

How the Daoist Master of a Village Helps to Keep Alive a Local Cult: A Case Study in Jiangxi

Isabelle ANG*

Abstract

In order to rethink the paradigms, which have, until now, shaped our understanding of the relationship between Daoism and local cults, this research note takes as an example the pilgrimage tied to the cult of Xu Xun (239–374), in and around the temple Yulong Wanshougong—the main temple of the cult, located in Xishanzhen, Jiangxi province. The places to which this event refers include a center, the main temple, and a defined territory surrounding it. This research is based on the actors of the pilgrimage: the pilgrims and their associations, and two types of Daoist masters who are involved in the pilgrimage and in the villages in the course of a year. On one side, the local Daoist of the village where I do my fieldwork, Youjiacun, performs annual rituals for the pilgrimage associations. I will define his role in the social cohesion of the village. On the other side, the Daoists of the Jingming pai perform rituals in the Yulong Wanshougong during the pilgrimage in response to the pilgrims's requests, and organize efficiently the whole pilgrimage. I will argue that all the actors of the pilgrimage have equally important and complementary roles. This could lead us toward an enlarged paradigm of Daoism.

Keywords: associations (*hui* 會), Xu Xun 許遜, Daoist liturgical framework, local cults, Xishan Yulong Wanshougong 西山玉隆萬壽宮

* Isabelle ANG, Associate Professor, Collège de France, Paris.

Foreword

Rethinking and revising the paradigms which have, until now, shaped our understanding of the relationship between Daoism and local cults, must certainly be done. But, given the number and variety of regional contexts—including their geopolitical, economic, social, and linguistic aspects—, many Daoist traditions and local cults require still more thorough research. This paper will evaluate the paradigms at issue using and analyzing a specific and regional religious event, namely, the pilgrimage tied to the cult of Xu Xun 許遜 (trad. 239–374) in Jiangxi province. The places to which this event refers include a center and a defined territory surrounding it. The actors include cult associations, individual pilgrims, and two types of Daoist masters. Several questions will be posed to help us understand this pilgrimage as a whole: how are the interrelationships among places and actors articulated; and, how are all of these components held together? Surprisingly, most of the studies on pilgrimages do not delve into the role played by Daoist masters in organizing this event or in establishing links with the local cults and associations.¹ Is it because they are not significant actors in regard to the other participants? Or can it even be that

1 For example, see Susan Naquin, “The Peking Pilgrimage to Miao-feng Shan: Religious Organizations and Sacred Sites,” in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, ed. Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü 于君方 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 333–77; Xing Haizhen 邢海珍, “Shengsheng de minsuhua yu minjian xinyang de duoyuanxing: Qinghai sheng Datong xian Laoye shan ‘Chaoshanhui’ diaoyan” 神聖的民俗化與民間信仰的多元性——青海省大通縣老爺山「朝山會」調研, *Qinghai shehui kexue* 青海社會科學 6 (2011): 217–20 (DOI: 10.14154/j.cnki.qss.2011.06.015). This article thoroughly describes the organization of the associations of pilgrims and of the pilgrimage itself, and mentions Daoist rituals which are performed in the temples of the villages involved in the pilgrimage and on the mountain. See also Wang Zhenzhong 王振忠, “Hua Yun jinxiang: minjian xinyang, chaoshan xisu yu Ming Qing yilai Huizhou de richang shenghuo” 華雲進香：民間信仰、朝山習俗與明清以來徽州的日常生活, *Difang wenhua yanjiu* 地方文化研究 2 (2013): 38–60. In his substantial article, Wang Zhenzhong reports historical research on the origin of the Daoists of Mount Qiyun and on the rituals they performed until the early sixties. These papers do not distinguish between “official” and “local” Daoists, nor do they give any details about the relationship between Daoists and pilgrims.

they do not play any role during the pilgrimage?

In order to set the background of my topic and to understand what the issues at stake are nowadays, I will first very briefly outline the history of the cult of Xu Xun and of the pilgrimage.² Then, I will use ethnographical material collected in the main temple and in a village to examine the organization of the pilgrimage at the present time.

Places and Actors

The pilgrimage takes place in the main temple of Xu Xun's cult, the Yulong Wanshougong 玉隆萬壽宮 in Xishanzhen 西山鎮, a market town located in Xinjian county 新建縣, about thirty kilometers southwest of Nanchang. This temple is the core of the territory constituted by the hundreds of villages and towns that worship Xu Xun and participate in the pilgrimage.

