

**Chief, God, or National Hero? Representing Nong Zhigao
in Chinese Ethnic Minority Society**

Ya-ning Kao

Nong Zhigao (b. 1015 or 1025) was a chieftain of the Nong clan, which settled along the Sino-Vietnamese border in the first half of the eleventh century. He waged a series of rebellions against both the Vietnamese Kingdom and the Song Empire, and succeeded in taking some of the most important Song cities along the West River, reaching as far as Guangzhou in 1052. Guangzhou stood up to the siege, and Nong, defeated by Song troops, fled into the Dali Kingdom. He might have been beheaded in Dali: his head was purportedly delivered by the Dali king as a gift to the Song emperor (Ni, 1998 [1549]; Li, 1985 [1182]: 4354). However, the records are not clear about his fate and he might have escaped. In Cao Bang, a northern Vietnamese province, which is Nong Zhigao's home prefecture, several temples dedicated to his cult remained active into the twentieth century and three of them are still in use (Anderson, 2007: 173-179). In several villages in Maguan county, Yunnan province in China, Nong Zhigao and his troops are sacrificed to annually on the day they passed through their villages (Luo, 2008). In the town of Ande in Jingxi county, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Nong Zhigao is worshipped as a community god. The annual offerings to Nong Zhigao at Ande recreates the history of his defeat

· Ethnographic materials for this article were collected from December 2004 to February 2006 mainly in Ande Township, and January to February 2006 in Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. The author acknowledges with thanks the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne for a Postgraduate Overseas Research Experience Scholarship and PhD Fieldwork Grant, and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange for a Dissertation Fellowship, and for research funding from the project "The conversion of chieftains – territorial gods, chieftain lineages and the retention of indigenous identity in border areas." I am indebted to James Wilkerson, Ho Ts'ui-ping, David Holm, John Shepherd, David Faure and Wang Ming-ke for their comments. My great debt is also to Grandma Xiaofang, Grandma Huimin, Mother Xian, Liao Hanbo, Ma Lanfen and Tan Miao who helped me with translating and transcribing eight hours of audio recording from the De-Jing Zhuang dialect to Chinese and International Phonetic Alphabet.

and reflects the isolated political and ritual unit once controlled by native chiefs and now protected by community gods.

The details of the annual offering as it was carried out from before the Cultural Revolution are not clear. I witnessed its re-emergence in 2005 and its subsequent execution. Every year, the same female oral ritual specialist (*mehmoed*) leads the villages of Ande through the same sequence of events. She goes to the cavern of the spirit of Nong Zhigao's wife, known as the goddess *lunx* (Zh.¹ *Yahlunx*²), to invite her to take part in the ceremony. After that, she invites the spirit of Nong Zhigao at his temple. *Lunx*, through her medium, sings in the *lunx* folksong mode in antiphonal style, while Nong Zhigao, again through a medium, makes a speech. After that, the ritual specialist and a large number of worshippers process through the villages. In 2005, I could sense that some of the ceremonies had to be improvised, but their repetition in the following years has incorporated them into an established repertoire. The local people are certain, now, that those ceremonies have been their "tradition".

The religious ritual is inserted into a framework of political discourse. The establishment of ceremonies venerating Nong Zhigao in Zhuang society through female oral ritual practice is complementary to the state recognition of local deities in Han society as described in Hansen (1990) for the Southern Song period (1127-1279). Watson (1985), furthermore, demonstrates, in the case of one female deity, the Empress of Heaven (Tianhou), that the local deity winning state approval might supplant other local deities. The involvement of the state in local rituals introduces a standard, in ritual practices and in temple architecture, that blends into local rituals along with the belief, real or imaginary, that the state sanctions the local deity. In Zhuang society, some deities made offerings to in village temples or shrines are identified in folklore as having been local chieftains, such as King Mo Yi, whose temples are found in parts of central and western Guangxi (Yang, 2007). Cen Tianbao,

considered an ancestor of the powerful *tusi* (native officials) of the Cen surname in western Guangxi, was rightly sacrificed to in a temple constructed at the foot of a mountain where he fell from horseback and died and was worshipped by nearby villagers and residents of the Debao county seat. However, he possibly also generated the community deity, only known as General Cen, who likewise died in a battle (Huang, 2004).

