

The Transmission of the Cult of Lü Dongbin to Sichuan in the Nineteenth Century, and the Transformation of the Local Religious Milieu*

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Abstract

In the last decade, religious texts and practices in the Qing dynasty have been the subject of many studies. As is evident in this collection, much work has concentrated on the cult of Lü Dongbin and the spirit-writing textual production related to this cult. These work have allowed us to understand the complexity of religious life in Qing China, and the interaction between spirit writing, printing, and local religious communities. In this process, attention has been mostly given to coastal regions and to Jiangnan, where much of the production and diffusion of texts happened. This article, on the other hand, traces the diffusion of Lü Dongbin worship from Jiangnan to Sichuan in the nineteenth century. This transmission is linked to different but intertwined processes: (1) The

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widespread diffusion of spirit writing and of local printing presses in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; (2) the massive migration to Sichuan from coastal areas throughout the Qing and especially in the nineteenth century; (3) the popularity of the Lüzu cult, and the Jiaqing canonization of Lü Dongbin in 1804; and (4) the popularity of charitable activities like the *xizi* 惜字 practice among Confucian literati, spreading from Jiangnan throughout China.

Despite the wealth of textual and historical evidence available in Sichuan, this article focuses on only one collection, the *Lüzu huiji* 呂祖彙集 (1849), and the site where it was received, Yuantong 元通, Chongyang 崇陽 (Chongzhou 崇州), in Sichuan. Its fullness and complexity, the abundance of sources, and the traces found on the site today provide enough material for an in-depth study. Looking at this multilayered site will shine a light on the intersection of religious beliefs and practices, textual production and transmission, and commercial activity in nineteenth-century Sichuan.

Keywords: Lüzu, Sichuan, *Lüzu huiji*, transmission, Qing Daoism

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“What Lüzu received from above was transmitted from Confucius and Mencius.”¹

In the past decade, religious texts and practices in the Qing dynasty have been the subject of many studies. As is evidenced in this collection, much work has concentrated on the cult of Lü Dongbin and on the production of text received through spirit writing from Lü. Specifically, the recent close analysis of the *Daozang jiyao* 道藏輯要 corpus has opened the doors to the critical study of Qing Daoism in general, and to the cult of Lü Dongbin and its related textual production and transmission in particular.² These work have allowed us to understand the complexity of religious life in Qing China, and the interaction between spirit writing, printing, and local religious communities. In this process, attention has been mostly given to coastal regions and Jiangnan, where much of the production and diffusion of texts happened.

This article, on the other hand, traces the diffusion of Lü Dongbin worship, spirit-writing activities, and the printing and dissemination of revealed texts, from Jiangnan to Sichuan in the nineteenth century. Little in-depth study of religious texts and practices has been devoted to Sichuan, so this work is part of a survey of the available materials in libraries, on gazetteers and on the ground in Sichuan, aiming to shed some light onto this important and yet understudied area, in order to understand the process of “localization” of Lüzu belief.³

The transmission from Jiangnan to Sichuan is linked to different but intertwined processes, which I refer to throughout the article:

¹ *Lüzu huiji*, *juan 1*, *Lüzu huiji Zongxu* 呂祖彙集總序 (Su Zongdai), in *Zhonghua xu daoang* 中華續道藏 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1999), vol. 19, 1b.

² *Daozang Jiyao* Project, initiated by the late Monica Esposito, now under the general editorship of Lai Chi Tim, at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. For the electronic text, see <http://www.daozangjiyao.org/dzjy/texts/dzjy>.

³ This point of view is also the starting point of Shiga Ichiko’s paper in this volume, where she analyzes the process of localization of the Lüzu belief in the area of Lingnan 嶺南 (Southern China, especially Guangdong and Guangxi), in the same period of time. Shiga Ichiko 志賀市子, “Qingmo Minchu Lingnan diqu de Lü Dongbin xinyang zhi difanghua: yi shengdi yu jingdian wei tantao zhongxin 清末民初嶺南地區的呂洞賓信仰之地方化：以聖地與經典為探討中心。”

(1) The widespread diffusion of spirit writing and of local printing presses in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries;

(2) The massive migration to Sichuan from coastal areas throughout the Qing and especially in the nineteenth century;

(3) The popularity of the Lüzu cult, and the Jiaqing canonization of Lü Dongbin in 1804; and

(4) The popularity of charitable activities like the *xizi* 惜字 practice among Confucian literati, spreading from Jiangnan throughout China.

This study thus provides a glimpse into the religious complexity of the period and of the place, and continues to question the categories we assign to certain beliefs and practices. Specifically, the materials challenge the well-known discourse and rhetoric of *sanjiao heyi* 三教合一, and push us to look further into the relationship between merchant activities, Confucian virtues, and Daoist self-cultivation.

The main sources used in this study are woodblock printed collections published in Sichuan, mostly gathered at the Sichuan provincial library and at the Sichuan University library, records in local gazetteers, stele inscriptions at Daoist temples and local altars, and visual evidence from religious sites still extant in Sichuan today.⁴

⁴ The main primary sources for this article are listed here. (1) Two different editions of the *Lüzu huiji*: *Lüzu huiji* 呂祖彙集 (1849), *juan* 1–34, with its appendix *Lüzu huiji fu* 呂祖彙集附 (1949), *juan* 1–14, and the second edition, *Lüzu huiji* 呂祖彙集 (1851). The 1849 original print is available only at the Sichuan provincial library and at the Shanghai municipal library. I have had access only to the Sichuan provincial library copy. There are two incomplete modern reprints of the 1851 edition: *Lüzu huiji*, *juan* 1–20 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1975), and *Lüzu huiji*, *juan* 1–20, *Zhonghua xu dao zang* 中華續道藏, *chuiji* 初集, vol. 19 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1999), 577–810. They reproduce only twenty of thirty-four *juan*, and do not reproduce the appendix. A comparison of the two prints (1849 and 1851) reveals that they were printed from the same woodblocks, but the 1851 edition has a new preface and rearranges the order of the other prefaces. (2) Two gazetteers for Chongzhou: *Chongqing zhou zhi* 崇慶州志 (1813, Harvard copy), and *Zengxiu Chongqing zhou zhi* 增修崇慶州志 (1870, Harvard copy). (3) Stele inscriptions for Sichuan temples, and Sichuan gazetteers as found in the Database of Chinese Local Records (*Zhongguo fangzhi ku di yi di er heji* 中國方志庫第一、第二合輯).

Despite the wealth of textual and historical evidence available in Sichuan, this article focuses on only one collection, the *Lüzü huiji* 呂祖彙集 (1849), and the site where it was received, Yuantong 元通, Chongyang 崇陽 (Chongzhou 崇州), in Sichuan. Its fullness and complexity, the abundance of sources, and the traces found on the site today provide enough material for an in-depth study. Looking at this multilayered site will shine a light on the intersection of religious beliefs and practices, textual production, and commercial activity in nineteenth-century Sichuan. However, this study is not the only representative of the variety of Lüzu worship activities in Sichuan, which will have to be uncovered in further analyses.

The article is divided into four sections. The first briefly discusses the Lüzu-related texts produced through spirit writing in eighteenth-century China. The second considers the large migration of populations to Sichuan throughout the Qing dynasty, and especially in the nineteenth century, and the unstable political situation there. The third addresses the effect of the 1804 Jiaqing emperor edict canonizing Lü Dongbin, which resulted in widespread construction and reconstruction of altars dedicate to Lüzu across the country and also in Sichuan; this section also briefly describes the textual corpuses appearing in Sichuan after the canonization of Lüzu. The fourth focuses on the specific case study of the *Lüzü huiji* collection, its relationship with the community of Jiangxi merchants who sponsored it and received it at their guildhall, and its printing at the local Xizi gong, built at the same time by the same community of Jiangxi merchants. The article discusses the religious practices of these merchants, and whether or not they are coherent with the Daoist label we often assign to Lüzu-related activities. The conclusion summarizes my findings and discuss why the Sichuan case is unique and an important addition to the field.

I. The Coming Together of the *Lüzü Quanshu* in Qing China

In the late Ming to the early Qing there was a resurgence of spirit-writing altars in the wealthier coastal regions, especially Jiangsu

and Jiangxi. The textual production was specifically related to gods like Wenchang and Lüzu and sponsored by elite lay communities.⁵ There was also a widespread production of *shanshu*, *gongguo ge*, and *baojuan* with messages exhorting and exalting Confucian virtues.⁶ One good example is the Peng family, discussed by Daniel Burton-Rose in this collection.⁷ Lai Chi Tim 黎志添 has described in great detail the activity of communities gathered around spirit-writing altars across China, receiving texts from Lü Dongbin, in the late Ming and Qing: “By at least the late sixteenth century, the Patriarch Lü had begun to communicate via planchette with many devotees of spirit-writing altars established in the Jiangsu 江蘇 and Jiangxi 江西 regions.”⁸ These altars were generally located in private homes, and received individual texts such as, for example, the *Immortal Scripture in Eight Chapters* (*Bapin xianjin* 八品仙經). In the early to mid-Qing, however, we find that both the cult and the spirit-writing communities and activities had attracted larger audiences and spread to other parts of the country. Lai identifies at least four different communities, which received and printed interrelated collections, at different spirit-writing altars:

⁵ This has been discussed at length in several works: Monica Esposito, “The Invention of a Quanzhen Canon: The Wondrous Fate of the *Daozang jiyao*,” in *Quanzhen Daoists in Chinese Society and Culture, 1500–2010*, ed. Vincent Goossaert and Liu Xun (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Lai Chi Tim 黎志添, “Qingdai sizhong Lüzu quanshu yu Lüzu fuji daotan de guanxi 清代四種《呂祖全書》與呂祖扶乩道壇的關係,” *Zhongguo zhexue yanjiu jikan* 中國文哲研究集刊 42 (2013): 183–230; Vincent Goossaert, “Modern Daoist Eschatology: Spirit-Writing and Elite Eschatology in Late Imperial China,” in *Daoism: Religion, History and Society*, no. 6 (2014): 219–246, and “Spirit Writing, Canonization and the Rise of Divine Saviours: Wenchang, Lüzu and Guandi, 1700–1858”, *Late Imperial China*, 36.2, December 2015.

⁶ Cynthia Brokaw, *Ledgers of Merit and Demerit Social: Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (1991; repr., Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); Yau Chi-on, *Shan yu ren tong: Ming Qing yi lai de ci shan yu jiao hua* 善與人同：明清以來的慈善與教化 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), 236–248; and many others.

⁷ Daniel Burton-Rose, “A Prolific Spirit: Peng Dingqiu’s Posthumous Career on the Spirit Altar, 1720–1906” (this issue).

⁸ Lai Chi Tim, “The Cult of Spirit Writing in the Qing: The Daoist Dimension” *Journal of Daoist Studies*, vol. 8 (2015): 112–133.

(1) Liu Tishu 劉體恕 and Huang Chengshu 黃誠恕 published a *Lüzü quanshu* 呂祖全書 in thirty-two *juan* in 1744, with materials received from Lü Dongbin at various locations as well as at their own Hansan gong altar, in the city of Wuchang 武昌 in Hubei 湖北.

(2) Cai Laihe 蔡來鶴 and his adept Shao Zhilin 邵志琳 published a sixty-four-*juan* *Lüzü quanshu* in Hangzhou 杭州, in 1775.

(3) Shortly after the publication of the sixty-four-*juan* *Lüzü quanshu*, toward the end of the Qianlong era (1790s) in Suzhou 蘇州, a group of Lüzu devotees produced the *Lüzü quanshu zongzheng* 呂祖全書宗正, in eighteen *juan*.

(4) Jiang Yupu 蔣予蒲 printed a *Lüzü quanshu* at the Beijing Jueyan tan in 1803.⁹

Of these groups, the Hansan gong was very influential. While other communities were gathering at home, the Hansan gong established a separate altar for communications from Lüzu, on Chongfushan 崇府山. The group was also the first to compile a collection completely devoted to the scriptures received from Lü Dongbin, the *Lüzü quanshu*.¹⁰ It included many of the scriptures that had been received at other altars, but also added many newly received ones. This collection was not only the basis upon which many later collections were compiled, but it also had a great influence in the diffusion of the cult throughout China.¹¹ For example, texts from this compilation feature prominently in the *Daozang jiyao*, the most important collection of Daoist scriptures after the Ming Daoist Canon (1805–1816); the above-mentioned Jiang Yupu compiled it at the Jueyan tan spirit-writing altar.¹²

A century after the first publication of the Hansan gong *Lüzü quanshu*, we find evidence that this collection made it into Sichuan, and was incorporated in, or at least it inspired, local collections

⁹ Lai, “Qingdai sizhong Lüzü quanshu,” 183. The genealogy and interrelatedness of these communities are complex. Lai, “Cult of Spirit Writing,” presents a slightly different list of four groups.

¹⁰ *Lüzü quanshu* 呂祖全書 (1744), compiled by Liu Qiao 劉樵 (Shanghai: Qianqingtang, 1917).

¹¹ Lai, “Qingdai sizhong Lüzü quanshu,” 183–184. Also see Yin Zhihua 尹志華, “Lüzü quanshu de bianzuan he zengji 《呂祖全書》的編纂和增輯,” *Daojiao yanjiu* 道教學研究 no. 1 (2012): 16–21.