As for the actors, first the pilgrims: The highest number of pilgrims belong to pilgrimage associations, *hui* 會, of these villages and towns. They organize the annual rituals in the place where they live, as well as the journey to the Yulong Wanshougong. Individual pilgrims—families or groups of friends—may also come on their own, without belonging to a *hui*. Second, the two types of Daoist masters: There are about twenty Daoists attached to the Yulong Wanshougong, ordained Zhengyi 正一 masters belonging to the Jingming pai 淨明派; they received their registers 受籙 at Longhushan 龍虎山 around 1995. The other “type” of Daoists are those of the villages and towns; they are called *sanju daoshi* 散居道士, “Daoists living in scattered places.” Some of them—and especially the Daoists with whom I

2 I already published a few articles about the cult of Xu Xun and the pilgrimage. See Isabelle Ang, “The Revival of the Cult of Xu Xun in Jiangxi Province: The Pilgrimage to Xishan, and the Annual Rites in a Clan Village,” *Journal of Taoist Studies* 道教學刊 1, no. 1 (2018): 111–32; Isabelle Ang, “Le Palais des Dix Mille Longévités et de la Bienfaisance de Jade à Xishan au Jiangxi: de l’origine d’un tissu économique et culturel et de son expansion au Sichuan sous les Qing jusqu’au XVIII^e siècle,” *Études chinoises. La Vertu administrative à l’œuvre: hommage à Pierre-Étienne Will* (2) 35, no. 1 (2016): 197–240.

work—are not ordained, but they have a hereditary office.

Brief History of the Cult and the Pilgrimage

The Cult

The cult I have been studying for many years is well-documented with historical and hagiographical resources, and has been the object of several academic works.³ We will see later that ethnographical material will complement these studies.

Xu Xun's life is mainly known through hagiographies. As a young man, he became the disciple of Wu Meng 吳猛 (?–374?), a local saint from the Poyang lake 鄱陽湖 region, who used to be a healer and a dragonslayer. The two men met Chen Mu 讎姆, a Daoist adept who transmitted the Way of Filiality (*xiaodao* 孝道) to them. Xu Xun was chosen to be her successor while Wu Meng became Xu Xun's disciple. Xu Xun later had a career as a prefect of Jingyang 旌陽 (probably in Sichuan), where he was famous for his honesty, for his concern for the people's welfare, and for his skills as a healer. Back in Xishan, he was renowned for being able to rule the flood dragons. During the fourth century, on the fifteenth of the

3 Among them, see Akizuki Kan'ei 秋月觀暎, *Chūgoku kinsei Dōkyō no keisei: Jōmeidō no kisoteki kenkyū* 中國近世道教の形成：淨明道の基礎的研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1978); Lee Fongmao 李豐楙, *Xu Xun de xianhua yu shengjing: yige feichanghua zushi xingxiang de lishi kehua* 許遜的顯化與聖蹟：一個非常化祖師形象的歷史刻畫 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjisuo, 2007); Li Pingliang 李平亮, “Difang shenmiao yu shehui wenhua bianqian: Nanchang Xishan wanshou gong beike yanjiu” 地方神廟與社會文化變遷：南昌西山萬壽宮碑刻研究, in *Beiming yanjiu* 碑銘研究, vol. 2, ed. Zheng Zhenman 鄭振滿 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2014), 316–34; Li Pingliang 李平亮, “Song zhi Qingdai Jiangxi Xishan Wanshougong xiangzheng de zhuanhuan ji qi yiyi” 宋至清代江西西山萬壽宮象徵的轉換及其意義, *Zongjiao xue yanjiu* 宗教學研究 3 (2012): 2–3; Kristofer M. Schipper, “Taoist Ritual and Local Cults of the T'ang Dynasty,” in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein III*, *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*, vol. 22, ed. Michel Strickmann (Brussels: Peeters, Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1985), 812–34; Xu Wei 許蔚, “Xu Xun xingxiang de goujian ji yiyi” 許遜形象的構建及意義, *Zhongguo su wenhua yanjiu* 中國俗文化研究 3 (2009): 35–53.

eighth lunar month, he flew to heaven, with his entire household.

