

---

書評 BOOK REVIEWS

---

*Ritual Words: Daoist Liturgy and the Confucian Liumen Tradition in Sichuan Province*, by Volker Olles. *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Band 83. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013. xviii, 253 pp. €68.00 (cloth).

## I. The Relation between the Liumen and the Fayan tan Traditions

Volker Olles' *Ritual Words* is a study of the community of the Liumen 劉門, or Liu School 劉門教, and its interaction with Daoist ritual traditions in western Sichuan 四川. The Liumen began with an academy established in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by Liu Yuan 劉沅 (1768–1856), a scholar born in the Shuangliu 雙流 district near Chengdu 成都, where the study of Confucian classics and Daoist (and sometimes Buddhist) methods of meditation were taught. According to Olles, Liu Yuan's contribution as a student of Confucian learning has been well studied by scholars in Taiwan. Yet, as far as I know, Olles' study is the first one that deals with the religious dimensions of the Liumen tradition thoroughly. As the Liumen tradition is composed of various aspects, including many from Confucianism and Daoism, scholars have not been able to approach it easily. I am not a stranger to the Daoist religious texts produced in Sichuan, but almost all the information about Liumen given below is derived from Olles' work. This study is filled with many facts and perspectives that are really new to us.

Olles gives two reasons why the focus of his study is on the interplay between Liumen and Daoism, even though the activity of Liumen was not confined to Daoism. One is that both Daoism and Liumen originated in Sichuan and it is more than likely that the latter was connected to and influenced by the former. I am not sure whether or not the fact that Daoism originated in Sichuan has distinctive effects on the interrelation between Daoism and local culture in Sichuan when compared to other regions in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and so forth. Yet, as Daoism has beyond any doubt been one of the most important cultural players in western

Sichuan, it is natural to examine the relations between the religious tendencies found in Liumen and local Daoist traditions. The second reason is that Daoism has so far been better understood and is more accessible to international scholars than the Liumen tradition, and so the study of Liumen in the context of Sinological and interdisciplinary discussions is best furthered when it is examined in its relation to Daoism (10–11). After reading this study, I believe that the author has made a truly successful choice. When he puts the Liumen tradition against the background of Daoism in Sichuan, the multiple layers of local Daoism rise to the surface. The local contexts of religion also become much clearer when a link with the Liumen tradition is added.

The title of this book, *Ritual Words*, is an English translation of the *Fayan huizuan* 法言會纂 (Compendium of Ritual Words), a large compilation of ritual manuals edited by Liu Yuan and his disciples. The second half of Olles' volume is dedicated to the synopsis and analysis of the content of the liturgical texts in the *Fayan huizuan*. However, his study is not confined to a textual study of this manual. As Olles describes, the content and history of the formation of the *Fayan huizuan* are deeply related to the activity of Liumen from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, to the various local Daoist traditions of Sichuan, and to the history of the ritual communities that have transmitted these traditions.

Olles refers to four kinds of local living traditions in western Sichuan. Two of them have depended mainly on the liturgical texts assembled in the *Guangcheng yizhi* 廣成儀制 (Ritual Systematization of Master Guangcheng), a large compendium of Daoist liturgical manuals first compiled by Chen Fuhui 陳復慧, a distinguished ritual master of Sichuan Daoism during the Qianlong 乾隆 era (1736–1795). Olles mentions that the manual is “still used in the liturgical practice of Quanzhen 全真 monasteries and householder priests today” (53–54). The branch of householder priests who use the *Guangcheng yizhi* belongs to what is called the Guangcheng tan 廣成壇 (Altar of Master Guangcheng), “an offshoot of the monastic Quanzhen” (53). The third local living tradition in western Sichuan that Olles explores is a branch of householder Daoist priests closely related to the Liumen tradition—that is called the priests of the Fayan tan 法言壇 (Altar of Ritual Words). The Fayan tan is a

tradition that produced (or was it produced by?) the compendium of liturgical texts mentioned above, the *Fayan huizuan*. And the last tradition Olles treats is, of course, the Liumen tradition, which is a local non-monastic literati tradition in Sichuan.

Olles gives us a spectrum of the different types of Daoism in western Sichuan, arranged from the monastic Quanzhen tradition to the syncretic tradition of Liumen in which Confucianism and Daoism stand side by side. The author gives a clear picture of some of the interactions between the local traditions connected through the *Fayan huizuan*. The *Fayan huizuan* seems to be a knot by which the Liumen tradition is connected to the other local Daoist traditions. Obviously, to choose the *Fayan huizuan* as an object of study is to choose a strategic standpoint from which to obtain a perspective on the interrelated, local liturgical traditions in Sichuan. The author also includes the results of his field study of the contemporary Liumen community. Thus, historical, textual, and anthropological methodologies are combined to examine the ecology of Daoist ritual activities in local cities in modern Sichuan.