¹² Monica Esposito, *Creative Daoism* (Paris: University Media, 2013), 177–199.

received through spirit writing there. Examples are the *Lüzu huiji* (1849), which incorporates the majority of the texts of the Hansan gong *Lüzu quanshu*, but also the Lüzu-related textual corpus gathered and published on Leshan 樂山 by Li Xiyue 李西月 (1806–1856) and his group of self-defined Daoist practitioners the *xipai* 西派 (publication range between 1840 and 1844),¹³ and the Lüzu-related corpus of scriptures received and published by Fu Jinquan 傅金銓, in the area of Hechuan 合川, in the period between 1817 and 1842.¹⁴

II. Sichuan

The transmission of Lüzu scriptures from coastal areas to Sichuan is at least in part tied to the massive migration, throughout the Qing but especially in the nineteenth century, in the same direction. Sichuan had been a theater for chaos and unrest since the late Ming; especially significant were the 1621–1622 rebellions, when a coalition of Yi tribal leaders and millenarian groups (later termed White Lotus) launched attacks on various cities in Sichuan.¹⁵ After the devastation of the Ming-Qing transition, and especially the Zhang Xianzhong 張獻忠 (1606–1647) campaigns, Sichuan's population was decimated and the economy was in decline. Qing

¹³ This group published collections of writings attributed to Lüzu and Zhang Sanfeng between 1840 and 1844 at a local printing house, the Kongqing dongtian 空青洞天, located in the area between Leshan 樂山 and Emeishan 峨眉山. Textual evidence reveals that this community was well aware of the Hansan gong *Lüzu Quanshu* and of how it came together. I am currently working on a paper on Li Xiyue and the Leshan community, which published works attributed to Lü Dongbin and Zhang Sanfeng 張三峰.

¹⁴ Fu Jinquan received many scriptures from Lüzu and published them in the *Daoshu shiqi zhong*. Only one of them, the female alchemy text *Qingjing yuanjun Kunyuanjing* 清靜元君坤元經, comes directly from the Hansan gong *Lüzu quanshu*. On Fu Jinquan, his spirit writing community, and printing, see Valussi, "Printing and Religion in the Life of Fu Jinquan: Alchemical Writer, Religious Leader, and Publisher in Sichuan," *Daoism: Religion, History and Society*, no. 4 (2012): 1–52.

¹⁵ These events are discussed in Robert Entenmann, "Migration and Settlement in Sichuan, 1644–1796" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1982), 26–30; and Barend Ter Haar, *White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 225–227.

emperors, especially Kangxi and Yongzheng, actively encouraged migration to Sichuan from other areas, putting in place policies to attract and retain migrants.¹⁶ This led to a gradual increase in population, which became massive in the nineteenth century: Sichuan's population grew from three million in 1678, to twenty-two million in 1813, to eighty-five million in 1898.¹⁷ Thus, the majority of the population of Sichuan originated outside of the province, with most of the migration coming from Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, and Guangdong. Even though by the mid-Qing migration was becoming a problem—arable land was unavailable and many officials complained that the migrants were nothing more than bandits, contributing to social upheaval—the Qianlong emperor continued to support it, especially in view of the threat from non-Han populations that had culminated in the Jinchuan 金川 wars against ethnic Tibetan tribes (1747–1749 and 1771–1776).¹⁸ The territorial expansion that accompanied these campaigns was not followed by an expansion of the civil service, so these internal frontier regions lacked imperial control and central coordination. Entenmann contends that this continuous migration, widespread poverty, and the spread of millenarian ideology, led to the large-scale “White Lotus” rebellion at the end of the eighteenth century (1796–1804) in the area between Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Hubei.¹⁹

¹⁶ Land, livestock, and tax incentives were all offered. See Robert Entenmann, “Sichuan and Qing Migration Policy,” *Ch'ing-shih Wen-ti* 4 (1980): 35–54; and Entenmann, “Migration and Settlement in Sichuan.” Also see *Sichuan tongshi* 四川通史 (Chengdu: Sichuan Daxue Chubanshe, 1993), 5:178.

¹⁷ William Skinner, “Sichuan's Population in the Nineteenth Century: Lessons from Disaggregated Data,” *Late Imperial China* 8, no. 1 (June 1987): 1–79; Lu Zijian 魯子健, *Qingdai Sichuan caizheng shiliao* 清代四川財政史料 (Chengdu: Sichuan sheng Shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 1984), 737–738; *Sichuan tongshi*, 5:176–177.

¹⁸ Entenmann, “Sichuan and Qing Migration Policy”; Wang Gang 王綱, *Qingdai Sichuan shi* 清代四川史 (Chengdu: Chengdu keji daxue chubanshe, 1991), 310–391.

¹⁹ Entenmann, “Migration and Settlement in Sichuan,” 229–230, discusses the widespread banditry associated with migrants from Huguang, Jiangxi, and Guangdong, and discusses the social and political reasons behind the White Lotus rebellion in the Sichuan areas (233–242). Ter Haar, *White Lotus Teachings*, 250–261, discusses this uprising and its appellation as White Lotus
(Continue on next page)

According to Wensheng Wang, increased military control accompanied by a lack of proper civil administration were the causes of the continuous turmoil and of the difficulty in the pacification of these areas (especially the border of Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Hubei).²⁰

The period under discussion in this article is even more volatile. The Taiping Rebellion, and especially the local Li 李/Lan 藍 uprising (1859–1862) in Meishan 眉山, connected to it, contributed to a greatly unstable political and social situation.²¹ This period also saw the proliferation of spirit-writing altars all around Sichuan; some of these altars received texts with strong millenarian and eschatological discourse.²² Sichuan is also recognized as the

(Note 19—*Continued*)

by government officials. McMahon discusses in great detail the political reasons for the violent uprising associated with White Lotus beliefs (government corruption, heavy taxation, suppression of pacific religious practices), as well as the changes in addressing these revolts introduced by the Jiaqing reforms. Daniel McMahon, *Rethinking the Decline of China's Qing Dynasty: Imperial Activism and Borderland Management at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2015), 112–113.

²⁰ Wensheng Wang, *White Lotus Rebels and South China Pirates: Crisis and Reform in the Qing Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 27.

²¹ Lan Dashi 藍大順 (Lan Chaozhu 藍朝柱) and his younger brother Lan Ershun 藍二順 (Lan Chaoding 藍朝鼎), together with Li Duanda 李短韃 (Li Yonghe 李永和), in 1859 led a peasant rebellion in Yunnan caused by heavy taxation and inspired by the Taiping Rebellion; the rebellious forces entered Sichuan in October of the same year, occupied the important salt mines of Zigong, and were attacked by several local and provincial Qing armies as well as by an army of local salt merchants; in 1862 they were defeated and had to retreat to Shanxi. Casualties are said to have reached a hundred thousand. For a description of the banding together of the local Sichuan salt merchants against the uprising and the strength of the merchant community in Sichuan, see Madeline Zelin, “The Rise and Fall of the Fu-Rong Salt-Yard Elite: Merchant Dominance in Late Qing China,” in *Chinese Local Elites and Patterns of Dominance*, ed. Joseph Esherick and Mary Backus Rankin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 82–109.

²² Komukai Sakurako 小武海櫻子, “清末四川の鸞堂と宗教結社——合川會善堂慈善會前史,” *Toho Shukyo* 東方道教 no. 111 (2008): 50–71. Takeuchi Fusaji 武内房司, “Qingmo Sichuan de zongjiao yundong—fuluan, xuanjiangxing zongjiao jieshe de dansheng 清末四川的宗教運動——扶鸞、宣講型宗教結社的誕生,” in *Mingqing yilai minjian zongxunjiao de tansuo* 明清以來民間宗教的探索, ed. Wang Chien-chuan 王見川 and Chiang Chushan 蔣竹山 (Taipei: Shangding wenhua Chubanshe, 1996), 240–265.

birthplace of the Qinglian jiao 青蓮教, which later developed in the Xiantian dao 先天道.²³ The Jiangxi official Ji Dakui 紀大奎 (1746–1825), himself a follower of the alchemical writer Fu Jinquan, who was posted to Shenfang 什邡 at the end of the Jiaqing period, recognized and tried to prevent the spreading of *yijiao* 異教 (heterodox beliefs), which he describes in detail in his *Xiu ming shishu tiaolun ce* 秀明十術條論冊, where he mentions the growing cult to Wusheng laomu.²⁴ As was true for the previous religious uprisings, some of the religious movements that claimed a direct connection to a divinity in the form of transmitted scriptures were centers of antitaxation resistance and became antagonistic to the state,²⁵ thus they were closely watched by government officials like Ji Dakui, and generally outlawed. At the same time, though, intellectuals and government officials were also engaged in spirit-writing activities, but of a less antagonistic and more didactic nature. Ji Dakui himself wrote prefaces for several spirit written scriptures, received by Fu Jinquan at altars in Sichuan.

²³ A branch of the Qinglian jiao will later become the Tongshan she 同善社, which also originated in Sichuan in the late Qing. On the early history of the Tongshan she in Sichuan, see Wang Chien-chuan 王見川, “Tongshan she zaoqi de tedian ji zai Yunnan de fazhan (1912–1937), jiantan qi yu ‘luantan’ ‘rujiao’ de guangxi 同善社早期的特點及在雲南的發展 (1912–1937) 兼談其與「鸞壇」「儒教」的關係,” *Minsu quyi* 民俗曲藝 no. 172 (2011): 127–159.

²⁴ Ji Dakui, *zi* Xiang Chen 向辰, *hao* Shen Zhai 慎齋, originally from Linchuan, a town in Jiangxi a few miles east of Jinxi, Jiangxi. He was appointed in 1780 as the district magistrate of Hechuan 合川, where he later met Fu Jinquan. An extensive biography of Ji is to be found in the *mingchen* 名臣 (notable ministers) chapter of the Hechuan Xianzhi 合川縣志, ed. Zhang Senkai 張森楷 et al. (Yingyin chuban 景印初版, 1920; repr., Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, Minguo 57 [1968]), *juan* 38:20a–26b. A much shorter mention of Ji is to be found in *Minguo Baxian Zhi* 民國巴縣志, *Sichuan fu xianzhi ji* 四川府縣志輯, vol. 6, *Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng* 中國地方志集成, *juan* 5:62b. Compiled by Meng Guo 夢國, 1939, *juan* 5:62b. Hechuan was the seat of several spirit writing altars. Komukai, “清末四川,” 52 and *passim*.

²⁵ Takeuchi, “Qingmo Sichuan,” 244–245. Masaru Yamada analyzes late Qing anti-taxation and anti-railroad movements, steeped in religious discourse, as the impetus behind the revolution, which eventually overthrew the Qing dynasty. Masaru Yamada, “Shan (Goodness) and Revolution,” *Journal of Contemporary China Studies* 3, no. 1 (2014): 23–44.

The combination of continuous political instability, the multiplication of spirit-writing altars as a coping mechanism against the political and social disorder, heavy migration, and the role of the merchant community are in the historical background of this study.

III. The Jiaqing Edict and the Construction of Altars

Soon after Qianlong's death, the new Jiaqing emperor introduced a number of changes in governance, and especially in his dealing with religious matters, specifically uprisings. Instead of violently suppressing tensions in local communities, which had led to the uprisings, he replaced the radicalism of his father with a more toned down approach, helped in this by his loyal minister and former instructor Zhu Gui 朱珪 (1731–1807). Important elements of these reforms were “greater elite funding of local public causes, . . . relaxation of central controls over the enshrinement of local worthies in local temples, . . . and the revived production of local literature” such as gazetteers.²⁶ It might be in this context of more relaxed religious policies that Jiaqing canonized the three gods Lüzu, Wenchang, and Guandi, all very popular and well represented in revealed literature.²⁷ The Jiaqing emperor's edict conferred Lüzu with a title: *xieyuan zanyun chunyang yanzheng*

²⁶ William T. Rowe, “Introduction: The Significance of the Qianlong-Jiaqing Transition in Qing History,” *Late Imperial China* 32, no. 2 (2011): 74–88, 80. Bonk mentions that this relaxation of central control also affected shrine building: “encouraging the participation of local gentry in war commemoration, for instance, was evident in state initiatives from shrine building to the granting of hereditary titles.” James Bruce Bonk, “Chinese Military Men and Cultural Practice in the Early Nineteenth Century Qing Empire (1800–1840)” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2014). The new Jiaqing policies are also discussed in other recent publications: Wang, *White Lotus Rebels*, and McMahon, *Rethinking the Decline of China's Qing Dynasty*.

²⁷ Wenchang is canonized in 1801, Xu Xun in 1803, Lüzu in 1804, and Guandi in 1814. On this process of canonization, see Goossaert (2015). Even though Wenchang and Lüzu have a particularly intertwined cultic and textual history, especially in Sichuan, in this article I discuss only the spread of the Lüzu cult in Sichuan.

jinghua fuyou dijun 變元贊運純陽演正警化孚佑帝君 (generally shortened to *xieyuan zanyun* 變元贊運 ‘he who harmonizes the original principle and assists with good fortune’).²⁸ In response to a miracle attributed to Lüzu in controlling a flood of the southern part of the Yellow River, the emperor ordered that shrines be built to Lüzu in the region of the Huai river, and that spring and autumn sacrifices be performed in honor of Lü, in order to receive his support for good weather and rain, as well as to guarantee his general protection of the empire. The emperor added that every county should comply with this order and that Lüzu’s new title be displayed in temples dedicated to him throughout the country. This imperial edict spurred building of altars throughout the country. However, while in the Jiangnan region altars to Lüzu were already widespread, this was not the case in Sichuan, where steles recording the building of temples dedicated to Lüzu overwhelmingly appear right after the edict, and for a period of sixty or eighty years after the edict’s promulgation.²⁹ Furthermore, whereas in coastal areas there was a widespread textual production through spirit writing prior to the edict, in Sichuan spirit-writing activities and textual production related to Lüzu seem to appear only after it.³⁰ Below is a table with dates of steles commemorating the building of temples dedicated to Lüzu. All those that do not have a specific date are nonetheless datable to after the Jiaqing edict, because they mention it in the stele. Even though it is a small sample and it likely does not represent the number of the actual temples, only two steles are found before the 1804 edict.