The Xuxianci 許仙祠 was erected at his ancient dwelling's location shortly after. He was venerated as a healer and a ruler of flood dragons, as well as an exemplar of filiality. The shrine was later upgraded to a temple, the Youweiguan 遊帷觀. During the Tang, a Celestial Master, Hu Huichao 胡慧超 (?–703), renovated the temple and revived the Way of Filiality; Xu Xun became the patriarch of the school. Kristofer Schipper, in his study of local cults under the Tang, points out that “The Way of Filial Piety under the T'ang was ... a local school inside the universal framework of the Ling-pao tradition.”⁴ During the Song dynasty, the cult grew considerably and the temple was enlarged; in 1116 the emperor Huizong bestowed upon it the title of Yulong Wanshougong. At the end of the thirteenth century, the Way of Filiality developed under the name of Pure and Bright Way of Loyalty and Filiality, Jingming zhongxiao dao 淨明忠孝道. Repeated periods of destruction and reconstruction followed. Finally, in 1983 the local government financed the reconstruction of the Palace, which at present includes eight large halls, dedicated to Xu Xun, Guandi, the Three Officials (sanguan 三官), Furen (Xu Xun's wife), the Three Pure Ones, Chen Mu, the Jade Emperor, and Caishen 財神.

The Pilgrimage

At least from the Tang dynasty on, local people assembled in the Youweiguan to celebrate Xu Xun's ascent to heaven and invited Daoist masters to perform rituals. In the thirteenth century, the ritual practitioner Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾 (1194–1229?) attests in his *Yulongji* 玉隆集 that *jiao* rituals were performed on the saint's birthday (twenty-seventh day of the first lunar month), and on the first day of the eighth lunar month thousands of pilgrims came from all over⁵ to worship Xu Xun. He

4 Kristofer M. Schipper, “Taoist Ritual and Local Cults of the T'ang Dynasty,” 827.

5 That is from the present districts located around Nanchang, to Poyang Lake 鄱陽湖 and to Mt. Lu 廬山 in the north of Jiangxi, to Jizhou 吉州 in the south, and up to Changsha, Chenzhou 郴州, and Hengyang 衡陽 in Hunan province. See Isabelle Ang, “Le Palais des Dix Mille Longévités et de la Bienfaisance de Jade à Xishan au Jiangxi,” 212–13.

also mentions people paying a visit to Chen Mu's temple, Huangtangguan 黃堂觀 (now Huangtanggong 黃堂宮) between Xishan and Fengcheng 豐城, a city located 50 kilometers from Xishan. Since that time, historical material has testified to the increasing involvement of chiefs of associations in the organization of the pilgrimage to Xishan and to its continuity. Nowadays, since the 1990s, tens of thousands of pilgrims converge on the Yulong Wanshougong over about two months to celebrate Xu Xun's apotheosis, beginning on the twenty-seventh day of the seventh lunar month.

Territory, Associations, Rituals, Gestures: Summary of the Relevant Facts

The Territory

The places, the actors, the history of the cult and of the pilgrimage, and their present-day manifestation have formed a whole, included in a territory. Among the mass of pilgrims who travel to the Yulong Wanshougong, most of them come with a group. Temple associations from cities and counties of Jiangxi are by far the most numerous, but there are also groups coming from other provinces, including Fujian, Zhejiang, Hubei, Hunan, Sichuan, Guangxi, Guizhou, and Hebei. It could therefore be said that the territory of the cult of Xu Xun consists of a large part of China,⁶ but the historical core of the cult, made up of the hundreds of villages scattered in the periphery of the Yulong Wanshougong, within an about one-hundred kilometer radius, defines the territory relevant to what is discussed here. At least from the beginning of the twentieth century on, associations (*hui* 會) dedicated to the

6 Chen Yuanjing 陳元靚 (fl. 1264), in his *Suishu guangji* 歲時廣記, already mentions that every year, on the day of Xu Xun's apotheosis, "people from Wu, Yue, Chu, and Shu travel a thousand *li* to bring famous incense" 吳越楚蜀人不遠千里而携挈名香 to Xu Xun's main temple. These places broadly refer to Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Hunan, Hubei, and Sichuan provinces. Chen Yuanjing 陳元靚, *Suishu guangji* 歲時廣記, Xuxiu Siku quanshu 續修四庫全書, vol. 885 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), *juan* 33, p. 7b.

organization of the pilgrimage to Xishan and to the rituals devoted to the cult of Xu Xun have been established in these villages. They are representative of the traditional local organization of this area, which has been one of the oldest and most active in the worship of Xu Xun for a century, and which is integrated into the territorial framework we are dealing with here.