However, in my reading of Olles' study, the relation between the Liumen tradition and the Fayan tan appears to have been unstable. Olles writes, "Although *the Fayan tan lineage is only a part of the Liumen tradition*, it constitutes the most active and visible aspect of the latter in the present day" (12, emphasis added). In another place Olles states, "Before 1949, many Daoist priests in Sichuan were affiliated with the Liumen community and used *Fayan huizuan* scriptures in their ritual activities. They eventually constituted an independent liturgical tradition of non-monastic Daoism in the area, which is still extant and known under the name of Fayan tan (Altar of Ritual Words)" (53). And in another place: "The Fayan tan branch of householder Daoism evolved under the patronage of the Liu family and the Liumen movement. After the Liumen community had officially ceased to exist in communist China, the Fayan tan ritual tradition nevertheless survived even the Cultural Revolution with its massive attacks on religions and traditional culture. This shows that the Fayan tan tradition had successfully established itself as a Daoist lineage and as such was (and still is) able to function independently of the Liumen community" (67).

It seems that the relation between the two traditions—the Liumen and the Fayan tan—changed over the course of their histories. The process of the compilation of the *Fayan huizuan* shows that the *Fayan huizuan* itself and the Fayan tan lineage were established in the intermediary field where the Liumen met the tradition of the *Guangcheng yizhi*. Although the *Fayan huizuan* was edited by Liu Yuan and his disciple Liu Fen 劉芬, it is noteworthy that the Daoist texts on the basis of which the *Fayan huizuan* was formed were initially collected by Tao Daofu 陶道夫, who received direct transmission from Chen Fuhui, the editor of the *Guangcheng yizhi*, and that Tao Daofu also added relevant texts as a supplement. According to the chart showing the Fayan tan line of transmission given on page 70, Tao seems to have been the first disciple who essentially began the Fayan tan lineage. The texts collected by Tao were brought to Liu Yuan by Tao's disciple, Fan Daoheng 樊道恆. Attention to this aspect of the formation of the *Fayan huizuan* might give the impression that the lineage of the Fayan tan was an offshoot from Chen Fuhui and that it was fairly independent from the Liumen. However, it is interesting that Tao and Fan were also the disciples of Liu Yuan, and Liu Yuan was said to have revised and edited these ritual texts himself, which means that the entire process of collecting Daoist ritual texts was basically under the control of the Liumen.

Depending from which side one views this picture, the degree of independence of the Fayan tan lineage from the Liumen seems to differ. Yet, Olles' statements may give readers the impression that, on the whole, the degree of independence grew as time passed. Olles mentions in the quotation above that the year 1949 was a fairly clear line after which the Liumen was forced to become an underground movement and the Fayan tan became more independent from it. However, this subtle but substantial change had seemingly begun already in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Olles writes, "It appears . . . that the religious traits of the Liumen tradition grew stronger after the abolition of the civil service examination system in 1905 and again in Republican times (1912–1949)" (1). Olles notes that after the abolition of the examination system "the Liumen education could no longer serve the needs of those who wished to pursue a career in the imperial administration" (28). After Liu Yuan's death

in 1856, the Liumen School developed into a quasi-religious community, where not only Confucius and Laozi, but also Liu Yuan and his ancestors, were worshiped as founding spirits along with other Daoist deities. The Liumen community featured “practical activities like the internal transmission of *Jingyang gong* 靜養功,<sup>1</sup> the arrangement of liturgical festivals, and the establishment of charitable institutions” (31). The community also acted as a patron by using its economic and cultural capital to support and watch over the management of local Daoist institutions and sacred sites such as Laojun shan 老君山, the Qingyang gong 青羊宮, the Erxian an 二仙庵, and so forth.

In sum, the Liumen tradition started as a syncretic learning community combining Confucianism and Daoism, and gradually developed into a compound religious network where self-cultivation, charitable work, and worship of deities came together. During such a transition, it seems natural that the Fayan tan—a tradition of Daoist masters who conducted rituals mainly for celebrating “the festivals . . . of the saints to repent of one’s sins,” and for releasing “the souls of one’s ancestors and orphaned spirits from suffering in the underworld in order to fulfill one’s filial duty and to extend benevolence to desolate souls” (64–65)—became ever more important to the Liumen tradition. By the time the Liumen was stigmatized as heterodox after 1949, the Fayan tan seems to have already obtained enough stability as an independent liturgical tradition to survive the successive social changes.