²⁸ The shortened version of this title, “*xieyuan zanyun* 變元贊運,” appears in local steles commemorating the rebuilding of altars and temples in response to the edict. It is also used in the Jiaqing era *Daozang Jiyao*.

²⁹ This is evident after a survey of local gazetteers, displayed in Table 1.

³⁰ Based on the collection of spirit written materials gathered in my research.

Table 1

Date	Number of temples
1585 (rebuilt 1683)	1
1751	1
1804	Edict
1805	6
1806	1
1809	1
1811	1
1814	1
1816	1
1817	2
1821	1
1825	1
1827	1
1829	1
1834	1
1837	1
1852	1
1859	1
1862	2
1864	1
1875	1
1883	1
1886	1
1887	1
Not dated but with mention of Jiaqing edict	5

Sources: Sichuan gazetteers searched through the Database of Chinese Local Records 中國方志庫第一、第二合輯).

As evidenced by the table above, the vast majority of temples, halls, or altars dedicated to Lüzu in Sichuan were built after the Jiaqing edict and in direct and explicit response to it (they all mention Lüzu's new title and sometimes the Jiaqing edict). Furthermore, only one of the steles surveyed discussed an altar located in a Daoist temple complex: this is the case of the Er'xian an 二仙庵 temple in Chengdu, where a large hall dedicated to Lüzu was built in 1814.³¹ None of the other inscriptions mention Daoist

³¹ *Chongxiu er xian'an bei* 重修二仙庵碑記, in *Erxian'an bei* 二仙庵碑記, JY293: 116b.

temples and clergy, in terms of either the fund-raising for the construction or the location of the altars/temples. In fact, the steles consistently indicate a close partnership between magistrates, mainly coming from coastal areas (Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Anhui) and local gentry in the fund-raising, building, and maintenance efforts.³² Shiga Ichiko, discussing the spread of the Lüzu cult in Guangxi and Guangdong, also points to the Jiaqing edict as one of the factors in a renewed wave of belief.³³

In the steles, this nationally sponsored cult was very often explained in terms of local efficacy; in Sichuan, a land of many rivers, essential to the survival of the population, it was often directly tied to flood control. In some cases, the newly built Lüzu temples were replacing, or standing side by side to, altars to local gods like the River gods (He shen 河神), the Dragon god (Long shen 龍神), and the Chuanzhu 川主 god, all well versed in water containment. The more powerful of the three gods above, Chuanzhu, is ubiquitous in Sichuan gazetteers describing local temples;³⁴ he is the deified historical figure Li Bing 李冰 or Li Erlang 二郎, an official in charge of the construction of the Dujiangyan irrigation system in the third century BCE.³⁵ One stele commemorates a Lüzu altar built in front of of the local Chuanzhu altar, and describes the charitable and educational activities housed

³² This kind of collaboration is often specifically detailed in the steles.

³³ Shiga, “Qingmo Minchu Lingnan,” conclusion.

³⁴ *Bashu dao jiao bei wen ji cheng* 巴蜀道教碑文集成, ed. Long Xianzhao 龍顯昭 and Huang Haide 黃海德 (Chengdu: Sichuan Daxue Chubanshe, 1997), passim. A recent article describes the revival of the Chuanzhu cult in Sichuan: John Flower and Pamela Leonard, “Defining Cultural Life in the Chinese Countryside: The Case of the Chuanzhu Temple,” in *Cooperative and Collective in China’s Rural Development: Between State and Private Interests*, ed. Eduard B. Vermeer, Frank Pieke, and Wei Lien Chong (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 273–290.

³⁵ Li Erlang (commonly referred to as Erlang) was purported to be the son and successor of Li Bing 李冰, the famous governor of the state of Shu 蜀 who undertook the Dujiangyan 杜江堰 hydraulic engineering project around 270 BCE. Li Bing and Li Erlang became canonized as objects of a state cult. The main Chuanzhu temple is located in Dujiangyan, but many others are to be found all around the Sichuan countryside. Steven F. Sage, *Ancient Sichuan and the Unification of China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), describes the history and folklore surrounding Li Bing, and credits the successful unification of China under the Qin, in large measure, to the stable supplies of grain made possible by the Dujiangyan irrigation system.

therein (distribution of winter clothing, help in disaster relief, honoring written characters, providing free education). Another stele clearly describes the disgust of the official observing an altar to Longshen, and his quick enlisting of the local gentry in building a temple to the vastly superior Lüzu, with halls to Confucian worthies and halls dedicated to imparting culture (*wenjiao* 文教).³⁶ While flood control had been the domain of these local Sichuanese gods, the power of the newly canonized Lüzu appealed to both magistrates and local gentry alike. Appointed officials supported and appreciated the local fund-raising efforts for the construction of these altar/temples; allied with the local gentry, they appealed to a powerful national god, and presented themselves as local sponsors of philanthropy.³⁷

The rise of the Lüzu cult in Sichuan after the Jiaqing canonization thus may be seen as a classic case of “standardization of the gods,” through which Lüzu effectively superseded local gods through the help of local gentry and public officials, who believed they were pushing a “civilizing” enterprise.³⁸ However, the power and role of Chuanzhu and other local gods was not eliminated, as later temple steles and gazetteers attest to. Thus, in order to understand more deeply the complex relationship between the

³⁶ This event closely resembles the superscription of beliefs through the building of an altar to Lüzu on the site previously sacred to a local Daoist saint, described by Shiga Ichiko in her paper about the localization of the cult of Lüzu in Lingnan. Shiga, “Qingmo Minchu Lingnan.”

³⁷ Nanny Kim discusses the importance of local gentry philanthropic activities in flood control. I would argue not only that the local gentry contributed to the construction of embankments, dikes, bridges, etc., but that their contribution to building temples to Lüzu and other divinities has to be considered within their flood-control philanthropic activities. The steles discussed above clearly use the same language identified by Kim to “record and reward” (*juanshu* 捐輸) such “righteous deeds” (*shanju* 善舉 or *yiju* 義舉). Nanny Kim, “River Control, Merchant Philanthropy, and Environmental Change in Nineteenth-Century China,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 52 (2009): 660–694, esp. 671–673.

³⁸ The notion of “standardizing the Gods” is explained in James L. Watson, “Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T’ien Hou, (Empress of Heaven) Along the South China Coast, 960–1960,” in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, eds. David Johnson, Andrew Nathan, and Evelyn Rawski (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 292–324.

state's clear attempt to standardize the cult of Lüzu and the local elite's apparent support of it, it is important to consider recent reflections about the Watson's "standardization" theory by Szonyi, Katz, and other scholars.³⁹ Szonyi problematizes Watson's assertion about the ability of the state to have a profound and lasting influence on local ritual practices through the creation of state cults, and instead talks about "the illusion of standardization" or of "pseudo-standardization," whereby local elites appeared to embrace the prescribed cult (in our case the cult to Lüzu), but in fact were either continuing to worship local deities under new guises/names (in our case Chuanzhu and the other river gods), and/or using the state rhetoric in their writings. This was done in order to receive state support, while at the same time in fact allowing for a diversity of practices that reflected a diversity of local interests. Szonyi also points out the active role of local groups in supporting deities that had local "efficacy," and resisting others, thus indicating a dialogue between state and local entities based on reciprocal profit. Katz, in discussing the cult of Marshal Wen, describes the relationship between different groups as one of "reverberation," a ricocheting of beliefs and practices from one group to another in which the belief and practice are constantly modified, rather than one of cultural hegemony (where the state imposes a cult from above). Both him and Szonyi insist on a process that derives not only from above, but from implicated state officials, local elites, and non-elites in a

³⁹ A recent reassessment of Watson's notion of standardizing the Gods is found in the special issue of *Modern China*, "Ritual, Cultural Standardization, and Orthopraxy in China: Reconsidering James L. Watson's Ideas," 33, no. 1 (January 2007). In that volume, most relevant to my discussion here are Paul R. Katz, "Orthopraxy and Heteropraxy beyond the State: Standardizing Ritual in Chinese Society," 72–90; and Michael Szonyi, "Making Claims about Standardization and Orthopraxy in Late Imperial China: Rituals and Cults in the Fuzhou Region in Light of Watson's Theories," 47–71. Other works related to this issue are Prasenjit Duara, "Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, the Chinese God of War," *Journal of Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (November 1988): 778–795; Paul R. Katz, *Demon Hordes and Burning Boats: The Cult of Marshal Wen in Late Imperial Chekiang* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); and Michael Szonyi, "The Illusion of Standardizing the Gods: The Cult of the Five Emperors in Late Imperial China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 56, no. 1 (February 1997): 113–135.

constant process of mediation.⁴⁰ Applied to our case, this reading allows us to see that, when the local officials and the merchant groups embraced the state-sponsored Lüzu cult in Sichuan, they did it not only or not necessarily because of the powerful state injunction, but also because it was something that could be profitable for them in terms of local power relations. At the same time, Lüzu did not completely obliterate older beliefs and practices. If we follow Hymes's theory of "culture as a repertoire," these two models do not exclude each other but coexist and are recurred to according to need and occasion.⁴¹ Thus the building of altars to Lüzu and the reception of Lüzu scriptures can be seen as a way for the outside merchant groups, in collaboration with state officials and local elites, to assert their authority in Sichuan by appealing to a newly "standardized" national god, whose cult initially appeared in coastal regions and which had been "appointed" by the state. However, while there is an element of competition between Lüzu and the local gods, this did not result in the erasure of local cults, which continue to work at a secondary level and, if we follow Szonyi's analysis, continue to be practiced under the cover of "pseudo-standardization."⁴² This setup seems to respond to the needs of all involved: the state officials, the local elites, and the outsider merchant groups.

In sum, we can say that the cult of Lüzu entered and spread in Sichuan in large part as a result of the Jiaqing edict and by pressure from outsiders, state officials, and merchants; it generally was not supported by a local Daoist temple network, but by an alliance of officials, local gentry, and immigrant merchants, who all had a stake in the support of this deity; however, its replacement of local

⁴⁰ Katz, "Orthopraxy and Heteropraxy beyond the State," adds that in the academic discussion of power relationship between state and local elites in the area of religious practice the religious practitioners themselves are overlooked, whereas they should be taken into account in understanding the complex process of standardization, of which they are active agents.

⁴¹ Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion, and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 4–5.

⁴² This is clear when we look at later gazetteers, where Chuanzhu altars are still present.

cults was by and large not complete. The next section discusses in more detail the community of Jiangxi merchants in Sichuan, the religious spaces they built, and the philanthropic activities they supported, including the publication of the *Lüzü huiji*.

IV. Building socio-religious spaces: the Wanshou tan (Altar of Longevity), the Wanshou gong (Palace of Longevity) and the Xizi gong (Palace for honoring the written word)

This particular community of Jiangxi merchants was established in Yuantong 元通, Chongyang 崇陽 (Chongzhou 崇州), in Sichuan. Devoted to both Lüzü and Wenchang, they received the *Lüzü huiji* through spirit writing at the local Jiangxi guildhall, the Wanshou tan, in 1849.⁴³ The small but flourishing town of Yuantong, on the Western river (Xijiang 西江), an affluent of the Yangzi, was (and still is) located only a few miles north West of Chengdu. Yuantong was wealthy, as evidenced by the large number of traditional residences still extant and preserved on site. While the Wanshou tan in Yuantong is not in existence any longer, there are traces of it; a plaque outside the remnants of the Jiangxi huiguan 江西會館 (Jiangxi guildhall) states that it used to be called Wanshou gong; nearby there is a still standing large Guangdong huiguan 廣東會館 (Guangdong guildhall). Gazetteers indicate that many more guildhalls were present in the area. The county of Chongzhou, similarly to other counties in the area, hosted an impressive number of religious locations, from small altars to larger temples (collectively listed in the gazetteer under *siguan* 寺觀), 24 in the county seat Chongzhou, and a total of 301 in the surrounding countryside.⁴⁴ Many of these were guildhalls.

The exact wording on the first page of the 1849 edition, which is not reproduced in the modern reprints of the 1851 edition, is “Chongyang Yuantong chang Xizi gong kanke 崇陽原通場惜字宮刊

⁴³ The *Lüzü huiji* is “received” from Lü Dongbin, but it is in fact mostly a reprinting, differently structured, of the 1744 Hansan gong *Lüzü quanshu*.

⁴⁴ *Chongzhou xian zhi* 崇州縣志 (1877), *juan* 8: 69a–77a.

刻” (printed at the Xizigong, located in Yuantong, Chongyang), indicating a connection to a local Xizi altar. In fact, stele inscriptions reveal that the merchants who funded the printing of the *Lüzū huíjī* also sponsored the building of a nearby Xizi gong 惜字宮, where the collection was printed. Below, I will explore the significance of both the Wanshou tan and the Xizi gong before I discuss the collection itself.