The Associations

The village where I conduct my fieldwork is called Youjiacun 游家村, a clan village located along the Gan river 贛江, five kilometers west of Fengcheng city 豐城市 and about 60 kilometers south of Xishan. It has about 6000 inhabitants. There are five pilgrimage associations, whose members for the most part live in the village. The members are the oldest men of those households, *hu* 戶, that belong to an association—which constitute 90% of the households of the village. Each *hui* is headed by a “chief of the association,” *huizhang* 會長 or *huishou* 會首, who changes annually. Thanks to the rotation of chiefs, almost every household of the village has the privilege to have a *huizhang* at some time. The new *huizhang* takes his turn on the ninth day of the first lunar month, which is the birthday of the Jade Emperor, Yuhuang dadi 玉皇大帝.⁷ On this day, the emblematic objects (the banner, the wooden dragon, the little statue of Xu Xun) of the association are put in his house.

The associations are specifically involved in the cult of Xu Xun, which, as we will see, mainly takes place in the houses of the *huizhang*. There is a temple outside Youjiacun where the villagers worship other deities, the most important of which is called Tianfu dadi 天符大帝. He is a god of epidemics, also venerated in Hubei and Hunan. His cult concerns the whole village, while the cult of Xu Xun concerns only the associations. Specific rituals are performed by the Daoist master of the village to venerate Tianfu dadi, whose status ranks higher than Xu Xun's. Villagers carry the palanquins of the gods—chiefly Tianfu dadi and his two lieutenants, but

7 For a detailed description of the associations of Youjiacun, see Isabelle Ang, “The Revival of the Cult of Xu Xun in Jiangxi Province,” 123–26.

not Xu Xun—in a procession along the village streets on the birthday of the Jade Emperor. The route of the procession delineates the territory of the gods of the main temple, which is different from Xu Xun's territory. Some villages around Youjiacun also have Tianfu dadi's temples. They may once have been parts of a cult network, but nowadays people say that there is no religious interaction between the villages. A statue of Xu Xun is set in a small room beside Tianfu dadi's hall. In fact, there are two cult systems that structure the religious life of the village, correlating with two different historical cults that have different functions, and the majority of the villagers are involved in both cults.

Daoist Rituals and Gestures in the Village

Specific rituals are performed by a Daoist master throughout the year. The local Daoist, You Zongtao, over 80 years of age, is a member of the You clan. His charge is a hereditary one, which can be traced back at least to the middle of the Qing dynasty: he has a manuscript of the “Thunder altar” (*leitán* 雷壇) dated 1750 and bearing the names of the ancestor who hand-wrote it and of the disciple—also a You—to whom he transmitted the charge. Unfortunately, he says, he has no information about other ancestors, he only knows the names of his father and grandfather; as his father died when he was 10 years old, it is his cousin, *biaoge* 表哥 (the son of his father's sister), who transmitted the rituals to him when he was 17. He says that the Daoist lineage to which he belongs, the Zixiaoguan 子肖觀,⁸ was founded by his ancestor, but he does not know his name. In his words, the Zixiaoguan is a school, *pai* 派, “a Daoist organization” (道教組織). His father's “friends in the Dao” *daoyou* 道友 belonged to the same “organization,” which had several temples; one of these friends also initiated him into ritual practice. To perform a *jiao* 醮 ritual, they had to look for other Daoists from the same temple organization only. The Daoists of Zixiaoguan are distributed within the Fengcheng

8 I thought that “子肖觀” should be written “紫霄觀,” but when I asked You Zongtao which spelling was the right one, he confirmed that it was “子肖觀.”

area. Zongtao also claims that his school originated from Sanqingshan 三清山 (in Jiangxi, about 150 km from Longhushan), where Daoism was flourishing during the Ming dynasty; he considers himself as a disciple of Sanqingshan Daoism, and specifies that this has nothing to do with the Jingming pai. I have not explored this information yet. He also complains that there are ever fewer Daoists (he means, *sanju daoshi* like him), and those who do not know to which *guan* they belong “are not authentic Daoists” *bushi zhenzheng de daoshi* 不是真正的道士.

