two Mazu temples on the west coast of Taiwan (in the towns of Dajia 大甲 and Baishatun 白沙屯) have insisted on visiting their "ancestral temple" on foot, deliberately forgoing the

43 See Chau, "Hosting Funerals and Temple Festivals."

44 For a case study on people hosting temple festivals "at home," see Yue Yongyi 岳永逸 , "Jiazhong guohui" 家中過會, in *Lingyan, ketou, chuanshuo: minzhong xinyang de yinmian yu yangmian* 靈驗・磕頭・傳說：民眾信仰的陰面與陽面 (Shanghai: Sanlian shudian, 2010), 169–240.

convenience of modern transportation. Such pilgrimages would therefore take a few days of gruelling brisk walking instead of a quick, leisurely day trip by car or chartered bus. In addition, their pilgrimage trajectories have become increasingly more circuitous, incorporating many more towns and villages, and as a result extra days have to be added to accommodate the deliberately-stretched itinerary.

The key reason for such spatially and temporally extended pilgrimages is the desire to establish ever wider networks of temples and temple communities through the acts of paying respect and hosting. Like most pilgrimages in Chinese popular religious traditions, these Mazu pilgrimages are not just about people visiting deities; crucially, they are more about *deities visiting deities*, with humans serving as members of the entourage. As deities travel through other deities' territories the former need to pay respect to the latter and the latter would host the former. The longer the journey the more such respect-paying and hosting occur, thus establishing and consolidating relationships amongst deities, between deities and humans, and between communities of worshipers. Some of the temples *en route* also serve as rest stops or places for the visiting deity and entourage to spend the night. Some temples would jostle for the honor of hosting the visiting deity, and the visiting temple community would resort to divination to decide on the pilgrimage route and which temples to visit, stop at, etc. Strings of temples and temple communities are thus linked together spatio-temporally by these pilgrimages, forming a complex, ever shifting network of deities, temples, territories, and communities. Indeed, in Chinese religious culture "deities visiting other deities" is one of the most prevalent cultural forms through which different, sometimes far-flung, communities establish long-lasting relationships with one another.[45] Herein lies the ingenuity of Chinese popular religion, and the whole networking enterprise rests on the cultural form of hosting and being hosted.

45 In contrast, saints do not typically visit one another in Catholicism.

Daoist on Top, Daoist Alongside, Daoist Absent, or Host on Top?: Interpreting the *Jiao* 醮