While the historical transition of the relation between the Liumen and the Fayan tan traditions seems to leave much room for the reader’s speculation, the more abstract relation between these two is clearly laid out by the author. He focuses our attention on the division of labor between the Way (Dao 道) and ritual (*fa* 法), employed by Zeng Huacong 曾華聰, a late expert priest of the Fayan tan (68–69). According to Olles, the notion of *fa* is closely related to the Daoist ritual methods transmitted in the Fayan tan, while the notion of Dao refers to the method of self-cultivation, which is also affiliated with the Confucian idea of cultivation.

---

<sup>1</sup> A method of inner alchemical self-cultivation transmitted to Liu Yuan by a Daoist hermit, Yeyun Laoren 野雲老人 (23–25).

Olles also compares this reciprocal pairing of the Way and ritual to the “polar attractors” of Confucian sagehood (*sheng* 聖) and spiritual power (*ling* 靈) introduced by Kenneth Dean.<sup>2</sup> Olles connects this pair as follows:

From a traditional Chinese perspective, however, the notions of *sheng* and *ling* would hardly be perceived as a dichotomy or contradiction, but as two complementary spheres of activity and function in the human quest to realize and embody the Dao. The Liumen tradition unites and transcends these spheres through its unique division of labor between the Way (self-cultivation, Confucian erudition, core community) and Ritual (communal liturgy, Daoist methods, Fayantan). (190)

While I am very interested in Olles’ comparison of Zeng Huacong’s idea of the relationship between Dao and *fa* with Dean’s concept of spheres of activity and function, I am not totally convinced by his conclusion that “the Liumen tradition unites and transcends these spheres.” From Dean’s anthropological perspective, *sheng* and *ling* comprise a pair of notions describing a ritual field as a force-field that encompasses the contradicting forces of fusion and fission.<sup>3</sup> But from another viewpoint, I see a strong political tension between *sheng* and *ling*. If we recall that Stephan Feuchtwang mentions that “*ling* is the dangerous quality, belief in which imperial and republican regimes sought to control,”<sup>4</sup> the tension between *sheng* and *ling* can be regarded as a metaphor for the ruling power of states and unruly power of minor communities. I think such a perspective is quite different from the framework supported by “a traditional Chinese perspective.” Should we stop regarding the political tension between *sheng* and *ling* as a dichotomy in order to place them within the realm of traditional Chinese perspectives? If we do so, I am afraid the most exquisite aspect of the idea of pairing *sheng* and *ling* will be lost.

But I should stop this argument here because it would lead us

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Dean, *Lord of the Three in One: The Spread of a Cult in Southeast China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 58.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 58–59.

<sup>4</sup> Stephan Feuchtwang, *The Imperial Metaphor: Popular Religion in China* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 141.

away from the substantial point raised by Olles. The point here is that a priest of the Fayan tan (Zeng Huacong)—as well as Liu Xianxin 劉咸炘, a scholarly successor of Liu Yuan—deliberately compared the relation between the ritual methods transmitted in the Fayan tan lineage and the body of self-cultivation teaching in the Liumen tradition with the relation between *fa* and Dao.

The words of Zeng Huacong and Liu Xianxin on page 68 (quoted below) remind me of the traditional Daoist way of expressing the relation between the Dao and *fa* as the relation between body (*ti* 體) and usage (*yong* 用). The great ritual compendium *Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元 (DZ 1220) explains that “the Dao is the body of *fa*, while *fa* is usage of the Dao” 蓋道者，法之體；法者，道之用 (76.4b). The difference between the Dao and *fa* is also explained as a difference in time of emergence, that is, before or after the formation of heaven and earth (*tiandi* 天地). The Dao had established itself before the formation of heaven and earth without form and words, while *fa* emerged after heaven and earth (76.1a). So, in this picture the Dao comes first, and then *fa* develops from it as an offshoot. Yet, the same chapter in the *Daofa huiyuan* insists they are not separated in reality (76.40a).