Zongtao performs rituals in every association of the village.⁹ I will only present elements which are relevant to the theme of our discussion.

Xu Xun’s birthday takes place on the twenty-seventh day of the first lunar month. The emblematic objects of the associations are displayed: banners are stuck in front of the *huizhang*’s house, the wooden dragon is hung on a wall inside the house, and Xu Xun’s statue stands on an altar before the ancestors’ altar. The members bring incense, candles, paper-money, firecrackers, and paper ingots they burn outside. Tables for the banquet are installed. The Daoist performs a ritual called “Worship of the Dipper,” *baidou* 拜斗—generally performed for the benefit of communities as well as for individuals asking for longevity, avoiding calamities—to celebrate Xu Xun’s birthday. He visits the associations one after the other, beginning with the oldest. The ritual lasts a half hour, the *huizhang* takes his place on the left of the Daoist, which is “the honorable side”—after Marcel Granet’s words.¹⁰ During the ritual, the most striking rite is the Daoist’s reading of the names of the members written in the register of the association (*huipu* 會譜). As the Dipper rules over destiny, for each name, the Daoist throws two divination blocks to the ground in order to know the destiny of each member. At each throw, everybody around loudly says “Shun gao” 順筭 to invite the blocks to fall in an auspicious way; this rite serves to reinforce the sense of solidarity between the participants. A member of the

9 For a more detailed description of the Daoist rituals, see Isabelle Ang, “The Revival of the Cult of Xu Xun in Jiangxi Province,” 126–31.

10 Marcel Granet, “La droite et la gauche en Chine,” in *Études sociologiques sur la Chine* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953), 290–305.

hui holds out lighted incense sticks one by one to the Daoist master, who places as many sticks as there are members of the association in a container of raw rice while bowing to Xu Xun. After the ritual, the members share a community-wide banquet.

Xu Xun's ascension to heaven is celebrated from the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month to the first day of the eighth month.

The ritual of the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month is called "Setting up of the Immortal" (*anxian* 安仙). It marks the beginning of the fast (*feng zhai* 封齋) for the members of the *hui*. The *huizhang* takes his place on the left of the Daoist. The Daoist performs the ritual and reads the names of the members. After his departure, the members take the dragon, the banner, and the small statue of Xu Xun, and go around the village to present incense to the shrines dedicated to Tudigong 土地公, Longwang 龍王, Huoshen 火神, and to the village temple outside the village to present incense in Xu Xun's hall and to the village deities. In doing so, they anchor the cult of Xu Xun in the territory of the village. It is worth noting here that the Daoist does not accompany the associations to the temple.

On their pilgrimage day to Xishan, on the twenty-eighth of the seventh month, the associations leave the village at dawn and go through the holy places of the territory related to Xu Xun's cult—among them, the Huangtanggong, a temple dedicated to Xu Xun's master, Chen Mu—before paying homage to him in the main temple of Xishan. They stay there for a couple of hours, then come back and pay a visit to the temple of the village to "bring back the incense" (*hui xiang* 回香). The Daoist of the village accompanies the associations to Xishan; he performs a ritual in Xu Xun's hall for them and reads the names of the members of the associations.

The ritual of the first day of the eighth month is called "Take leave of the Immortal" (*xiexian* 謝仙). The *huizhang* takes his place on the left of the Daoist, who performs the ritual. Then the members take the dragon and the banner, and the Daoist accompanies them to the river bank. He performs a short ritual before the banner and the dragon are carried back to the *huizhang's* house. A banquet with the members of the *hui* marks the end of the fast.

The Daoists of the Yulong Wanshougong

The Daoist masters bear various responsibilities. They take care of the general management and current affairs of the temple. As official Daoists, they play an indispensable role in the economic and political spheres. On a political level, they have an important representative role, welcoming foreign Daoist delegations, and participating in Daoist meetings in other provinces, and in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia. They have close relationships with the officials of the provincial government in Nanchang, especially of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau of Jiangxi Province 江西省民族宗教事務局. For five years the *daozhang* 道長 of Yulong Wanshougong took part in a training class in Sichuan, organized by the Communist Party. The participants get lessons on the government's religious policies, the traditional culture, the international exchanges... These classes of indoctrination are of course related to the government's increasing control over religion. But this political aspect seems to have no direct impact on the pilgrimage, which continues from year to year. However, if the Daoists of Xishan did not agree to get involved in these activities, the cult of Xu Xun and the pilgrimage could not exist as they do. Anyway, I think that the political involvement of Daoists must be brought into consideration for our purpose here.