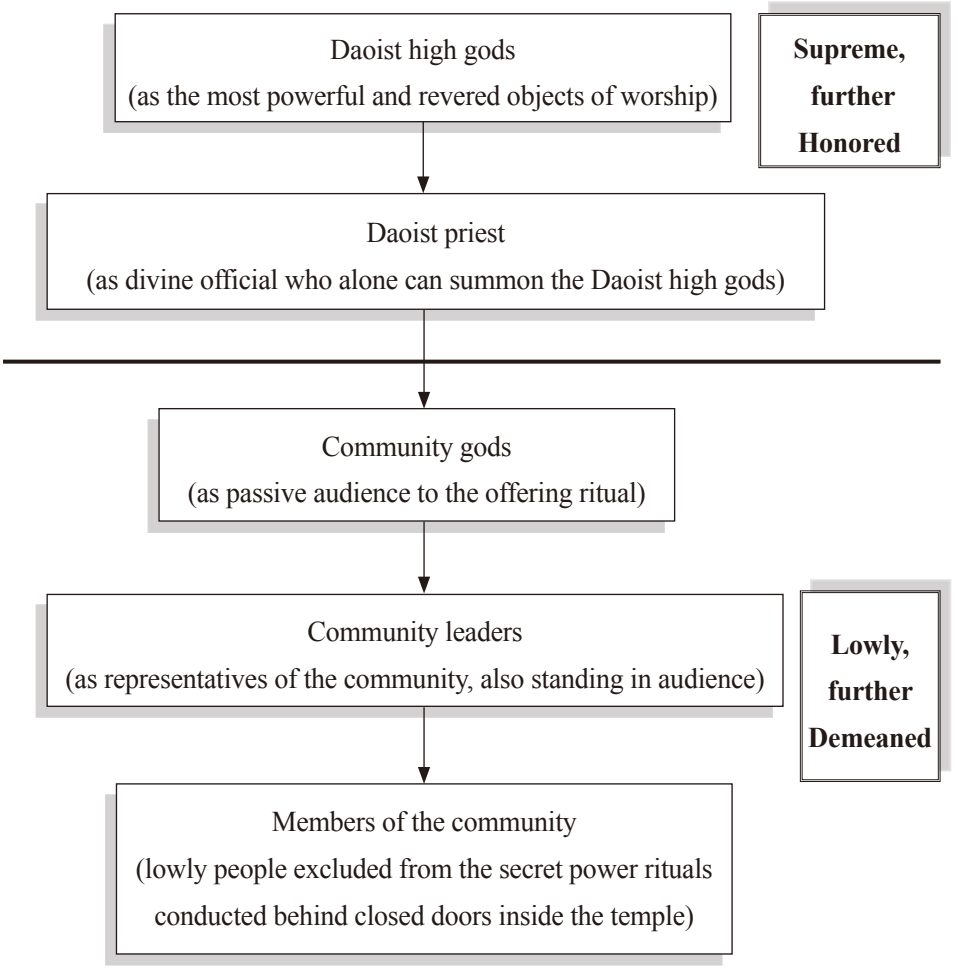
One of the useful applications of the hosting form as an analytical approach is to help resolve a debate that arose in recent years in the study of the role of Daoist liturgy in communal religious festivals.[46] Scholars who have studied communal festivals in southeastern China (Fujian and Taiwan)[47] proposed that Daoist priests and their liturgical framework play a dominant role in structuring the entire festival. The local deities and the sponsoring community itself are put in a subordinate position by the Daoist priests and the Daoist high gods they invite to the scene. Hymes has teasingly called this perspective the "Daoist-on-top" perspective (i.e., from the Daoist priests' and the Daoism scholars' lofty perspective) (see Figure 1).[48]

46 Dean, *Taoist Rituals and Popular Cults of Southeast China*; Dean, "Alternative Approaches to Chinese Ritual"; Hymes, *Way and Byway*; Paul R. Katz, *Demon Hordes and Burning Boats: The Cult of Marshal Wen in Late Imperial Chekiang* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995); John Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1987).

47 For example, Dean, *Taoist Rituals and Popular Cults of Southeast China*; Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History*; P. Steven Sangren, *History and Magical Power in a Chinese Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); Kristofer M. Schipper, "The Written Memorial in Taoist Ceremonies," in *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, ed. Arthur P. Wolf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 309–24; Kristofer M. Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical Ritual in Taoism," *Journal of Asian Studies* 45, no. 1 (1985): 21–57.

48 Hymes, *Way and Byway*, 220.

Figure 1. Schematic chart showing relationships between various participants at a communal offering ritual from a ***Daoist-on-top perspective***:

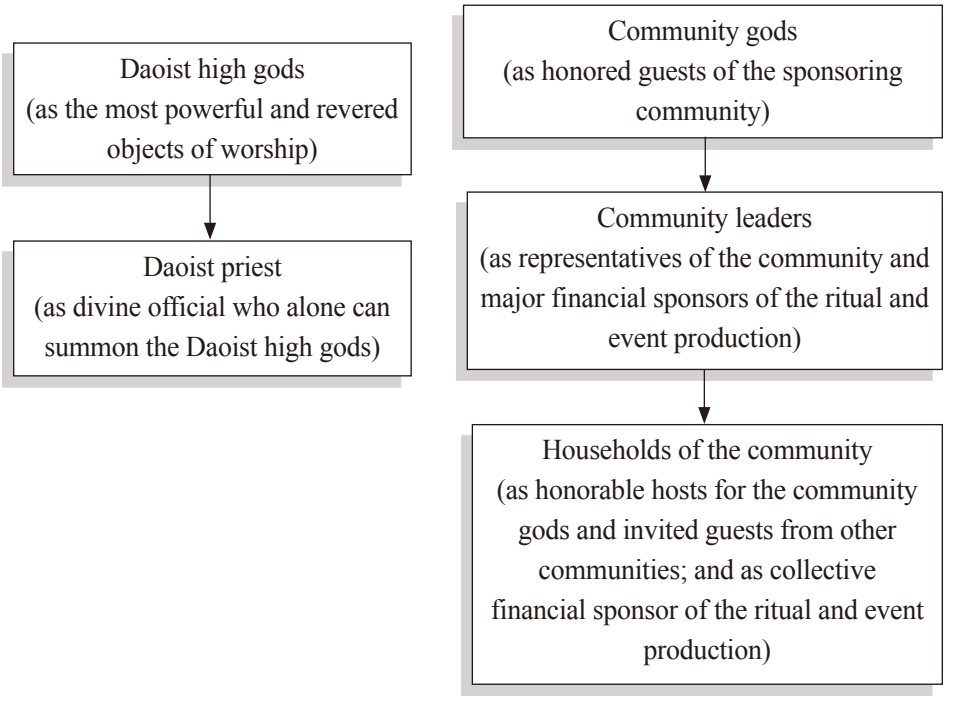


Upon discovering examples of communal festivals that either feature the Daoist rituals as not quite central to the entire event production or do not feature any Daoist ritual at all, while at the same time noticing that even in southeastern China Daoist liturgy might not be as structuring as it has been portrayed to be by some scholars, Hymes questions the entire Daoist-on-top perspective.[49] He suggests that

49 Ibid.

in fact probably only the Daoist priests themselves think they are on top (perhaps just to make themselves feel better after having succumbed to performing rituals for lay communities for money), while the truth is that the lay communities and their leaders might see the Daoists as mere hirelings to perform the ritual for them.[50] As a corrective to the Daoist-on-top perspective, Hymes suggests a Daoist-alongside perspective, granting the Daoist liturgical setup and the community festival structuring equal status (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Schematic chart showing relationships between various participants at a communal offering ritual from a ***Daoist-alongside perspective***:



50 In fact, the Daoists as a collective group of ritual experts may be on top in the local hierarchy of respectability, but specific Daoist priests might not; in other words, Daoist expertise might be respected, but the specific Daoist priests as hirelings might not be. But this is really an empirical question. On Daoist ritualists as householder ritual service providers, see Adam Yuet Chau, "Superstition Specialist Households?: The Household Idiom in Chinese Religious Practices," *Minsu quyi* 民俗曲藝 153 (2006): 157–202.

But I think the Daoist-alongside perspective does not go far enough in challenging the Daoist-on-top perspective. On the most basic level, I think the hosting form is the most encompassing framework for understanding communal religious festivals. If the community decided not to host the festival, there would not be any festival, and the Daoists would not have an occasion to stage their rituals, nor world there be processions, pilgrimages, possessions, exorcisms, festival commerce, red-hot sociality, etc. When the Daoist priests assert that their conception of the whole event production is superior, and more all-encompassing, such an all-encompassing framework is conceptual and symbolic at best. Such a conception can only be iterated when the community decides to host their deities for a festival.