(a) Wanshou Tan 萬壽壇 or Wanshou Gong 萬壽宮

Wanshou gong are temples dedicated to the cult of Xu Xun 許遜 (239–374) found throughout China. The cult to Xu Xun originated in Xishan 西山, Jiangxi, where first a small shrine and then a temple, the Yulong Wanshou gong 玉隆萬壽宮 were erected in honor of Xu Xun and his teachings.⁴⁵ Xu Xun’s original teachings focused on Confucian virtues like *zhong* 忠 (loyalty) and *xiao* 孝 (filiality); later, in the Tang dynasty, these teachings were combined with Lingbao 靈寶 Daoist practices; the school reached preeminence during the late Tang and Song dynasty, when two emperors conferred titles on Xu Xun and the temple itself. The Zhenzong 真宗 (r. 997–1022) emperor conferred the Yulong 玉隆 title on the temple in 1010 and the Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1082–1135) emperor conferred the title of “Perfected Lord of Supernatural Feats and Miraculous Deliverance” (Shengong miaoji Zhenjun 神功妙濟真君) on Xu Xun in 1112. It is at this time that the cult of Xu Xun and the *Jingming zhongxiao* 淨明忠孝 Daoist school associated with it, started appealing to a larger audience and producing Ledgers of Merit and Demerit. In the late Ming and Qing, *neidan* 內丹 texts attributed to Xu Xun appear through spirit-writing revelations. Belief in Xu Xun and the Jingmingdao was disseminated, in Jiangxi and beyond, through a network of Wanshou gong temples, which,

⁴⁵ For the early history of the cult of Xu Xun and its connection to the Yulong Wanshou gong, see Richard Shek, “Daoism and Orthodoxy” in *Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China*, ed. Kwang-Ching Liu and Richard Hon-Chun Shek (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004), 145–153, and Brokaw, *Ledgers of Merit*, chap. 1. For a general historical introduction to the Jingming dao, see Judith Boltz, “Jingming dao,” in *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio (New York: Routledge, 2004), 567–571.

outside of Jiangxi, also worked as Jiangxi merchant guildhalls (Jiangxi huiguan 江西會館). A preliminary survey of the diffusion of Wanshou gong in Jiangxi and in other parts of China, based on gazetteer records as well as personal investigation, reveals that, in Jiangxi, there were at least 405 such temples within seventy-six different administrative regions (*xian*).⁴⁶

The Wanshou gong was not at all the only such guildhall/religious space. Guildhalls in southwest China were a result of the migration inland of coastal populations that started in the Song period and increased exponentially in the Ming and especially the Qing dynasty. Guildhalls were important religious spaces. As discussed by Brokaw, by the late Ming and early Qing there was a definite change in the role of the merchant class, which, because of their accumulation of wealth and land, and their intermixing with the scholar class, were able to “indulge in such elite activities as collecting books, paintings, calligraphy, and organizing local charities and religious festivals.”⁴⁷ There was a disruption of the direct correlation between moral worth and social place, and merchants were claiming their place in the moral landscape by actively participating in activities (charitable work, book production, honoring books) that had generally been reserved for the scholar-officials. William T. Rowe describes the importance of merchant communities in Hankow in the nineteenth century; in Rowe’s characterization merchants, strongly organized in guilds according to their province of origin, pushed their practical Confucianism “committed to Confucian ideals of gentlemanly conduct, social harmony and paternalistic public service.”⁴⁸ So guildhalls were not only places where people from the same province could meet, do business, make marriage matches, and maintain communication with their home provinces, but they were also places of religious worship and promoted various kinds of

⁴⁶ Zhang Wenhuan 章文煥, “Wanshou gong lishi wenhua ziliao jianshu 萬壽宮歷史文化資料簡述,” in *Ganwenhua yanjiu* 贛文化研究, ed. Zheng Xiaojiang 鄭曉江 (1999), 6:276.

⁴⁷ Brokaw, *Ledgers of Merit*, 13.

⁴⁸ William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Conflict and Community in a Chinese City, 1796–1895* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), 16.

assistance and charity. If we look at the records in local Sichuan gazetteers, all guildhalls for migrants from different provinces also included a temple to their patron deity. The Jiangxi merchants had the Wanshou gong, the population from Huguang 湖廣 (Hubei and Hunan) had the Huguang huiguan, which housed the Yuwang gong 禹王宮, the Guizhou huiguan 貴州會館 had the Ronglu gong 榮祿宮, the Shaanxi huiguan 陝西會館 had the Sansheng gong 三聖宮, the Fujian huiguan 福建會館 had the Tianhou gong 天后宮.⁴⁹ According to Zhang Wenhuan, the Wanshou gong (and one would imagine, all of these establishments that combined guildhall and worship activities) was not in the same category of Buddhist and Daoist monasteries, but were busier and more diverse religious establishments; they were often found on busy street in urban centers, close to each other, and not on secluded mountain areas. This is confirmed by maps provided in local gazetteers, which indicate that guildhalls/temples were very often located next to each other in the bustling city centers. The difficulty in finding a category (religious, cultural, or economic?) for these community centers reveals their hybrid nature, and is exemplified in the different ways gazetteers group them: under “huiguan 會館” (guildhalls), “dianli 典禮” (ceremonial spaces), “siguan 寺觀” (Buddhist and Daoist temples) or “cimiao 祠廟” (memorial temples and shrines).⁵⁰ While

⁴⁹ These names are taken from the list of different guildhalls recorded in the Qianlong 25 *Fushun xianzhi* 富順縣志, *juan* 18, 23a–24a, which records five different Jiangxi guildhalls in the area, as opposed to only one or two guildhalls from other provinces.

⁵⁰ For example, the Qianlong 25 *Fushun xianzhi*, *juan* 18, 23a–24a, lists several different guildhalls, followed by the name of the temple associated with it. The Jiaqing 4 *Qingxi xianzhi* 清溪縣志, *juan* 3, 55a–57a, in the section *dianli* 典禮 lists several of the above religious establishments, this time, though, under a religious rubric. The term “guildhall,” though, does feature in this list once, the Guizhou guan. The Jiaqing *Yibin xianzhi* 宜賓縣志, *juan* 27, 13a–b, under the rubric *siguan zhi* 寺觀志, lists four Wanshou gong, as well as several of the above mentioned religious establishments connected to guildhalls. Sometimes, these kinds of religious establishments are listed under the category *cimiao* 祠廟, rather than in the *siguan* rubric. This is the case in the Qianlong *Guang'an zhou zhi* 廣安州志, *juan* 4, 10a–11a. From this we can see how the rubric “guildhall”

(Continue on next page)

Rowe, in his discussion of Hankow guildhalls in the late Qing, implies that giving a religious name to the guildhalls would “provide a prestigious front for economic activity,”⁵¹ I believe that the various natures of these associations coexisted and were useful to the community, and that the religious aspect was as necessary as the economic one.⁵² The close collaboration between local and state officials and merchant communities in religious matters at the center of this paper supports the interpretation of guildhalls as multifunctional spaces.

From the point of view of the Qing government, these guildhalls were an effective way to organize relocated populations in their new locations, and provided an effective tool to control the migrating populations as well as their interaction with the local population. As for Sichuan, the largest migrating population was from Hubei and Hunan (Huguang), but a close second was from Jiangxi.⁵³ Most of the Jiangxi migrants were merchants, who relocated to Sichuan establishing various kinds of businesses.⁵⁴

(Note 50—*Continued*)

and several other religious rubrics are not mutually exclusive, showing us how closely related trade and religious worship, as well as communal practices, were for these communities of migrants.

⁵¹ William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796–1889* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1984), 256.

⁵² In a study of Dongchuan 東川 in northern Yunnan province, on the border with Sichuan, Huang Fei describes the social and political role of these local guildhalls and suggests that, while guilds have been studied for their economic role in contributing to the development of capitalism and modernity in Beijing and other economically developed regions on the lower Yangzi and southern China, it is also essential to examine their cultural and religious activities, especially in the less affluent regions of the South West. Huang Fei, “Landscape practices and representations in eighteenth-century Dongchuan, Southwest China, Ph.D. Dissertation, Leiden University, 2012, Chapter 2: From Indigenous Capital to Qing Walled City”. Wang Gang, *Qingdai Siduan Shi*, 193–199.

⁵³ Wang Gang, *Qingdai Sichuan shi*, 193–199.

⁵⁴ One flourishing business that relocated from Jiangxi to Sichuan was printing: see Cynthia Brokaw, “The Yuechi Block-Cutters and Woodblock Publishing in Qing and Republican-Era Sichuan: A Field Report” (n.p.), and Valussi, “Printing and Religion.” Also see Wang Xiaoyuan 王孝源, “Qingdai Sichuan muke shufang shulue 清代四川木刻書坊述略,” in *Sichuan Xinwen chuban shiliao 四川新聞出版史料* (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1992), 43–65.

Thus the Wanshou gong in Yuantong was one of many in Sichuan; a quick look at gazetteers reveals that there were communities of Jiangxi merchants gathered around Wanshou temples all across the region.⁵⁵ This is supported by information gathered by foreign visitors such as Baron Von Richthofen: “all the great commerce throughout the country in cotton, silk, salt, opium and white wax is in the hands of men from Shenxi and Kiangsi [Jiangxi] . . . the trade of Szechuan, with all of its branches, from the purchase of the silk at the places of production, and its collection at Chung-king-fu, to its disposal at Hankou, Siangtan, Shanghai, and other places of destination, is in the hands of merchants from Kiangsi (and a few from Shensi).”⁵⁶ The Mission Lyonnaise made a thorough investigation of commerce in Sichuan in the years 1895 to 1897 and remarked on the importance of merchants from Guangdong, Jiangxi, and Hunan.⁵⁷ The 1909 *Chengdu tonglan* 成都通覽 describes a very diverse population, with 25 percent originating from Huguang, 15 percent from Jiangxi, and 10 percent respectively from Shaanxi, Yunnan, and Guizhou.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ For a discussion of Wanshou gong temples in Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan, see Zhang Wenhuan 章文煥, “Yun Gui Chuan sansheng Wanshou gong kaocha ji 雲貴川三省萬壽宮考察記,” *Jiangxi shehui kexue* 江西社會科學 (1997): 5. According to Zhang, the largest Wanshou gong in the southwestern provinces was the one in Chongqing, which unfortunately was destroyed in a fire in 1949 (ibid., 34). In his research, based on both oral histories and stele inscriptions, Zhang also finds that a large percentage of the family names now common in these areas have their roots in Jiangxi, and that families still today think of themselves as from Jiangxi (ibid., 35). Wanshou gong are recorded widely in Sichuanese gazetteers from the Yongzheng to the Republican period. Some examples are in *Qianlong Rongxian zhi* 乾隆榮縣志, *juan* 2, *Fushun xianzhi*, *juan* 16:23a, *Jiaqing Yibin xianzhi*, *juan* 27:13a.

⁵⁶ Ferdinand Von Richthofen, *Baron Richthofen Letters 1870–1872*, 2nd ed. (North China Herald Office, 1903), 164–166.

⁵⁷ S. A. M. Adshead, *Province and Politics in Late Imperial China: Vice-Regal Government in Szechwan Province 1898–1911* (Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series, No. 50, 1984), 15–16.

⁵⁸ Fu Chongju 傅崇矩, *Chengdu Tonglan* 成都通覽 (1909), reprinted *Chengdu, Bashu shushe* 1 (1989): 100.

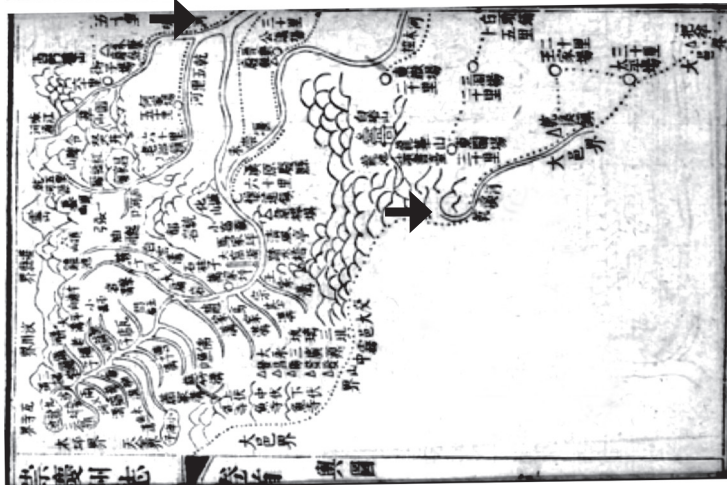
Looking at clues from gazetteers from this region, we find seventy-nine Wanshou gong temples in forty-five different *xian* in Sichuan, fifty-six temples across thirty-four *xian* in Yunnan, and ninety-four temples across forty-five *xian* in Guizhou.⁵⁹

The plaque outside the Yuantong Wanshou gong describes the temple in this manner: “just inside the main door, there was a long narrow lane 50 meters long, and on the two sides were market stalls selling gold silver and jade objects, and jewellery. In the Republican period it went back to selling cloth, and silk threads. The play stage was the most peculiar square structure of the guildhall, divided between a performing area outside, and an internal area. Behind the stage there was a stone stele with these characters ‘Jiangxi huiguan’ carved onto it, and this was the second door. In front of the performing stage, about 60 meters away, was the ceremonial hall; from the front room there were 3 rooms that were divided by bamboo rolling mat screens and 5 eaves; in the main hall there was a statue of the medicine king Sun Simiao. In the Republican period the ceremonial hall was turned into the business office of the guildhall.” This well describes the polyvalent nature of business, entertainment, and religious space.