The Daoists organize the major events, among which the most important is the pilgrimage. One Daoist is in charge of the relationship with the associations: he asks them to come to his office to register, and to give the date they intend to come. He told me that in 2009, 500 to 600 groups participated in the pilgrimage (40,000 to 50,000 persons). He maintains links with the leaders of the pilgrimage associations, and sometimes pays a visit to them in order to encourage them to keep on taking part in the pilgrimage.

The Daoists also perform rituals, such as *ping'an qifu fashi* 平安祈福法事, a *jiao* ritual to ask for peace and benediction and to celebrate Xu Xun's birthday, on the twenty-seventh day of the first month. They perform rituals at the request of associations and individual worshippers all year long, and especially during the pilgrimage. In September 2018, a *kaiguang* 開光 ritual for a statue of Xu Xun was

performed in the Hall of the Three Officials for a temple association coming from Ruijin city 瑞金市 (Jiangxi), situated 360 km south of Xishan.

A Brief Analysis

How do we analyze this data, with a view to (re)considering the relationship between Daoism and local cults? Within its territory, the pilgrimage constitutes a total social fact¹¹ and a very specific example for thinking through the paradigms under consideration here. My aim is to show that all the elements which are involved are inseparable and intimately interrelated; moreover, they play equal and complementary roles in the accomplishment of the pilgrimage.

A schematic presentation of all operating actors will highlight a number of key features. Within the territory of the cult, there are many associations. The center of this territory is occupied by the main temple, and all around it are located many peripheral temples—the houses of the chiefs of associations and the village temples which all venerate Xu Xun. Ordained Daoist masters are attached to the main temple in the center, whereas non-ordained ones live and work in the periphery. The villages have a local identity and a territorial one, as they belong to the larger area of the cult.

Daoism and the Integration of a Local Cult into Its Territory

During the pilgrimage, the cult groups make a round-trip from the periphery to the center and back. In the periphery, Daoist rituals are mostly performed in the houses of the chiefs of the associations. On Xu Xun's birthday, they renew a sense of belonging to the community of the cult. Then, on the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month, during the *anxian* ritual, the Daoist plays a crucial role when he submits the names of the participants to Xu Xun. On the pilgrimage day, the Daoist of the village accompanies the associations to Xishan and performs a ritual for them.

11 The concept of “total social fact” was developed by Marcel Mauss; see his “Essai sur le don: Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques,” *L'Année sociologique*, N.S., 1 (1923–1924): 30–186.

Finally, on the last day of the celebration of Xu Xun's ascension to heaven, after the *xiexian* ritual, the Daoist goes with the associations to the river bank, where he performs a ritual. So, we can notice that during the preparation of the pilgrimage and during the pilgrimage itself, there is a strong interaction between Daoism and the local cult in the periphery and in the center of the territory as well. The Daoist rituals provide a liturgical framework for the local cult, temples of which are distributed within the region, and integrate the local associations into the whole body of the territory. The local Daoist master makes the link between local temples and the main temple.

In the center, the official Daoist masters provide rituals at the request of the pilgrimage groups. They also keep in touch with the chiefs of associations.

Both types of Daoists belonging to different schools give prestations and perform different rituals, they play different and complementary roles in society and in the pilgrimage to Xishan. They all interact through mutual respect, without any antagonism. The Daoists of Xishan consider *sanju daoshi* as “traditional, common Daoists” *chuantong de, laobaixing de daoshi* 傳統的, 老百姓的道士.

We could say that a “bicephalous Daoism” permeates the cult of Xu Xun, and cooperates so as to maintain the territorial unit of the cult, which is particularly evident during the pilgrimage.

