

Affiliation and Transmission in Daoism

A Berlin Symposium

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Contents

Foreword	VII
FLORIAN C. REITER	
Modes of Affiliation and Transmission: Early Quanzhen Daoism (全真) and Daoist Thunder Magic (五雷法)	1
TERRY KLEEMAN	
“Take charge of households and convert the citizenry” The Parish Priest in Celestial Master Transmission	19
JOHN LAGERWEY	
Canonical fasts according to Lu Xiuqing	41
LÜ PENGZHI	
Ordination Ranks in Medieval Daoism and the Classification of Daoist Rituals	81
STEPHEN BOKENKAMP	
Transmissions of a Female Daoist: Xie Ziran (767-795)	109
HSIEH SHUWEI	
Lineage, Hagiographie and Teaching: The Daoist School of Eastern Florescence in Song and Yuan Dynasties	123
CHANG CHAOJAN	
Nocturnal Invocation and Installation of Officials: Difficulties encountered in Purification Rites of the Numinous Treasure Sect during the Tang and Song and adaptive responses to them.....	159
TAM WAI-LUN	
Transmission Ritual of Local Daoists in Southeast China.....	173
PAUL R. KATZ	
The Development of Jiangnan Daoist Networks of Transmission and Affiliation as seen in the Mount Weiyu Genealogy.....	193
LEE FONGMAO	
The Transmission of Daoist Registers and the Climbing of the Knife-Ladder: The 63 rd Heavenly Master Zhang Enpu in Taiwan (1950-1969) and the Reorganisation of Daoism	225
LIN WEI-PING	
Son of Man or Son of God? The Spirit Medium in Chinese Popular Religion	249

HSIEH TSUNG-HUI The Study of Secret Knowledge Transmission in Daoist Altars: How “The Origin and Development of Daoism” 《道教源流》 has been transmitted in South Taiwan	277
Abbreviations	293
List of Contributors	295
Glossary	297

Foreword

The Department of Sinology at Humboldt University in Berlin staged in June 2011 the International Symposium on Affiliation and Transmission in Daoism that was sponsored by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) in Bonn. The participants came from Germany, England, Hongkong, Taiwan, Japan and the United States of America.

We assembled for a few days of vivid exchanges of discussions, always based on lengthy presentations of lectures, and we are happy to present most of them as scientific articles in this volume.

Considering the length of the Taoist history and its many ups and downs, the vicissitudes of administrative and social changes and challenges, the theme of affiliation and transmission in Daoism has a superb importance. What were the conditions of transmission and affiliation? What did it mean to become a disciple and member of an affiliation, taking into account changing times and locations? Such themes and related questions came to our mind when we planned the symposium and received an enthusiastic response from the prospective participants.

Affiliation and transmission are not the topics the canonical sources are perfectly outspoken about or informative as many aspects were left to personal relationships and family habits that were not entrusted to public knowledge and aired in the more or less public forum of the *Daoist Repository* (*Da Ming daoze jing*). And yet, the historical sources allow us to sift out much information about our very special theme. The relevant information may be coached, for example, in the history of the transmission of rituals and professional skills or other ritual specialties.

The participants were free to contribute in accordance with their personal preferences and expert knowledge to explore the many aspects of the theme and possibly open up new approaches that we had not imagined before. In a sense the conference was a laboratory for inventive persons who operated with the firm and wide net that the literary background for Daoist studies and the methods of traditional Chinese studies provide, more often than seldom in combination with field work on the Chinese mainland and in Taiwan.

We do not describe the individual contributions in more detail but hope to induce the reader to study the articles for entertainment and scholarly information. We thank very much the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) in Bonn for their fine support which was indispensable. We could not have staged the symposium without the scope of support that DFG granted.

I especially thank my secretary Mrs. Elisabeth Schulze for her fine efforts to prepare the layout of the book and make it ready for publication. We also

thank the publisher, Harrassowitz Verlag in Wiesbaden, for its unceasing support for the publication that we can present in the long established monograph series (AKM) of the German Oriental Society (Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft).

Florian C. Reiter, Humboldt University, Berlin, March 2012