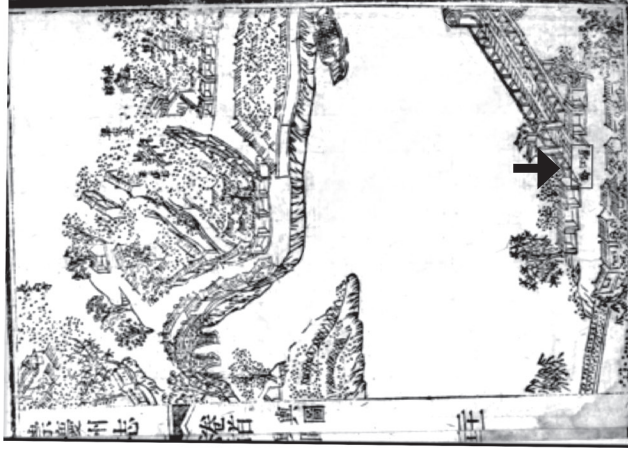
As it is clear from the map of Yuantong reproduced below, the Xizi gong and the Jiangxi huiguan / Wanshou gong were both in Yuantong, but not located in the same place. The Jiangxi huiguan is close to the Guangdong huiguan (as today), right in the middle of the central area, whereas the Xizi gong appears to be outside of the boundaries of the hamlet, though not very far. The area where it once was is now occupied by a large modern primary school.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Zhang Wenhuan, “Wanshou gong lishi.” For a discussion of Wanshou gong temples in Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan, see Zhang Wenhuan, “Yun Gui Chuan sansheng.” Wanshou gong are recorded widely in Sichuanese gazetteers from the Yongzheng to the Republican period. Some examples are in *Qianlong Rongxian zhi*, *juan* 2, *Fushun xianzhi*, *juan* 16:23a, *Jiaqing Yibin xianzhi* 嘉慶宜賓縣志, *juan* 27:13a.

⁶⁰ Personal observation, May 2014.



Zengxiu Chongqing zhou zhi 增修崇慶州志: juan 1:2b-3a (1870).



This map provides a look at the small town of Yuanlong, on the Xi river, and the location of the Wanshou gong and of the Xizi gong. This bridge still exists in Yuanlong. *Zengxiu Chongqing zhou zhi: juan 1:20b-21a* (1870).

While the Wanshou tan was the site of the revelation, the Xizi gong was identified as the site of the printing of the collection.

(b) Xizi Gong 惜字宮

The tradition of *jingxi zizhi* 敬惜字紙 (respecting and honoring written paper) involves collecting and ritually burning written paper.⁶¹ It is a practice associated with traditional beliefs about honoring books and knowledge, and it became closely connected to the Wenchang cult.⁶² The unwillingness to dispose carelessly of paper with written characters on it, and the ritual practices surrounding this belief, dates back to the Song dynasty. People gathered the written paper, burned it, made offerings to the God of writing Cang Jie 倉頡, and then disposed of it in a river or in the sea. This practice was then called *song zihui* 送字灰 (sending off the ash of the written words), and was initially very popular in Suzhou and surrounding areas. Gradually, the private practice of respectfully disposing of the written paper became a public religious practice and spread from Suzhou to other areas of the Yangzi delta and beyond.⁶³ Furnaces for the burning of the written paper, and communities gathered around this practice (*xizihui* 惜字會), arose; these communities not only cared about the proper disposing of paper, but also fostered other charitable activities such as dispensing free food, coffins, and medicine to the poor, and helping poor widows,⁶⁴ as well as honoring of the Five Grains (*xigu* 惜谷) and following the interdiction of eating beef and dog. Sparing written paper and carefully disposing of it also became a way to accrue

⁶¹ A good introduction to this practice is Ki-che A. Leung 梁其姿, "Qingdai de xizi hui 清代的惜字會," *Neo History* 新史學 5, no. 2 (June 1994): 83–114, and also *Shi shan yu jiao hua: Ming Qing di ci shan zu zhi* 施善與教化：明清的慈善組織 (Taipei: Linking, 1997), 132–155. Yau Chi-on also discusses this in detail in Yau, *Shan yu ren tong*, 236–248.

⁶² Yau, *Shan yu ren tong*, 236–237. For a discussion of the relationship between the *xizi* cult and Wenchang, apart from Yau, *Shan yu ren tong*, 236–238, see Hsiao Teng-fu 蕭登福, "Wenchang dijun xinyang yu jingxi zizhi 文昌帝君信仰與敬惜字紙," *Renwen shihui xuebao* 人文社會學報 4 (2005): 5–16.

⁶³ Liang, *Shi shan yu jiao hua*, 140–144.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

merit, and, accordingly, demerits were also accrued when careful guidelines were not followed. The belief in the accruing of merit associated with this practices flourished in the Qing dynasty and led to a dissemination of prescriptive literature in the form of *shanshu* and *gongguo ge*, regulations (*Xizilü* 惜字律), as well as the widespread building of Xizi altars.⁶⁵ The regulations strictly forbid people from using paper with writing on it for purposes other than reading; for example, it was prohibited to use it to cover windows, to produce lacquer, and to clean oneself. In a recent article, McDermott describes the practice through the eyes of several foreign observers, who mostly saw this as a form of excessive idolatry. McDermott also interprets this widespread practice as a way for the local elites to Confucianize society, describing the participation of Confucian scholars as an “intrusion” in local religious practices, which resulted in the sidelining of other religious practitioners like Daoist and Buddhist monks.⁶⁶ However, the interaction between Daoist and Confucian practices seems more than just a simple “replacement” of earlier Daoist practices and practitioners with Confucian practices and elites. Liang Qizi, basing her information mostly on Jiangnan gazetteers, sees the *xizi* practice (and the Wenchang cult), from the mid-Qing onward, as appealing to Confucian literati, who were embracing a more diverse religiosity; Liang explains this both as a reaction to the more fraught political landscape, to the declining value of official degrees, often obtained by illegal practices, and to the subsequent lessened authority of the educated elites.⁶⁷ From the mid-Qing the worship of Wenchang was embraced by a growing number of Confucian

⁶⁵ Some examples of prescriptive literature: *Wenchang xizi gongguo lü* 文昌惜字功過錄, *Wenchang dijun xizi lü* 文昌帝君惜字律. On this topic, see Xin Deyong 辛德勇, “Xizilü erzhong 惜字律二種,” *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化 (2000): 4.

⁶⁶ Joseph McDermott, “Sacred Books and Sacred Trash,” in *The Art of the Book in China*, ed. Ming Wilson and Stacey Pierson (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 2006), 211.

⁶⁷ Liang, *Shi shan yu jiao hua*, 153–154. On the scandals of the illegal practices around official degrees, specifically in Sichuan, see William Ayers, *Chang Chih-tung and Educational Reform in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 44–50.

elites, and the *xizi* practice had also become fairly widespread, it encountered the favor of the elites and was merged with the cult of Wenchang. Thus the parallel flourishing of Wenchang worship and *xizi* practice reveals a multilayered religious life to which Confucian literati willingly participated, in order to remain relevant in society.

Most of the (scant) scholarly literature on *xizi* is concentrated on the Jiangnan region, where the practice began; there is almost no secondary literature on *Xizi gong* and *Xizi hui* in Sichuan.⁶⁸ The *Xizi* complex in Yuantong was a large temple. Today, a furnace has been reconstructed not far from the grounds that it occupied, and new steles relating to its original construction have been recarved on the basis of steles inscriptions that were recorded in local gazetteers.⁶⁹

According to the original 1851 stele, the structure was set in the countryside on a large parcel of land ten mu wide, it housed a Wenchang hall (Wenchang dian 文昌殿) with a school, a hall dedicated to Lüzu (Chunyang guan 純陽閣), halls to several Confucian worthies, and a hall devoted to the parents of the Wen 文 and Wu 武 emperors; to the sides of these three halls, there was a pond and a bronze bell; there was also a furnace to ritually burn the written paper.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ For a discussion of *xizi* and its relation to Confucio-Daoist beliefs in the late Qing and Republican period in Sichuan, see Ding Peiren 丁培仁, “He Weihan yu bazi gongguoge 賀維翰與八字功過格,” *Zhongguo Daojiao* 中國道教 (2001): 4. Ding mentions the *Huayang xianzhi* 華陽縣志, *juan* 17, *simiao* 祠廟 section, which lists the buildings in the temple: an altar to Yu 禹, one to Cang Jie 倉頡, and an academy (shuyuan 書院). Di Wang also briefly refers to this practice in Chengdu in the late Qing and Republican period, in connection to the accruing of merit. Di Wang, *Street Culture in Chengdu: Public Space, Urban Commoners, and Local Politics, 1870–1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 89.

⁶⁹ “Chuangxiu *xizi gong* bei xu 創修惜字宮碑序,” in the *Yiwen* 藝文 section of the Guangxu 光緒 era gazetteer for Chongqing: *Zengxiu Chongqing zhou zhi*, *juan* 11, 47a–49a. A synopsis of this information by local Chongzhou scholar Lü Guochun 呂國春: “*Xizi gong*,” *Chongzhou wenshi ziliao* 崇州文史資料 19 (2005): 101–102.

⁷⁰ This structure brings to mind another one constructed a few decades later in Xinjin 新津, Sichuan, the Chunyang guan 純陽觀, only a few miles south of Yuantong, and still extant today. Between the twenty-third and thirty-second
(Continue on next page)



Reconstructed Xizi furnace, with carving reproducing stele inscriptions from 1851 and 1868. Yuantong, Sichuan. Photo by the author.

(Note 70—*Continued*)

years of the Guangxu period (1897–1906) a wealthy merchant from Shaanxi 陝西, Zhuang Fuchen 莊輔臣 (*hao* Tingbi 庭弼), funded a large-scale temple to Lüzu on a site already occupied by a Lüzu altar. In 1917, a philanthropic organization (Cishan tuanti 慈善團體), the Chengdu Zhenxin tang 成都正心堂, enlarged the temple and built the first Sichuanese Zhongxiao tang 忠孝堂. The largest halls were the Dazhong ting 大忠亭 and the Zhixiao ting 至孝亭, with Confucian worthies (twenty-four loyal ministers 二十四忠臣, twenty-four filial sons 二十四孝子); because of the large number of Confucian worthies, the Chunyang guan was also called “*gujin tianxia diyi zhongxiao Rulin* 古今天下第一忠孝儒林.” Other divinities represented were Kui Xing 魁星 (the Big Dipper and God of literature), Lüzu, Zhang Sanfeng, Wenchang, and Confucius (flanked by Mencius, Zeng Can, Yan Hui, and Zisi).

The close connection between the *Lüzü huiji* and the Xizi gong is not only attested in the first page of the *Lüzü huiji* (mentioned above), but also confirmed by this 1851 stele: written by the Regional Governor Li Xiangbing 李象昇,⁷¹ it names donors for the building of the Xizi gong: several of them were also involved in the printing of the *Lüzü huiji*. They are Tao Xu 陶煦, Zhao Bi 趙璧, Huang Yunxiu 黃雲岫, Chen Jinfeng 陳金鳳,⁷² Hu Anhui 胡安惠, and Che Yandong 車延棟. Unfortunately, there is almost no information about these people in gazetteers, indicating that they had not received official degrees.

A later inscription (1868), dedicated to the building of a Baoben tang 報本堂 (Hall of Gratitude to ancestors), reveals that this construction was added to the existing Xizi gong.⁷³ The inscription, written by local magistrate Ye Jiong 葉炯 (*zi* Xianggu 香谷, from Dinghai 定海, Zhejiang, *zhixian* 1854),⁷⁴ describes how, in 1868, he donated money to the diligent and industrious Hu Anhui, who had sponsored both the Xizi gong and the *Lüzü huiji*, in order to build a Baoben tang in the garden of the Xizi gong. The stele inscription continues by praising the Confucian virtues that promoted the construction of the Xizi gong and of the Baoben tang, a token of the gratitude everyone owes to their parents, who are the root of humanity. The inscription also contains a scathing critique of the Daoist “Yellow Hats,” who do not care for Confucian virtues, practice by themselves and for themselves, and do not recognize the importance of parents. “They do not consider their father as a father, but they consider their master as a father; they do not consider their son as a son, but they consider their disciple as a son.”⁷⁵ According to the magistrate, this goes against

⁷¹ Li Xiangbin (*zi* Xiao Cun 曉村), from Changsha in Hunan (*ba gongsheng* 拔貢 senior licentiate of the first class), was posted to Chongzhou in 1849. He died soon afterward. *Minguo Chongqing xian zhi* 民國崇慶縣志 (1926), *juan* 6:22b.

⁷² His name appears in the list for notable virtuous local people (*xiao yi* 孝義) in the *Minguo Chongqing xian zhi*, *juan* 8:19b, and is described as having raised money for the construction of the local Xizi gong.

⁷³ “Baoben tang beiwen 報本堂碑文,” in *Zengxiu Chongqing zhou zhi*, *juan* 11, *Yiwen* 藝文: 50a–52a.

⁷⁴ *Minguo Chongqing xian zhi*, *juan* 12:23a.

⁷⁵ *Chongqing zhou zhi*, *juan* 11:50a.

all Confucian virtues of filiality and gratitude. That is why he is particularly happy to contribute to the enlargement of the Xizi gong with a Baoben tang.