Xu Xun's Dual Status

Regarding another aspect of the question of the relationship between Daoism and local cults, let us hear what the Daoists say about Xu Xun. In Xishan, a Daoist told me that Xu Xun is a “deity of the Posterior Heaven” (*houtian zhi shen* 後天之神), a “Daoist deity” (*daojiao de shenxian* 道教的神仙), who became a god through personal practice and good deeds, while the numerous popular deities are not Daoist ones (*minjian de shen bu shuyu daojiao* 民間的神不屬於道教). In Youjiacun, the Daoist says that Xu Xun was a human being who did good deeds, therefore many legends circulated among the people; he insists that Xu Xun has a temporal dimension, while the Three Pure Ones or the Jade Emperor do not. Moreover,

he considers that Xu Xun has not attained a high grade equal to theirs yet. In one way, the two Daoists say the same thing, but the second one emphasizes Xu Xun's mundane dimension. These different perspectives have something to do with the substratum of Xu Xun's cult. At an earlier stage, Xu Xun was a local deity; later, because of the considerable development of his cult and of the Jingming pai, he became a "Daoist god," accepted into the Daoist pantheon. In the village, Xu Xun is one god among the others, his temple is located beside the temple of the god of the village, which is the most important for the villagers. By contrast, in Xishan he is the most important deity. It is as if he had a twofold identity, but it does not imply any antagonism. None of the actors has an interest in objecting to the way Xu Xun is considered and venerated. Moreover, there is no pre-eminence of "official Daoists" over "local Daoists" and local cults. I suggest that the inclusive territorial framework of the cult is one of the guarantors of this situation.

As noted above, we saw that the village has a double identity, a local one and a territorial one. Xu Xun has a double status: in the village he is less important than the god of the village, but in Xishan he is the most important god. Through these double identities, it is possible to state that Xu Xun's representations correspond to the local cult on one hand, and to the official cult in the other hand. What I consider as the "official cult" of Xu Xun refers to his cult in the official temple, which is managed by the "official" Daoist priests who are in charge—among many other tasks—of the organization of the pilgrimage. The Daoists have a close relationship with the local government and the local police. These last years, they have been asked to participate in education and religious campaigns, in order to improve their ability to transmit the political values of the government. The temple of Xishan is recognized by the state, while the small temples in the countryside are only tolerated, they do not have any official status. Here are some of the reasons why I distinguish between "official cult" and "local cult"; it does not concern the cult of Xu Xun itself, but rather the places where Xu Xun is worshipped, and the different roles of the actors who perform rituals within the society. I would like to put forward the complementarity between the two types of Daoists in perpetuating, and even

expanding the pilgrimage and the cult; in this way, the boundaries between the local and the official cult are permeable.

The Place of the Associations within the Local Cult

Groups of people decide to create a pilgrimage association, as it has been the case since the beginning of the twentieth century in Youjiacun. Henceforth the associations invite the Daoist master to perform rituals in the house of their annual chiefs. They have an essential role as providers of a mainspring for Daoist rituals. It is also important to notice that they enjoy a certain degree of autonomy in making decisions and in practicing religious activities. They have their own regulations, stipulating that the chief bears the expense of the rituals and the banquets, is responsible for the organization of the religious activities, and has to respect rules of high morals; it is a prestigious function inside the association and inside the village as well, and a social and economic incentive. In return, Xu Xun will reward his good deeds and keep his family under his protection during the whole year.

There are three important times during the year when no Daoist ritual occurs in the religious activities of the associations, because they are not regarded as the Daoist master's concern: 1) on the ninth of the first month, when the deities of the village are assembled in front of the Shentang 神塘, the Divine Pond to honor the Jade Emperor, the associations bring their statues of Xu Xun, but the Daoist master does not attend the event; then the statues of the village deities, except Xu Xun's, are paraded in sedan chairs through the lanes of the village; 2) when the associations pay a visit to all the village deities on the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month; 3) on the twenty-eighth day of the seventh month, when after returning from Xishan, the associations bring back the incense to their village temple. These three events are handled by the associations themselves, without involving the Daoist master. Every year the associations delineate the boundaries of the local cult of Xu Xun in the village, and re-enact its link with the root temple within the territorial cult. This provides further evidence of their autonomy of action in conducting their relationship with their deity. It is also noteworthy that the birthday of the Jade Emperor, who is

the chief of the Daoist pantheon, is celebrated by all the deities of the villagers, but as Xu Xun is the saint of the *hui*, not that of all villagers, he does not participate in the parade in the village; his territory is a different one.

The associations play an important role in structuring the local cult and the local society. They have their autonomy as cult communities, but we saw above that they also rely upon Daoist masters' involvement.