One problem remains, which is: Why does the community willingly accept the Daoist priests' manipulation of their beloved patron deities into a subordinate position during the temple festival? But this is a problem only if we are sure that members of the sponsoring community actually do feel that their deities are put in a subordinate position during the *jiao* 醮. I doubt that they do. I think they know that they are hosting their own patron deities (the first form of hosting within the temple festival mentioned above), that it is fine if it is necessary for the Daoist priests to invite their high gods (the Three Pure Ones, the Jade Emperor, etc.) to do their arcane rituals, and that just to be hospitable even their community deities assume the humble host position to make room for the Daoist priests and their high gods (one aspect of the second form of hosting within the temple festival).[51] Humbling oneself is essential to hosting (especially when the guest is a deity), so being put on the honored pedestal/altar only accentuates one's guestness.[52] In other words, rather

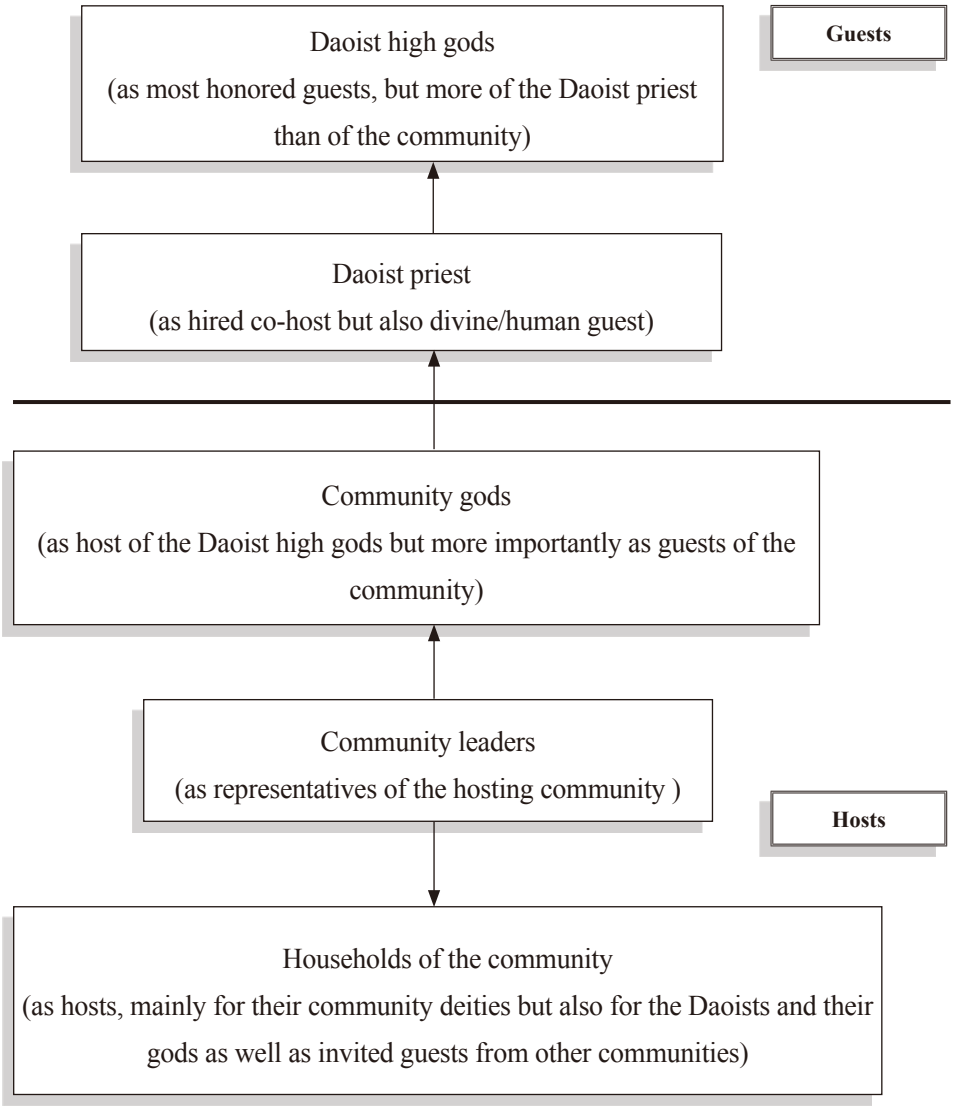
51 In his 1976 study of the *jiao* in southern Taiwan, David Jordan has already highlighted that not only the diversity of understandings of the *jiao* depend on one's role in it, but more importantly, one segment of the *jiao* participants (e.g., the local villagers) had no interest in some other segments' understanding of the *jiao* (e.g., that of the Daoist priests) and vice versa. See David K. Jordan, "The *Jiaw* of Shigaang (Taiwan): An Essay in Folk Interpretation," *Asian Folklore Studies* 35, no. 2 (1976): 81–107. I thank Philip Clart for alerting me to this important article.