Hu Anhui, the main actor behind the reception and printing of the *Lüzu huiji*, not only was one of the principal initiators of the Xizi gong project, but also continued to devote time and effort in fund-raising for the enlargement of the Xizi gong (he is the only person mentioned in the second stele), supported by local officials who saw this as an effort to reassert moral values. From the above steles, we also come to understand that the community of Jiangxi merchants who sponsored the printing of a collection of writings from Lüzu, as well as the Xizi gong and the Baoben tang, and even more the magistrates who helped them achieve these goals, did not necessarily subscribe to Daoist ideas but were elevating Confucian virtues and practices over Daoist ones. This attitude might have been a reaction to the very unstable political situation, to the eschatological and millenarian texts and practices flourishing all around them, and a way to establish authority as an outsider group. This is also clear if we look at the prefaces as well as at the structure of the *Lüzu huiji*.

V. The *Lüzu Huiji*: The Para-text

The *Lüzu huiji* is composed of thirty-four *juan*, plus fourteen *juan* of appended works (*Lüzu huji fu* 呂祖彙集附, also dated 1849). A second edition was printed just two years later in 1851, at the same location, using the same woodblocks, and featuring the same contents but adding one new preface, and rearranging the order of the other prefaces. The *Lüzu huiji* was received from Lüzu at the Wanshou tan in 1849, upon the request of Hu Anhui, Peng Wendou 彭文斗, and Che Chuipi. The carving of the woodblocks and its printing were all sponsored by the Jiangxi merchant community. The *Editorial Conventions* (*fanli* 凡例) name thirty people involved in one way or another in the project, from those who raised funds to those who secured the copy of the original manuscript, from those who supervised the manufacture of the woodblocks to those who printed it, from those who copy-edited to those who made



Luzu huiji (1849) frontispiece (Sichuansheng tushuguan).

署督部堂瑚 為知照事
嘉慶
十年十一月二十九日准 禮部咨
開祠祭司案呈本 部咨前事一案
相應抄單行文該督遵照可也計粘
單一紙內開准 江南總督徐 咨
准 禮部咨議覆姜 等奏請

呂祖師加封尊號竝額請
勅建崇祀一摺業經具奏載入祀祭奉
旨依議欽此嗣經 內閣奏請
欽定四字加於原銜之上行文該督等即
遵
旨於淮郡地方
勅建崇祀至各省原有廟宇應令該地方
士民自行供奉一體遵照等因奉
硃筆圈出變元贊運四字業經欽遵加於
原銜之上建設牌位供奉各在案伏
思清江浦
呂祖師廟既經奏准奉

Lüzū huījī (1849), juan 1:1a-2a (Sichuan sheng tushuguan).

sure the principles were clear. The *Conventions* also indicate that the woodblocks would be stored in perpetuity at the Wanshou gong, so as to be re-used if necessary. As mentioned earlier, most of the contents of this collection come from the Hansan gong *Lüzu quanshu*.⁷⁶ However, it is significant that the Wanshou tan community claimed to have received it directly from Lüzu. This is not unusual, the Hansan gong *Lüzu quanshu* itself includes scriptures that had been received at other altars; the Wanshou gong community openly acknowledged that this material was initially revealed at the Hansan gong. What is important here is that by descending on Yuantong, the imperially sanctioned divinity Lüzu enacted a powerful investiture of the local Sichuanese community.⁷⁷

Hu Anhui seems to be the most prominent element of this local community, one of the people who directly pleaded with Lüzu to descend on Yuantong. In the third preface by Wang Hui 汪濊, dated 1849, Hu is also credited with supervising the engraving of the woodblocks, collecting the texts, producing the appendix, and soliciting the preface itself.⁷⁸ In *Conventions* 18, he is again identified as the person who supervised the manufacturing of the woodblocks (together with Chen Jinfeng 陳金鳳 and Peng Wendou). Hu is also mentioned (with Chen, Che, Peng, Huang, and Tao), in the 1851 preface to the second edition of the *Lüzu huiji* by Ye Tingsong 葉聽松, as one of the gentlemen (*zhugong* 諸公) in the community who invited Lüzu to descend on the altar; thus we can say that Hu was central in this endeavor, contributing time, effort, and money to the project.

The 1849 edition immediately starts with a long section reprinting the Jiaqing edict, its provisions about Spring and Autumn

⁷⁶ The *Editorial Conventions* acknowledge that a large amount of materials came from the Hansan gong *Lüzu quanshu*, because this collection, among all others, was the most reliable and correct. *Lüzu huiji*, *juan* 1, *Fanli* 13, 3b.

⁷⁷ Wang Hui, in the third preface, clearly states that the contents of this collection are, for the most part, coming from the Hansan gong *Lüzu quanshu*. This is interpreted as an affirmation of the level of personal connection this local community has with Lüzu, who chose to transmit the same texts at the Yuantong altar. *Lüzu huiji*, *juan* 1, *Lüzu huiji Zongxu* (Wang Hui), 3b.

⁷⁸ *Lüzu huiji*, *juan* 1, *Lüzu huiji Zongxu* (Lü Dongbin), 1b.

rituals, as well as Lüzu's new title. This indicates the centrality of the imperial investiture for the local Sichuanese community.

The subsequent prefaces and the restructuring of the texts in this edition indicate that the people behind the *Lüzu huiji* did not identify themselves with a specific Daoist lineage, and clearly put Confucius above Lü Dongbin in order of importance. They understood their belief in Lüzu within the confines of Confucian practices. The first preface by Su Zongdai 宿宗岱 states that Lüzu received the teaching he was transmitting directly from Confucius and Mencius.⁷⁹ This preface also discusses at length Confucian virtues like *xiao* and *zhong*, Neo-Confucian concepts like *ti* 體 and *yong* 用, and the importance of “applied virtue” (*yongde* 庸德), “applied speech” (*yongyan* 庸言), and “applied practice” (*yongxing* 庸行). The author emphasizes the importance of putting virtues into practice and dismisses empty “philosophizing.” Understanding the importance of applied virtues lies at the basis of the ability to receive scriptures from the gods.

As Lufrano has shown, the agrarian and commercial classes in late Ming and Qing China were strongly influenced by Confucian ideologies. Lufrano in particular says that merchants actively adapted the Confucian messages to fit their own needs, and “de-emphasized aspects of Confucianism valued by philosophers and the orthodox elites but irrelevant to their readers.”⁸⁰ In a very similar manner, Su Zongdai emphasizes the “practicality” of the Confucian message and criticized the over-philosophizing of scholars:

The sages and worthies of old handed down to posterity the teachings in order to instruct 10,000 generations. In terms of Virtue (*de* 德), we call it the applied virtue (*yongde* 庸德), in terms of speech (*yan* 言), we call it the applied speech (*yongyan* 庸言). Their principles are rooted (*ben* 本) in tradition, their ends are manifested through applied practice (*yongxing* 庸行). . . . If you can root your applied practice

⁷⁹ *Lüzu huiji*, *juan 1*, *Lüzu huiji Zongxu* (Su Zongdai), 1b.

⁸⁰ Richard John Lufrano, *Honorable Merchants: Commerce and Self-Cultivation in Late Imperial China*, Studies of the East Asian Institute (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 7.

and thereby establish virtue, then your virtue will be the utmost virtue of all under heaven. If you can root your applied practice and thereby establish speech, then your applied speech will be the utmost speech of the past and present. That is why Confucius, through both praise and criticism, corrected applied virtue, and wrote the “Spring and Autumn.” That is why Zi Si, through the way of human nature, illuminated the applied practice and wrote the “Zhongyong.” . . . What Lüzu received from above was transmitted from Confucius and Mencius, and those who write it down in this book change the degenerate customs (of today’s people), and return them to the original transformation. . . . The value of this book is (made evident) through the teaching of the mainstays and constant virtues (three mainstays and five constant virtues; *sangang wuchang* 三綱五常); for the sake of fostering the Dao in our world and in human hearts, it is necessary to root through the constant virtue, so as to assist the flourishing of the family and the country (*jiaguo* 家國), and support the essence of heaven and earth. How is this not perfect virtue?⁸¹

古聖賢垂訓以教萬世。德曰庸德，言曰庸言。其理本於固有。其端肇於庸行……惟能本庸行以立德。澤庸德即為天下之至德。本庸行以立言。則庸言即為古今之之言。故孔子以褒貶正庸行。而春秋作。子思以性道明庸行。而中庸作……。

呂祖所為上接孔孟之傳以筆之於書者。換頹風而回氣化……。

書之大有功於綱常名教。而為世道人心之所欣助者要皆本諸庸行。以襄家國之隆盛。而揚天地之精華也。豈不懿歟？

Of note is not only the clear acknowledgment that Lüzu’s teachings derive from Confucius and Mencius, but also that the value of the whole collection lies in its focus on putting virtues in practice in society, in its teaching of the three mainstays and the five constant virtues, and in its support of family and country. The need for stability and order is clearly expressed.

The ideas emerging from this preface remind us of a similar attitude expressed by the Jiangxi Daoist, Lüzu follower, and adherent of the Jingming dao Fu Jinqian, also active in Sichuan toward the mid-nineteenth century, who writes,

⁸¹ *Lüzu huiji*, *juan* 1, *Lüzu huiji Zongxu* (Su Zongdai), 1a–b and 2b.

Correcting your heart, refining your body, changing course toward righteousness and respecting virtues, this is applied virtue (*yongxin* 庸行), being filial and respecting one's older brother, being loyal and honest; being tolerant and yielding, merciful and kind, this is applied virtue (*yongde* 庸德). The practice of applied virtue (*xing yongde* 行庸德), the sincerity in applied speech, the true learning of a person of integrity, has to start from here. . . . Leaving this world (*chushi* 出世) needs to be done on the basis of having entered the world (*rushi* 入世) (having experienced it); if you want to pursue the work of leaving this world, you need to first explain the Dao of entering this world, and Confucianism is the great tradition (for this).⁸²

正心修身，徙義崇德，此庸行也；孝弟忠信，忍讓慈惠，此庸德也。庸德之行，庸言之謹，真學志士，必自此始。……出世必基於入世，欲求出世之功，先講入世之道，儒其大宗矣。

The emphasis on “yong” and the references to Zi Si and the *Zhong Yong* indicate the desire to focus on the close relationship between Heaven and human beings, and receiving scriptures from Lüzu has to be seen in the perspective of providing helpful and practical guidance to people in the world.

The second preface of the *Lüzu Huiji* is by Lü Dongbin himself, who recounts how, in the autumn of 1847, he was called upon by Hu Anhui, Peng Wengdou, and Che Chuipi to transmit his scriptures. As a reason for agreeing, Lü acknowledges that he had not transmitted any scriptures to Sichuan, implicitly elevating the Yuantong community, the only one selected to receive his transmission in Sichuan. Lüzu then mentions how he was involved not only in the transmission of the scriptures but also in the structuring of the whole collection. This detail will become significant once we understand how the collection was in fact restructured.

The author of the third preface is Wang Hui 汪濊 (?–1891) (1856 *gongsheng* 貢生), from Jinyuan 晉原, in Dayi 大邑 county, the county immediately west from Chongqing county, a few miles southwest of Yuantong.⁸³ While Wang Hui was not among the

⁸² *Daohai jinliang* 道海津梁 (1822), *juan* 1.

⁸³ *Minguo Dayi xian zhi* 民國大邑縣志, *juan* 9:19b.

group who sponsored the Xizi gong discussed above, he was engaged in other activities supporting Lüzu and Wenchang worship.⁸⁴ Wang Hui refers to the imperially bestowed title at the very beginning of his preface, and mentions (only once) the idea of the unity of the three teachings. However, the bulk of the preface, like the preface by Su Zongdai, revolves around Confucian virtues; Wang discusses the importance of building a close relationship with Lüzu and to practice Confucian virtues in every day life. He quotes Lüzu as saying:

Those people in the world who compete and desire to see me, but are not able to put my words into practice, even if they were with me night and day, what benefit would they gain? If people can be loyal (*zhong* 忠) to their country (*guo* 國), filial and brotherly (*xiaoyou* 孝友) in their family (*jia* 家), trustworthy towards their friends, and benevolent (*ren* 仁) to the people underneath them; (if they) do not satisfy their own hearts, do not deceive with secrets, and through skillful means save creatures . . . , then people will love this, ghosts will be frightened by this, and with this one thought, you and I are the same (*ji yu wu tong* 己與吾同). Even if you cannot see me, it is the same as seeing me.

世人競欲見吾。而不能行吾言。雖日夕與吾同處。何益哉。人若能忠於國。孝友於家。信於交友。仁於待下。不慢自心。不欺暗室。以方便濟物……人愛之。鬼神敬之。即此一念。己與吾同。雖不見吾。猶見吾也。

Wang comments on this statement in this way:

What admirable instructions! By reading this collection, you can see the heart of *dijun* (Lüzu) as if you were seeing his face.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ According to an 1875 stele, Wang later sponsored the building of a Wenchang hall, which also housed a Lüzu hall, in Dayi. The stele describes how the process of enlarging and repairing the Wenchang hall started in 1864, that in 1865 the Chunyang 純陽 hall was also repaired, and that the work was finished ten years later, in 1875. *Tongzhi Dayi xianzhi* 同治大邑縣志 (1867) “Peixiu wenchang gong chongxiu Chunyang guan beiji 培修文昌宮重建純陽觀碑記” (*Jinshi* 金石), *juan* 12:37b–8a. *Minguo Dayi xianzhi*, “Wenchanggong xingjian miaogong beiji 文昌宮興建廟工碑記” (1930) (*tanmiao* 壇廟) *juan* 5:15b.

⁸⁵ *Lüzu huiji*, *juan* 1, *Lüzu huiji Zongxu* (Wang Hui), 2a.