Conclusion

The interpretation of my fieldwork materials does not necessarily challenge the paradigm of “Daoism as a liturgical framework for local cults,” but I think that working on the relationship of Daoism to local cults requires taking into account the religious, social, economic, and political environment. Daoism does provide a liturgical framework for local cults, but it is also important to consider the specific reasons why association members still request Daoist rituals, and why they still join together several times a year. In the village, the local Daoist does not take part in all the ritual activities of the associations, and in the main temple, the Daoists are in charge of many tasks that are not ritual ones. Similarly, Daoists are integrated into many of the local cults' ritual activities, but not into all of them. Local cults sometimes need Daoists, but sometimes they do not.

Another aspect of the pilgrimage is worth mentioning: its mundane horizontal framework has to be completed with a spiritual vertical one, which concerns the relationship between the actors of the pilgrimage and heaven, represented by the cosmic pantheon. In this vertical relationship, the Daoist rituals integrate the associations into the order of the universe, making a “cosmic adjustment,” to borrow Stephan Feuchtwang's words.¹² The Daoists agree to be the intermediaries between the *hui* and the local saint they worship, and between them and heaven as

12 Stephan Feuchtwang, *Popular Religion in China: The Imperial Metaphor* (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 2001), 44, 161–63.

well. Religious fervor of the worshippers, who throughout the year have fulfilled their duty towards the saint and then flood the temple in Xishan, transported with emotion, is linked to their expectation of the deity's answer to their requests. The intercession of Daoists is crucial here, too.

In her study of the history of the pilgrimage to Miaofengshan 妙峰山, Susan Naquin, talking about this “regional pilgrimage center in early modern China,” holds that “the organizations ... appear to be its most significant patrons.”¹³ Indeed, no Daoists are mentioned as being linked to the associations or as providers of rituals for them, probably because there are no available documents about this. I think it necessary to develop a new approach of the study of pilgrimages in China through the relationship between local cults and Daoist masters. If we raise the following question, referring to Adam Chau's chapter of this volume: during the pilgrimage to Xishan, which encompasses associations, two “kinds” of Daoist masters, local temples, and a main temple, who are the hosts, who are the guests? I would say that the answers differ depending on the role played by the Daoists. In the village of Youjiacun, the associations are, without any ambiguity, the hosts, and the Daoist master is their guest, hired by them. The chief of association stands at the left of the Daoist, in a “on top” position, to use Chau's formula. While in the main temple of Xishan, the Daoists have an ambivalent position: On the one hand, they concentrate economic and political authority during and around the pilgrimage, being “pre-eminent agents” as such, but on the other hand, their liturgical role is limited to specific, most of the time individual, requests. Does their political power grant them a “host” status? I think that this aspect should be taken into consideration; they represent the local government and, more broadly, the state. If they decided not to host the pilgrimage, there would be no pilgrimage. On the other side, the pilgrimage was historically the initiative of local associations, without which it would not exist. Are the Daoists of Xishan both hosts and guests? The question remains open.

13 Susan Naquin, “The Peking Pilgrimage to Miao-feng Shan: Religious Organizations and Sacred Sites,” 368. The “organizations” are the pilgrimage associations.

The pilgrimage to Xishan is a total social fact that consists of different actors. They all need each other so that the pilgrimage continues to exist and its unity is preserved. The territorial unity of the cult of Xu Xun appears obvious when during the pilgrimage, people say: “The Perfected Lord Xu is the Sovereign of Happiness of the World of our Jiangxi [province] 許真君是我們江西的普天福主。” My short survey has to be continued and enriched, and would benefit from studies of pilgrimages taking place in other regions of China.

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鄉村道士何以維持地方宗教的活動： 以江西爲研究案例

洪 怡 莎*

摘 要

本文以江西西山鎮許遜（239–374）祖廟玉隆萬壽宮及其周邊的進香活動為例，來重思至今我們理解道教與地方宗教間的關係的典範。玉隆萬壽宮是進香活動的中心。本研究以進香活動的參與者為主要基礎：香客、香會組織，以及兩種道士。第一種道士是我田野調查的游家村的道士，他常年為香會做儀式；本文分析了他對推動村落連貫性的角色。另一種是淨明派道士，他們在進香活動期間應香客的要求在玉隆萬壽宮做儀式，同時有效組織整個進香活動。我認為進香活動的所有參與者都扮演平等和補充角色。這或許可以擴展我們對道教的認識典範。

關鍵詞：會、許遜、道教儀式框架、地方宗教、西山玉隆萬壽宮

* 作者係巴黎法蘭西學院副教授。