52 A pervasive assumption in Chinese religious studies postulates that the southern position is inferior to the northern position (for example, Sangren, *History and Magical Power in a Chinese*

than being "put in a subordinate position," the community deities willingly take on the humble host role during the festival, on the side of the community whom they protect and bless (see Figure 3). The host's position might be humble and lowly, but it is at the same time noble and *structuring/enframing*, which is why I would argue that *the host is on top* (including the local deities), while the Daoists are neither on top (following the Daoist liturgical framework) nor alongside (following Robert Hymes's model) but *enframed*. While the community (together with their deities) is the chief host (*zhuren*), the Daoist priests assume the position of the "accompanying or assistant hosts" (*peike* 陪客). In fact, the hosting form might very well be clear to the Daoist priests, who might think of themselves as the sovereign host of the Daoist high gods and yet being enframed by the overall hosting structure of the temple festival.

Community). The southern position in itself is not inferior; the sun, after all, is in the south (of China). One can easily say that the northern position's presumed superiority is largely derived from the fact that it faces the south, receiving power from the south (i.e., it is a vicarious superiority). The southern position becomes inferior when it is put in relation to another entity to its north that assumes transcendental, superior positionality for itself (e.g., the emperor, the deity). The emperor and the deity do not derive their power from facing south; they are the very source of power themselves. Similarly, the most honored position in the house or in the temple is not necessarily the host position; rather, the guest is always invited to take the most honored position (see Kipnis, *Producing Guanxi*, 39–46). Whoever is the most senior person in the room sits in the most honored position when there is no guest.

Figure 3. Schematic chart showing relationships between various participants at a communal offering ritual from the ***host-on-top (Daoist-enframed) perspective***:



The Hosting Form in Cross-Cultural Perspectives

The hosting form appears in many ethnographic descriptions of non-Chinese cultures. It is a salient structuring framework for many household and community event productions, non-religious and religious, as is the case in Chinese cultural settings. In all of the cases I found, the underlying assumption is that, though the guest is accorded honor and respect, it is the host who is the most active, potent, and pre-eminent agent. Additionally, one cannot be a legitimate guest if one cannot host in return. The intricate web of hosting and guesting entwines with the equally intricate web of gifting and counter-gifting and both are indispensable to making subjectivities, households, communities, and society.

Sherry Ortner writes about the use of aggressive hosting among the Sherpas:[53] because the host (provider of food and drinks) is morally superior, he or she can ask favors of the guest, who becomes indebted as they receive food and drinks from the host. Ortner contrasts the Sherpa conceptions of hosting (giving) in social life as interested and sensual with those of hosting (giving to) gods as not interested because the gods have no needs.[54]

Clifford Geertz begins his analysis of Javanese religion with the simple yet paradigmatic communal feast ritual called *slametan* ("wishing for no disturbance").[55] He argues that this ritual provides the basic structure for all other Javanese religious rituals. Though quite clear in his ethnography, Geertz does not highlight the fact that the *slametan* is fundamentally a household hosting event production. Toby Alice Volkman writes about the crucial role hosting plays among the Toraja in southwestern Sulawesi (Indonesia) in celebrating a "house" (physical as well as

53 Ortner, *Sherpas Through Their Rituals*.

54 For more cases of hosting and hospitality and the relationship to fortune and fear, see Giovanni da Col, "The Poisoner and the Parasite: Cosmoeconomics, Fear, and Hospitality among Dechen Tibetans," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18 (Supplement 1) (2012): 175–95; Giovanni da Col, "Natural Philosophies of Fortune: Luck, Vitality, and Uncontrolled Relatedness," *Social Analysis* 56, no. 1 (2012): 1–23.