旨哉斯訓。可以讀彙集一書矣。可以見帝君之心。如見其面矣。

This preface again reiterates the centrality of Confucian virtues as a practical exercise to keep family and country in harmony; even more important is that, by reading the collection, people can build a close and personal relationship with the divinity. In a period of such turmoil in Sichuan, these words must have resonated with the readers.

The next section of the para-textual materials are the eighteen *Conventions* which discuss in detail the genesis of this collection, its structure, and its meaning and list the people involved in it. After reaffirming the importance of Lüzu as a national divinity invested by the emperor, the *Conventions* too take up the question of the relation between Daoism and Confucianism within it. The editors say, “In this collection the first volume starts with the ‘Zhongxiao gao 忠孝誥 (Admonishments on filiality and loyalty),’ the appended volume (*fu* 附冊) starts with the ‘Zhixuan pian 指玄篇 (Chapter on pointing to the mysterious).’ So people see ‘zhongxiao’ as primary. . . . the meaning of Lüzu’s arrangement order is evident.”⁸⁶ Not only are the Confucian notions of *zhong* and *xiao* of primary importance over Daoist ones (*xuanjiao* 玄教), but it is a hierarchy determined directly by Lüzu himself.

After the *Conventions*, the 1849 edition features two of the prefaces reprinted from the Hansan gong *Lüzu quanshu*. A comparison between these original prefaces and the ones produced in Yuantong reveals a very different tone. Throughout the first original preface, by Liu Tishu, there is a constant reference to the importance of merging the three teachings (Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism), and their “founders” are mentioned in parallel about four times; Liu also explains that the *quan* 全 character in the *Lüzu quanshu* refers to its completeness in terms of the equal representation of the three teachings. In this preface, there is an obvious attempt to represent Confucian virtues on the same level as Daoist and Buddhist teachings. The second preface by Huang Chengshu also focuses on the unity of the three teachings, it refutes

⁸⁶ *Lüzu huiji*, *juan* 1, *Fanli*: 2b.

the widely held notion that “the immortal’s scriptures” (*xianjing* 仙經) only belong to the Daoist tradition, but it ascribes them to the Yellow Emperor, to a time when there were not distinctions in different religious schools. He continues by saying that Lü Dongbin has taken the same point of view, reconducing the three teachings to their initial common origin.⁸⁷

This perspective is different from the one evinced from the prefaces in the *Lüzu huiji*, where there is almost no reference to the unity of the three teachings, where Confucian virtues are clearly held above Daoist teachings and practices, and Buddhism is not mentioned at all. This and other examples indicate that the rhetoric of the three teachings is a universalist religious framework that does not always match the reality on the ground. This universalist ideology had received strong and authoritative support from the Yongzheng emperor (1723–1735), who wrote extensively about merging the three teachings, and therefore had strongly influenced elite intellectuals.⁸⁸ The pervasiveness of this discourse in the mid-to late Qing is also a response to this imperial endorsement; however, it is becoming increasingly clear that different communities were using this rhetoric differently and for their own purposes. So, even though the texts inside both the Hansan gong *Lüzu quanshu* and the *Lüzu huiji* refer numerous times to *sanjiao heyi*, the different emphases in the para-textual materials reveal that the Sichuanese community did not feel the need to support *sanjiao* ecumenism, to which they refer only in passing; a more powerful tool was to align themselves with Confucian morality, practical concerns, support for family and country, and charitable activities, in line with their own affiliation with Xu Xun and the Jingmingdao, and in response to a religious context that was increasingly moving toward both direct confrontation with the state and toward explicit concerns for the afterlife (millenarianism, eschatology). The

⁸⁷ *Lüzu huiji*, *juan* 1, *Lüzu quanshu yuanxu fu* 呂祖全書原序附 (1 and 2), in Zhong xu daoang, 1–2.

⁸⁸ Monica Esposito describes in detail the uses of *sanjiao* ideology in both the *Daoang Jiyao* and in the 1906 *Chongkan daoang Jiyao*, published in Chengdu. See *Creative Daoism*, 231–248.

preeminence of this message is also made clear by the actual restructuring of the scriptures inside the collection.

VI. The Contents

As mentioned above, most of the thirty-four *juan* and of the fourteen *juan* of the appendix of the *Lüzu huiji* feature the same material included in the Hansan gong *Lüzu quanshu*. Generally speaking, the *Lüzu quanshu* includes a number of biographies of Lüzu, like the *Lüzu benjuan* 呂祖本傳, poems and prose by him, all under the general heading *Wenji* 文集, as well as treatises on the “unity of the three teachings,” like the *Cantongjing* 參同經. There are also incantations (*zhou* 咒), eulogies (*zan* 贊), and prayers for repentance (*chan* 懺). Several scriptures describe in detail the process of self-refinement through inner alchemy (*Wupin jing* 五品經, *Hou Bapin jing* 後八品經), and many of them include eschatological references, with a description of humanity’s sinfulness, the wrath of Shangdi in response to it, and the mercy of Lüzu.

The contents of the *Lüzu huiji* however, are rearranged according to categories introduced by the new editors and which were not used by the editors of the *Lüzu quanshu*:

Juan number	New categories
<i>Juan</i> 1	No specific name
<i>Juan</i> 2	文集彙
<i>Juan</i> 3–4	詩集彙
<i>Juan</i> 5–6	誥集彙
<i>Juan</i> 7–23	經集彙
<i>Juan</i> 24–25	懺集彙
<i>Juan</i> 26–27	葫頭集彙
<i>Juan</i> 28–29	涵三彙
<i>Juan</i> 30	因果彙
<i>Juan</i> 31	功過彙
<i>Juan</i> 32–34	靈異彙

And in the appendix:

<i>Juan</i> 1–2	玄蘊諸詩彙
<i>Juan</i> 3–6	玄丹彙
<i>Juan</i> 7–10	玄蘊諸經彙
<i>Juan</i> 11	說彙
<i>Juan</i> 12–13	論彙
<i>Juan</i> 14	靈寶畢法

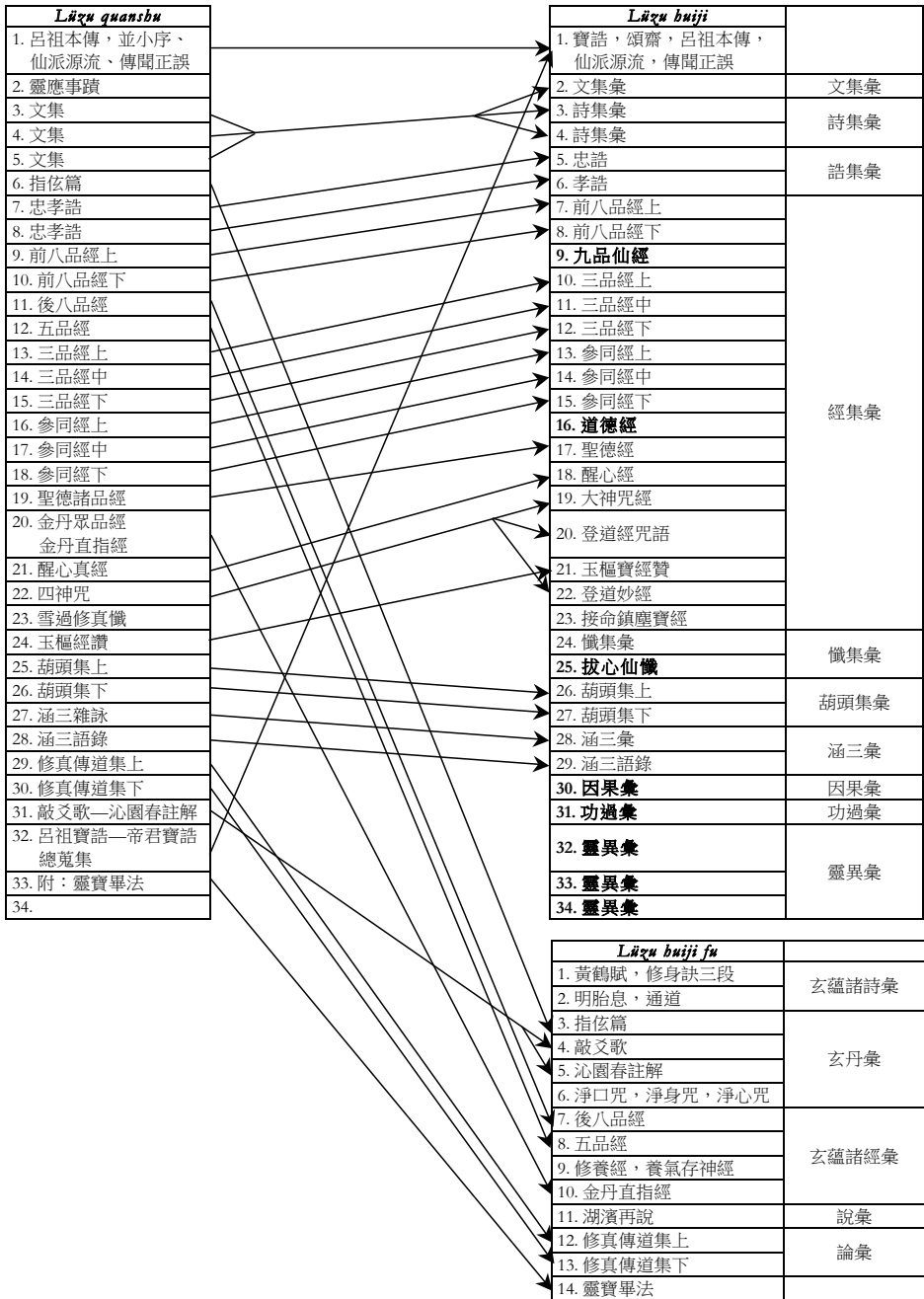
If we compare the two editions, while most of the contents are the same, the *Lüzü huiji* concentrates the materials relating to *neidan* to the fourteen *juan* of the appendix, under general titles that refer to Daoist self-cultivation. Titles in boldtype are newly added to the *Lüzü huiji* collection (see the next page).

This is a change clearly acknowledged both in the preface to the 1851 edition, by Ye Tingsong, and in the 1849 preface to the appendix by Lü Dongbin himself. Ye says, “As for the decision to gather the *neidan* materials in the appendix, we were concerned that people would erroneously enter ‘heterodox paths’ (*pangmen* 旁門).”⁸⁹ The conscious decision to restructure the materials, dividing them between texts mainly dealing with hagiography, unity of the three teachings, and correct moral behavior in the first section and the materials relating to *neidan* techniques of self-perfection in the appendix, is attributed to Lü Dongbin himself:

The world has people who boast about their self-refinement; they foolishly talk about the “great cinnabar (*dadān* 大丹),” but in fact they cannot distinguish inner (alchemy) from outer (alchemy), they do not clarify “dragon and tiger,” they do not explain yin and yang, they do not know lead and silver, they do not distinguish pushing and pulling. . . . They practice blindly and refine foolishly. . . . This is also why my scriptures have encountered great misfortune. Thus, in reordering my scriptures, I have gathered the *chuandao* and *zhixuan* and other chapters altogether in one compilation and made it into an appendix, and have not made them public (*fei wai zhe* 非外者).⁹⁰

⁸⁹ *Lüzü huiji* (1851), *juan* 1, *Lüzü huiji Xu* (Ye Tingsong), 1b.

⁹⁰ Lü Dongbin preface to the appendix, 1a–b.



Source: *Lüzu huiji* (1849) (Sichuan sheng tushuguan)

世有自矜修行。妄語大丹。究竟不識內外。不明龍虎。不解陰陽。不知鉛汞。不辨抽添……盲修瞎煉……是亦吾經之大不幸也。吾編次彙集。亦諸經及傳道指玄等篇而統歸一集。作為附本非外之也。

This, as explained in both prefaces, is done to avoid the problem of confusing readers, leading them astray with complex discussion of *neidan* self-refinement, and to avoid them falling prey to harmful practices. Thus, in the *Lüzü huiji*, the centrality of *neidan* to the process of self-perfection, discussed extensively in prefaces and other para-textual materials in the *Lüzü quanshu*, is relegated to the appendix. It is unclear what the “heterodox practices” that are mentioned in the prefaces might be, but what is clear is the criticism against other practitioners and groups; given the invective against “Yellow Hats” by a supporter of Wang Hui (mentioned above), and the adoption of self-refinement techniques by contemporary millenarian groups, the Yuantong group might have had a different perception of *neidan* than the Hansan gong group a century earlier.

Apart from the rearrangement, several *juan* are also added to the first section, which were not in the *Lüzü quanshu*: the *Jiupin xianjing* 九品仙經 (Immortal’s Scripture in Nine Chapters),⁹¹ the *Daodejing* 道德經,⁹² the *Yinguo hui* 因果彙 (Collection on Retribution) and *Gongguo hui* 功過彙 (Collection on Merits and Demerits),⁹³ and the *Lingyi hui* 靈異彙 (Collection on the Amazing and Mysterious), containing images illustrating Lüzu’s life stories.⁹⁴ The images are meant to contribute to the didactical nature of the collection; they are described in this way in the *Conventions*: “As for the *Lingyi shiji* 靈異事蹟 (Traces of the Amazing and

⁹¹ *Lüzü huiji*, *juan* 9. Possibly dated to 1834, not linked to the revelations at the Wanshou gong. It includes a disquisition on the importance of the Confucian virtues of *ren* 仁, *yi* 義, *li* 禮, *zhi* 智, and *xin* 信.