This traditional thinking about the relation of division and unity between the Dao and *fa* seems compatible with the thinking of Zeng Huacong and Liu Xianxin. Olles translates a passage from an internal handbook containing instructions by Zeng Huacong:

The Dao governs ritual; ritual depends on the Dao; the Dao comes first; ritual comes second. (68)

Olles then goes on to translate from a tract by Liu Xianxin:

The ritual methods are emitted by the Dao; [you] must achieve [some success] in embodying the Dao, only then will your ritual practice prove efficacious. (68)

It seems worthwhile to consider the possibility that the relationship between the Dao and *fa*, a conceptual issue with which the Liumen and Fayan tan grappled, had its roots in traditional Daoists' perspectives. This would show that the people living in the tradition of the Liumen and the Fayan tan imagined the division and unity of the Dao and *fa* in a traditional way.

Olles tells us that this unity of the Dao and *fa* was split after 1949, and “the Liumen tradition as a distinct social and cultural formation virtually vanished from public life, since the Liumen community and its organizational structures were destroyed or forced to go underground” (50). Today, the Fayan tan “operates independently and outside the framework of the Liumen community” (50). Yet, I wonder *how* people could have separated the Fayan tan from the Liumen community in this time of suppression. Olles mentions that the Fayan tan was also in an unfavorable position, since its history was shared with the Liumen community, which was severely stigmatized as heterodox (64). Why is it that the Daoist aspects of the tradition eventually survived while its Confucian counterparts did not? More detailed historical studies of this process of the separation of the Dao and *fa* would give us further insight into the relationship between modernization and traditional religions.

## II. The Relation between the *Fayan huizuan* and the *Guangcheng yizhi*

In part 2 of his study, Olles gives summaries and analyses of each liturgical manual collected in the *Fayan huizuan*. It is worth mentioning that the author explains the contents of this large compendium of Daoist rituals in a very objective manner. He also compares many rituals in the compendium with rituals actually performed by the Fayan tan priests in Sichuan today. In my review, however, I am not going to discuss these details. Instead, I would like to raise one question related to the comparison of the *Guangcheng yizhi* and the *Fayan huizuan*.

The relation between the ritual tradition of the *Fayan huizuan* and that of the *Guangzheng yizhi* is one of the important subjects of Olles' study. Examination of this relation will give us a better understanding of the position the Liumen and Fayan tan traditions take in the gradations of local Daoist religions. The author points out that Chen Fuhui's work, the *Guangcheng yizhi*, and the *Guangcheng* tradition constituted a basis for the compilation of the *Fayan huizuan* and the establishment of the Fayan tan tradition (63). However, there are also many differences between these two texts,

and some of these differences are not simply matters of technical detail, but also involve their fundamental characteristics as Daoist texts. To put it more precisely, the Daoist priests mentioned in these two compendiums seem to belong to different categories of Daoist priests with different qualification backgrounds. Olles points out in detail the overlaps and differences between these two compendiums, but does not necessarily refer to the differences of the qualification backgrounds of the priests. I would like to point out some differences between the *Guangcheng yizhi* and the *Fayan huizuan*, which seems to be relevant to this question.

Let me begin with a point that has already been mentioned by Olles. Traditional Daoist ritual manuals, including the *Guangcheng yizhi*, frequently indicate that Daoist priests should clarify their own titles of celestial office (*juzhi* 具職) when addressing the celestial bureaucracy.<sup>5</sup> Yet, as Olles points out, the introductory remarks of the *Fayan huizuan* state that priests (*fashi* 法師) should not refer to themselves with official titles of the celestial hierarchy (80). One remark states, “Why do you have to imitate the title of official position (*zhihao* 職號) in vain to run the risk of asking for misfortunes?”<sup>6</sup> The title of official position is important for Daoist priests because it is one of the certifications they have as Daoist ritual priests who are legitimized by celestial authority. The statement in the *Fayan huizuan*, which prohibits priests from using titles, seems to suggest that the Fayan tan priests conducted their liturgy on the basis of qualifications different from those of traditional Daoist priests.