55 Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

genealogical).[56]

Chris Fuller presents what in popular Hinduism is considered the most basic form of devotional practice, the offering of a single lamp of camphor flame with a small piece of food offering on the side.[57] For most Hindus, the deities are treated like honored guests. Even more explicitly, Paul Younger presents South Indian Hindu temple festivals as "playing host to deity."[58] According to Younger, a Hindu deity is usually sequestered in the innermost quarters of the temple, being taken care of (i.e., fed, bathed, worshiped) by the priests. Only major patrons and donors to the temple such as landlords and kings can worship inside the temple. The masses of devotees, however, only get to see and feel the deity's presence during festival time, when the deity comes out of the temple. So for a brief but intense period of time during the festival the deity is treated like a honored guest, when the festival crowds feed the deity with offerings, praise the deity with chants, and rejoice in the deity's presence.[59]

Both Anne Meneley[60] and Andrew Shryock[61] write on the Arab practice of hosting and hospitality and how these practices define the reputation of a particular house, family, lineage, tribal group, or even the whole of the "Arab race" vis-à-vis strategic others. However, these studies are about humans hosting other humans. We do not know if hosting and hospitality are significant cultural forms in Muslims' interactions with Allah.

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56 Toby Alice Volkman, *Feast of Honor: Ritual and Change in the Toraja Highlands* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

57 Chris J. Fuller, *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

58 Paul Younger, *Playing Host to Deity: Festival Religion in the South Indian Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 13–14.

59 Ibid, 14.

60 Meneley, *Tournaments of Value*.

61 Shryock, "The New Jordanian Hospitality"; Shryock, "Thinking about Hospitality"; Shryock, "Keeping to Oneself: Hospitality and the Magical Hoard in the Balga of Jordan," *History and Anthropology* 30, no. 2 (2019): 1–17, DOI: 10.1080/02757206.2019.1623793.

In Christianity, hosting plays a special role. I have argued elsewhere[62] that before the spread of Christianity the Romans hosted their gods in ways that were very similar to those of the Chinese. However, the Christian Church eventually usurped the Romans' "household sovereignty" and as a consequence the Romans could no longer host their pagan gods. Instead, they had to worship God in His own house, i.e., the church, and *be hosted by God*. Christian theology makes Christians believe that they will be God's guests in Heaven after they rise from their graves when the Day of Reckoning comes. God is the ultimate host in Heaven ("the Kingdom"). This theological formulation is translated into this-worldly practice in the form of the church (physically as the church building but also as the collectivity of all believers), which represents the body of Christ. When worshipers go to church for mass/service, the church and the church personnel are always the host and the worshipers are always the guests. Instead of "feeding" the deities like in Chinese popular religion, the worshipers *are fed* the body and blood of Christ at communion (known as *host* as well, though having an entirely different etymology, meaning sacrifice). Christians stage important life event productions such as weddings and funerals at the church, again relegating sovereignty to the church.[63] This church-centered event production structure vitiates the importance of the households as loci of hosting.[64]

62 See Adam Yuet Chau, "Household Sovereignty and Religious Subjectification: Comparing the Idiom of Hosting in Chinese and Christian Religious Cultures," *Studies in Church History* 50 (2014): 492–504; Chau "The Absolute Host."