⁹² *Lüzü huiji*, *juan* 16. A short disquisition on the real meaning of Dao and De, on cutting desires and distinguishing good from bad.

⁹³ *Lüzü huiji*, *juan* 30 and 31. Because the only original copies of this collection are in the Chengdu and Shanghai libraries and not reproduced in any reprints, I have had access only to the titles of these particular chapters but not the contents.

⁹⁴ *Lüzü huiji*, *juan* 32–34, containing images illustrating Lüzu’s life stories.

Mysterious), the old copy did not have pictures. Today we drew pictures of the ‘traces’ 事蹟, so that what is ‘amazing’ and ‘mysterious’ in *Lüzu* would be clear and manifest to the eyes and ears.”⁹⁵ It is thus clear that all of the materials added to the collection in Yuantong have a strong didactic message. This confirms the interests of the community around this collection, composed of merchants affiliated with the Jingmingdao, connected with the local gentry, and supportive of local charitable activities. This different community influenced the rearrangement of the materials in the collection, suggesting a front-loading of materials on moral behavior, adding two sections on retribution and ledgers of merit and demerit, and concentrating in the appendix all the *neidan* materials that might be seen as at the same time too focused on the individual and possibly confusing and harmful.

In sum, even though the *Lüzu huiji* mostly includes texts that were already part of the Hansan gong *Lüzu quanshu*, the prefaces to the *Lüzu huiji*, as well as the different way in which the texts are rearranged, indicate a shift of priorities. While the original prefaces to the *Lüzu quanshu* indicate a strong support of the “unity of the three teachings,” it is a kind of practical morality and its effects on society that largely occupy the discourse in the prefaces of the *Lüzu huiji*; the rearrangement of the contents of the collection, ascribed to Lüzu himself, and the few texts added also indicate a clear hierarchical shift, with *neidan* practices relegated to the appendix, thus putting *zhongxiao* before *xuanjiao*. Strong support for the unity of family (*jia*) and country (*guo*) is also displayed.

The shift in ideology from a *sanjiao* ecumenism to a preeminence of practical moral values sponsored by the local elites fits well with recent analyses of the nineteenth century and of the effects of the Jiaqing reforms, especially directed at borderland regions, which fostered “activist oriented values, selectively drawn from the orthodox Confucian canon, encouraged social commitment, moral determination,” in a context of reconstruction after the “White Lotus” millenarian rebellions.⁹⁶ The Jiaqing

⁹⁵ *Lüzu huiji*, *Conventions*, 8.

⁹⁶ McMahan, *Rethinking the Decline of China's Qing Dynasty*, 7.

reforms and borderland rebuilding implemented “policies of settlement, infrastructure building, policing, production and education,” and were intended to “stabilize society, strengthen state oversight, promote production and propagate knowledge,” all the while fostering relations with the local elites.⁹⁷ Even after the end of the Jiaqing reign, these policies continued to have an effect in local communities.

In this effort toward emphasizing practical morality, stability, and order, and redirecting Daoist practice toward moralistic and philanthropic aims, the Yuantong community was not alone. Another example is the Liumen school, a group also active in Xinjin 新津, southwest of Yuantong, and in Chengdu. The founder of the school, Liu Yuan 劉沅 (1768–1855), was a self-defined Confucian scholar; however, he actively supported Daoism by funding the reconstruction of Daoist temples (specifically the Er xian’an in Chengdu), and his school established and developed a Daoist ritual tradition, the *Fayantan* 法言壇 (Altar of Ritual Words).⁹⁸ Liu received texts from Lü Dongbin through spirit writing, and the Liumen worshipped Lü, among other deities, in their temples.⁹⁹ The community was also very active in philanthropy. Thus the combination of Lüzu worship, spirit writing, and Confucian beliefs and practices in Sichuan was not unique to the Yuantong community and should be investigated further.

VII. Conclusion

In this article, I mainly, though not exclusively, focused on one collection of texts and one location in order to provide a deeper understanding of at least one religious community devoted to Lüzu in Sichuan. However, the *Lüzu huiji* is not the only collection of spirit written materials received from Lüzu in Sichuan at this time (notable examples are the cases of Fu Jinquan and Li Xiyue), so inevitably this article offers only one facet of Lüzu worship in

⁹⁷ Ibid., 9 and 10.

⁹⁸ On this tradition, see Volker Olles, *Ritual Words: Daoist Liturgy and the Confucian Liumen Tradition in Sichuan Province* (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz Verlag, 2013).

⁹⁹ Ibid., 43.

Sichuan, and illuminates only one small side of the complex religiosity of mid-nineteenth-century Sichuan. This case study is significant for the amount of textual and stele information still available to us, which allows us to look closely at the community behind it. In analyzing the people behind the *Lüzü huiji* and the broader social and religious context, the study focuses on the “localization” of Lüzu beliefs, and uncovers dynamics at work that sets this case apart from previous cases of revelations from Lüzu in the Jiangnan area, even though it is also part of a wide and consistent spreading of Lüzu worship throughout China in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and one that continues well in the Republican period.

In this analysis, the spreading of Lüzu-related activities (altar building and textual production) to Sichuan in the mid-nineteenth century has two different causes. The first is, more generally, related to population migration to Sichuan from Jiangxi and other provinces. Migrating populations bring their religious practices with them and this case study focused on a specific community, merchants from Jiangxi devoted to Xu Xun, who sponsored the publication of a collection of scriptures received from Lüzu at their local guildhall, the Wanshou gong. Even though more evidence is needed to prove this convincingly, it is significant that another spirit-writing community that received texts from Lüzu was also headed by a man from Jiangxi, Fu Jinqian, who had a spirit-writing altar very close to the original Wanshou gong in Jiangxi before moving to Sichuan.

The second significant factor in the expansion of this cult to Sichuan is the Jiaqing emperor’s edict canonizing Lü Dongbin, ordering sacrifices to him twice yearly in every county, and the consequent building of altars. In Sichuan, unlike other areas, the Jiaqing edict did not just sanction a status quo, but in fact spurred cultic activities around Lüzu. As mentioned above, the standardization of Lüzu was used by officials posted to Sichuan, allied with the local gentry, in order to establish Lüzu’s (and their) authority on the ground, appearing side by side to, and sometimes taking the place of, earlier cults. The importance of the authority of the Jiaqing emperor’s edict is revealed by its prominent display in temples, on steles, in gazetteers, and in scriptures. The cult was used

by at least one local community of Jiangxi merchants to establish their local authority. In so doing, they emphasized not Lüzu's association with Daoism, or with *sanjiao*, but the preeminence of practical morality, order, and stability.

The nineteenth century is a period of great insecurity with the opium wars and Taiping Rebellion as great destabilizers; Sichuan, which had also been greatly traumatized during the Ming-Qing transition, continued to be a place of turmoil and rebellions and a fertile place for eschatological ideologies. After the Jiaqing edicts canonizing Lüzu, the god is co-opted by the emperor and the government, and utilized by an alliance of government officials, local gentry, and wealthy migrant merchants in Sichuan to advance their social standing, stabilize local society, and spread virtue. In this process, migrant merchants in Sichuan have a central role. Through their guildhalls, these merchants often collaborate with government officials in matters of public welfare and order. A strong collaboration between scholar-officials posted to Sichuan who are encouraging an effort to civilize society by subscribing to imperially mandated worship, and the merchants, often not original to Sichuan, aspiring to a higher social standing achieved through works of public good is evident in this case study. The *Lüzu huiji* and the larger context of intense rebuilding of Lüzu altars throughout the area are good examples of this collaboration.

The uniqueness of this “localization” of belief is evident: the social and religious context in which this collection is situated is different from previous ones outside of Sichuan, described by Lai in this manner: “distinguished themselves particularly within the cult of Lüzu by their explicit association with the traditional lineages of Daoism and the worship of Daoist deities . . . representative of a new type of lay Daoist movement that broadly shared a belief in Lüzu combined with the cult of spirit-writing, independence from monastic Daoist temples, and the engagement of communities of lay believers in the cult within certain congregational contexts in association with traditional lineages of Daoism.”¹⁰⁰ In contrast, the *Lüzu huiji* is not received at a Daoist altar, by either Daoist clergy or lay Daoist adepts, there is no sign of a congregation, or a lay

¹⁰⁰ Lai, “Cult of Spirit Writing,” 9.

Daoist association with adepts and ordination names, and there is no obvious worship of other Daoist deities (other than Lüzu and Wenchang; other statues are of Confucian saints and worthies). The transmission takes place in a guildhall (albeit also a religious place), the publication at the Xizi gong, supported by both a group of merchants and officials whose beliefs (sponsoring of the Xizi gong and the Baoben tang, criticizing the lack of filiality of the Daoists, putting Confucian virtues above Daoist practices) indicate that they did not see themselves as lay Daoists. In the conclusion to her article, Shiga also mentions that the rooting of Lüzu cult in the Lingnan area was mostly not due to the efforts of Quanzhen priests coming from north China, but to a variety of people, including local gentry, local Daoist priests, medicine professionals, merchants, and fengshui masters.¹⁰¹

Lüzu collections have been hailed as a good example of “unity of the three teachings,” where elites, self-describing as Confucians, are free to express their religious beliefs (Daoist, Buddhist, or both) privately. Despite the ecumenical ideal, the concept of *sanjiao* has in fact been utilized by different communities to fit their needs. The case of Sichuan and of the *Lüzu huiji* is less an example of ecumenism, and more of an attempt to utilize the power of the newly canonized Lüzu to assert the authority of one community of Jiangxi merchants in nineteenth-century Sichuan. In return for the great effort spent on publication and building efforts, these merchants receive the support of the officials, the gratitude of the populace, and a direct connection with a powerful god.

Finally, despite the great religious turmoil of the period, the abundance of strong eschatological discourse found in many of the scriptures received through spirit writing in late Qing Sichuan, the prefaces to the *Lüzu huiji*, as well as the few texts added to the original list of *Lüzu quanshu* texts, do not indicate an eschatological discourse; in contrast to what Goossaert describes as the general trend toward “elite eschatology,”¹⁰² it appears that this Sichuanese community was more focused on moral didacticism and utilitarian morality, rather than threats of the “end of the world.”

¹⁰¹ Shiga, “Qingmo Minchu Lingnan,” conclusion.

¹⁰² Goossaert, “Modern Daoist Eschatology, 219–246”.

Appendix

Comparison of the 1949 and 1951 *Lüzu huiji* editions. The second edition rearranges the order of the para-textual materials and adds one preface, dated 1851, marked in red below.

	四川藏本 1849		中華續道藏本 1851
1	Title page: 呂祖彙集 (道光二九年)		Title page not existent or not reproduced
2	頒祭	●	呂祖彙集序 鍊丹度世……慈悲之意也夫 咸豐元年……葉聽松……
3	呂祖彙集總序 「古聖賢……豈不懿歟」 崇陽宿宗岱敬序	●	呂祖彙集總序 「道有彌淪……輒識簡端」 道光二十九年……汪濊……
4	呂祖彙集總序 「吾東游巫峽……車垂壁也」 道光乙酉初夏洞賓呂純陽序	●	呂祖彙集總序 「古聖賢……豈不懿歟」 崇陽宿宗岱敬序
5	孚佑帝君像	●	呂祖全書原序附 三代以前……也已 乾隆七年——劉體恕……
6	讚	●	呂祖全書原序附 世謂仙經……豈小補哉 ……黃誠恕……
7	呂祖彙集總序 道有彌淪……輒識簡端 道光二十九年……汪濊……	●	呂祖彙集總序 吾東游巫峽……車垂壁也 道光乙酉初夏洞賓呂純陽序
8	呂祖彙集 凡例	●	呂祖彙集 凡例
9	呂祖全書原序附 世謂仙經……豈小補哉 ……黃誠恕……	●	孚佑帝君像
10	呂祖全書原序附 三代以前……也已 乾隆七年——劉體恕……	●	讚
11	總目	●	頒祭
12	呂祖彙集卷一 目錄	●	呂祖彙集卷一 目錄
		●	呂祖彙集 總目

十九世紀呂祖信仰在四川的傳播與 地方宗教環境的變化

阿琳娜

摘要

近十年以來，許多學者開始研究清代宗教文獻、信仰的各種方面，他們特別注意扶乩活動與呂洞賓信仰的關係。因為他們的工作，我們現在可以深刻了解清代複雜的宗教生活與扶乩、印刷、地方宗教的互相作用和影響。研究特別以江南與海邊地區為重點，因為呂祖信仰在這些地區發展得早。本文則要追蹤呂祖信仰與扶乩文獻從江南到四川地區的傳播過程。我的目標是介紹四川呂祖信仰的特點，突出跟江南的差別，而且也展現傳播的過程。雖然在四川關於呂祖的原文文獻比較豐富，但是本文要集中研究討論一套文集：《呂祖彙集》(1849)，與它出版的地區：元通—崇陽—崇州。研究《呂祖彙集》讓我們了解了19世紀四川宗教活動、宗教文獻出版文化與商業行為。這過程當中，還要考慮下面一些問題：19世紀到四川的大規模移民；嘉慶皇帝把呂祖封為國家聖賢(1804)；慈善團體的廣泛傳播。結果是我們更深刻地理解了19世紀全國宗教傳播系統，而且能以新的角度來看待呂祖信仰；同時這一篇文章能夠增加學界對清代四川宗教的認識。

關鍵詞：呂祖、四川、呂祖彙集、傳播、清代道教