A few examples from other materials can illuminate this same question. It is interesting that in traditional manuals Daoist priests tend to refer to themselves as “subject” (*chen* 臣) when they address

<sup>5</sup> For instances in the *Guangcheng yizhi*, see *Hetu sanchen xingxiang wanchao ji* 河圖三辰星象晚朝集, 7a; *Sigong taiyang zhengchao quanji* 祀供太陽正朝全集, 10b; *Leiting shuijiao zhengqi sansheng quanji* 雷霆水醮正啟三聖全集, 4b; *Baomiao sanyao chanhui quanji* 保苗三曜懺悔全集, 14b; all in *Guangcheng yizhi*, in *Zangwai daoshu* 藏外道書, comp. Hu Daojing 胡道靜 et al. (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1992–1994), 14:4, 13, 29, 85ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Fayan huizuan*, “Fanli” 凡例, 3b, in *Zangwai daoshu*, 30:462.

the celestial bureaucracy.<sup>7</sup> Yet, in the *Fayan huizuan* priests tend instead to refer to themselves using the term “disciple” (*dizi* 弟子).<sup>8</sup> In the *Fayan huizuan*, priests also use the term “people” (*zhao* 兆) to refer to themselves, a practice reflected in other traditional Daoist manuals, including the *Guangcheng yizhi*. There seems to be no evidence that *fashi* referred to themselves as *chen*.

The fact that ritual priests in the *Fayan huizuan* do not use official titles or refer to themselves as *chen* could possibly suggest that the ritual priests of the Fayan tan avoid using metaphors reminiscent of a bureaucracy. One might also speculate that they want to approach the supernatural through a quasi-privatized relationship, such as that of master and disciple, rather than the more formal relationship of subject and emperor. In either case, the priests of the Fayan tan appear to place themselves in a relationship with the celestial institution different from the way the priests using the *Guangcheng yizhi* place themselves.

In some manuals included in the *Guangcheng yizhi*, we find the ritual of Lightning the Incense Burner (*yalu* 發爐), which seems to be absent in the *Fayan huizuan*. The *yalu* ritual is one of the most ancient elements of Daoist liturgy, seen already before the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Through this ritual, a Daoist priest summons several sets of twenty-four or thirty-six divine messengers from his own body in order to inform the local gods about the start of a ritual.<sup>9</sup> This ritual element shows literally that the body of the Daoist ritual priest and the Daoist ritual space function as the connector between the celestial institution and local gods. To be able to hold these

<sup>7</sup> In the *Guangcheng yizhi*, see, for example, *Hetu sanchen xingxiang wanchao ji*, 5b, 6a–b; *Longwang zhengchao quanji* 龍王正朝全集, 1a; *Sigong shuifu quanji* 祀供水府全集, 5b; all in *Guangcheng yizhi*, in *Zangwai daoshu*, 14:3, 24, 38ff.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, *Fayan huizuan*, 14.1a–b, in *Zangwai daoshu*, 30:511, where a person who is referred to as a *fashi* (1a3) addresses him or herself as *dizi* on the same page (1b9). The same person also refers to him or herself as “one who transmits the teachings” (*sijiao* 嗣教); *Fayan huizuan*, 14.17a10, in *Zangwai daoshu*, 30:519. Similarly, we find in another place a *fashi* who is mentioned as holding a ball of water and reciting two spells clearly addressing him or herself as *dizi*; *Fayuan huizuan*, 35.8b6, 9a5, in *Zangwai daoshu*, 30:619, 620.

<sup>9</sup> See Poul Andersen, “Lighting the Incense Burner,” in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio (London: Routledge, 2008), 1:400–401.

divine messengers within the body possibly constitutes qualification for being a Daoist priest in the *Guangcheng yizhi*. I wonder whether the Fayan tan priests are able to conduct their rituals without such qualification.

The Daoist priests reflected in the liturgical texts of the *Fayan huizuan* seem to have different qualifications from those reflected in the *Guangcheng yizhi*. Was the difference brought about by a commitment by the Confucian Liumen tradition to the Daoist traditions in Sichuan? It would not be meaningless to consider this difference between the two textual traditions in order to understand further the interaction between the Liumen and the Fayan tan.

Olles' study of the liturgical tradition of the Fayan tan and its interaction with the Liumen tradition has successfully opened up a new horizon not only for scholars who study the religions of Sichuan, but also for a wider range of readers who are interested in Daoist societies in transition from the late imperial era to today. This study gives us a totally new picture of Sichuan local intellectual and spiritual culture, where different but mutually interacting Daoist and Confucian liturgical traditions have been practiced by local people. It also depicts how such traditional liturgical traditions have survived and changed through the modern rearrangement of spiritual culture. In sum, this study not only opens up new ways to approach the study of local religious traditions in Sichuan, but also provides a new topic of research and so opens up much opportunity for future research. In his preface, Olles mentions that this study was first intended as a full-scale examination of the Confucian Liumen tradition, but the book's focus eventually shifted to the interaction between Liumen and Daoism (xv). I am looking forward to seeing his full-scale study of the Liumen tradition in the future.

Yuria Mori  
Waseda University