63 But for a case study on popular Catholicism in which saints are hosted in the home, see Fenella Cannell, *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

64 However, we do have the bourgeois version of hosting parties at home (otherwise known as "to entertain") as well as family reunions (e.g., Thanksgiving, Christmas), which again make the household "pre-eminent." But these household hosting event productions are largely secular.

Conclusions: The Hosting Form and Orthopraxy

The hosting form is attractive to the Chinese because it is a common cultural form found in many domains of Chinese social life. On the surface this might sound like a Durkheimian argument but it is not. I do not want to argue that Chinese religious life is merely social life clothed in religious symbols (and worshipping deities is simply people worshipping society). Rather, I want to argue that *the familiar forms and models prevalent in Chinese social life have informed and enframed Chinese religious life*. Scholars have known for a long time that the Chinese often interpret the supernatural world in terms of the categories of their social world (this being a Durkheimian insight).[65] I suggest that, more than a cognitive resonance between the religious and the social, the actual "doing" of religion employs certain key organizational and conceptual forms that underlie much of Chinese social life. Hosting is one of these key cultural forms that have been imported to, or captured by, the religious domain. Therefore, I present an interpretation that is not only in contrast with that of Arthur Wolf,[66] but more importantly it is the opposite of what C. K. Yang tried to argue with the notion of "diffused religion."

C. K. Yang[67] put forth the idea that Chinese religion exists in two modes: institutional and diffused. The institutional mode is manifest in the organized aspects of Daoism and Buddhism (e.g., temples, doctrines, priests and monks, etc.). The diffused mode refers to religious values and practices that have "seeped" into the core secular social institutions of family, village, clan, guild, native-place associations, and the state. I would like to argue that what has not been adequately recognized is that a reverse "seepage" or "transfusion" has also occurred, that the

65 For example, Wolf, ed., *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, v–viii, 1–18. See Wolf's "Preface" and "Introduction," respectively.

66 Arthur P. Wolf, "Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors," in *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, 131–82.

67 C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1991) (originally published in 1961).

principles and mechanisms of organizing different aspects of Chinese society in general are also used to organize different religious practices, especially in popular religion.[68] Similarly, the same cultural values or desires that are realized in folk social life are replicated and enacted in popular religion. Hosting is a major structuring form through which the staging of many ritual actions and event productions in popular religion is made possible. Yang argued that the diffused religious ideas and practices provided an air of sanctity to, and thus helped uphold, the core secular institutions. I argue that in the case of popular religion the reverse is also true, that the uses of structuring principles prevalent in secular social life such as the hosting form sanctify and legitimate popular religious ritual actions.

Yet capturing a key sociocultural form such as hosting has its costs for the development of Chinese popular religion: the "over-socialization" of religious practices and the inability of Chinese popular religious traditions to disengage from the social to achieve the sort of theologicalization characteristic of Judeo-Christian religious traditions. Asking "Why did Chinese popular religion never develop theologies?," just like economic historians in the past asking "Why did China not develop capitalism?," is of course problematic, though the question can be extremely productive. I suggest that while the religious domain captured hosting as a key conceptual and organizational form, hosting as a social practice in turn captured the religious domain to reproduce itself as a sort of "immutable form" (to modify Bruno Latour's concept of the "immutable mobile"),[69] i.e., an easily transposable form amenable to be used in radically different domains and contexts.[70] This is why in Chinese religious actions the emphasis is put on being a good host and "orthopraxer"[71] rather than being a good theologian and "orthodoxer." Hosting is an

68 See P. Steven Sangren, "Traditional Chinese Corporations: Beyond Kinship," *Journal of Asian Studies* 43 (1984): 391–416.

69 Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).

70 My formulation of hosting as a cultural form is reminiscent of, but different from, Ortner's conception of "cultural schemas" (see Ortner, *Sherpas Through Their Rituals*).

71 See Watson, "The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites."

irreducibly social practice that has prevented the emergence of theologians. The host has to be thoughtful, but he needs not think. The hosting has to be done properly, yet the host can be (or even must be) an unthinking host because all the hosting acts have been prescribed and codified. When a surrogate (co-)host is needed (e.g., the Daoist priest who is hired by the community to help host the *jiao*), he is hired for his skills in hosting the deities but not for his thoughts on ritual or theological matters (such as what a Christian priest is expected to provide in the form of a sermon). The Daoist priest can hardly impose his conceptions upon the community—even if he cares to, which he doesn't—because the form of hosting has imposed on him and his ritual actions, restricting him to perform in certain ways but not in others; his hands are tied, so to speak (his hands and legs might as well be tied had it not been necessary for him to "pace the void" and dispatch petitions, and his mouth might as well be sealed had it not been necessary for him to mumble some chants). This might be called a "Daoist-enframed" or "host-on-top" model, not quite a "Daoist-alongside" model, and certainly not a "Daoist-on-top" model.[72]

As a result of the prominent role hosting plays in Chinese religious culture, Chinese religious practices cultivate a kind of *social subjectivity* (i.e., hosts and guests) rather than religious subjectivity (i.e., the Judeo-Christian "believer"). Instead of saying China doesn't really have a religion (which would be overly provocative!), I will say that ordinary Chinese people typically don't have a *religious subjectivity*. In other words, we may say that we find in China neither religion nor superstition but a bunch of hosts and guests (some human and some supernatural) united in rounds of never-ending, multitudinous hosting occasions.

The discovery of the hosting form might also help resolve some debates in the study of Chinese religions. Take for example, the "one or many Chinese religions" debate initiated by Maurice Freedman and Arthur Wolf:[73] the hosting form unifies Chinese religious practices (it seems Freedman wins in this round, but not for

72 Hymes, *Way and Byway*, 220, 225.

73 Maurice Freedman, "On the Sociological Study of Chinese Religion," in *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, ed. Arthur P. Wolf, 19–41; Wolf, "Preface" "Introduction."

reasons that he originally proposed).

What I am trying to argue is not that Chinese religious life is *merely* hosting. Chinese religious life is of course a lot more than that; no one can deny the richness of Chinese religious imagination. A Judeo-Christian style of theologizing is far from being the only way to elaborate religious conceptions, and lay religious life is also far richer and varied than the hosting model can summarize. In other words, Chinese religious life cannot and should not be reduced to the hosting form. Yet one can hardly picture Chinese religious life without the hosting form. Take away hosting from Chinese popular religious life and the entire popular religious life on the practice level will simply collapse or become entirely unrecognizable.

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「道士上位」還是「主人上位」？：從做醮中看道教科儀框架與地方神廟的關係

周　越*

摘　要

各種社區宗教慶典（如廟會、醮）歸根結底是一種做為文化形式的「做主」的展現，而其對象是各種各樣的神明、鬼、祖先和人。這個「做主」的視角可以幫我們從根本上解決困擾學者多年的道教儀式與地方神廟孰高孰低的這個問題。研究中國東南沿海地區（包括福建與台灣）的多位學者（其中包括施舟人、桑高仁、勞格文、丁荷生）認為道教科儀傳統（Daoist liturgical framework）龐大精深，所以地方神廟屈居其下，這尤其彰顯在地方神廟做醮期間：道士團被邀請到廟中做法事，廟的主神反而要把廟讓出來，自己委屈地搬進廟外臨時搭的棚子裡。韓明士借用性交體位用語戲謔地把這個叫做「道士上位」的觀點（從道士及道教專家的角度），並同時提出「道士並排」的觀點，企圖把道士從「上位」拉下來。本文試圖凸顯道教科儀在做醮期間被「做主」這個大結構所涵蓋支配，所以我的觀點是「主人上位」。

關鍵詞：做主、文化形式、醮、地方神廟、道士、道教科儀、道教科儀框架、廟會、社區祈禳

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