The likes of Mo Yi and Cen Tianbao have remained ethnic deities in the sense that their followers, who are mostly ethnic Zhuang, tie them closely to their own history. In Ande, Nong Zhigao and, especially his wife, the goddess *lunx*, have retained a much sharper Zhuang identity by not yielding to the tradition that might have emanated from the imperial state. Like state-sanctioned deities, the spirit of Nong Zhigao also once demanded to be made an offering to in a temple. However, unlike temples of state-sanctioned deities, most of which, by far, are located within towns and villages, the temple in the name of Nong Zhigao is built in Nyaz Slays (*yamen*, *nyaz*: a Chinese loan word of *ya*, *slays*: native chieftains) Forest outside the villages. Moreover, as Zhuang deities are gendered in their location in the landscape, Nong Zhigao is paired with a female spirit, his wife, *lunx*, who is housed, not in a temple, but in a cavern. The ritual of inviting local spirits is carried out by women and oral ritual specialists. In an order that is constantly adhered to, they invite the female spirit before the male spirit. Nong Zhigao, the community god, cannot be separated from his wife.³

In Ande the local people do not set up Nong Zhigao's tablet on the family altar, but, instead, locates it in the temple in the forest. Nong Zhigao's spirit tablet is deposited on the altar in his ancestral hall in Ayong village and another Nong Zhigao's tablet was set up at the Baima Monastery in the county city, both in Guangan county, Yunnan province. His dual character may be explained by the fact,

that to Ande, his violent death precludes sacrifice to him within the village or at least outside the house, and yet, to the Nong surname of Guangnan, he is an ancestor.

The Zhuang People and Nong Zhigao

The Zhuang are a Tai-speaking cross-border ethnic group in China and mainland Southeast Asia. In China, they are the most populous group among fifty-five ethnic minorities and number over 17 million people. Most Chinese scholars agree that the Zhuang, unlike some other ethnic groups in south and southwest China such as the Miao and Yao, are indigenous to the area. In the Ming dynasty, they were governed by chieftains who were recognised by the imperial state (Tan, 1995), and, although by the early Qing dynasty, in parts of Yunnan and Guangxi, native chieftains were replaced by appointed officials, along the Sino-Vietnamese border, chieftains continued to rule into the late Qing era (Took 2005).

Until the history of Nong Zhigao was rewritten after 1949, Nong was given a negative image in Chinese history. The Song official Yu Jing, one of the principal commanders who fought against Nong, described him as:

A stupid barbarian born in a ferocious clan, who, knowing well that the frontier was defenseless, incited traitors to his scheme (to raise a rebellion).

(Yu 1976 [11th century] *juan*16: 6)

Obviously, from the Chinese imperial perspective, Nong Zhigao was a barbarian, a rebel, and a traitor.

The socialist version of Nong Zhigao's image has been transformed from that of a traitor to a hero. Huang Xianfan, a mainland Chinese historian, wrote:

After New China had been founded, every minority ethnic group has risen and has become master of its own fate. The history of Chinese minorities has been reversed. It is time to reveal the true colours of the Zhuang leader, Nong Zhigao, and his rebellion against the Song Empire (Huang, 1983: 1).

From rebel, Nong has become a minority ethnic hero.

Nevertheless, the re-writing of Nong Zhigao's history has not altered the portrayal of his mother, who played a pivotal role in his uprisings. She continues to be viewed not as a heroine in Chinese history or legend, but as a witch who ate children at every meal, or an immoral woman who married three times. On the Sino-Vietnamese frontier, it is said that Nong Zhigao could have become an emperor if his mother had not destroyed his powers. As a result of this belief, over there, some villagers offer her unwashed and uncooked intestines in their annual offering, the raw and contaminated meat representing her untamed presence.⁴

Compared with Nong Zhigao and his mother, little is recorded about Nong Zhigao's wife. Legend says that she, like Nong Zhigao's mother, destroyed his plan to establish an empire. However, in Ande Township, men and women seem to identify differently the *lunx* goddess as either Nong Zhigao's wife or mother. In interviews and conversations with organizers of the ceremony to commemorate Nong Zhigao, all of whom were men, I was told that *lunx* was Nong Zhigao's mother. In contrast, in prayers and ritual proclamations, the women, who were the predominant participants in the ceremonies, said she was Nong Zhigao's wife. The discrepancy shows that men have received the information from written history, which recorded the mother's role, but the women involved in ritual practices learned from the ritual specialists, the *mehmoed* (Zh.), themselves mostly women, who speak about the death of Nong Zhigao's wife.

Before elaborating on the ritual representation of Nong Zhigao and his wife in a Zhuang society, it is necessary to discuss the differences between the mother-son connection emphasized in written sources and legends and the husband-wife relation practiced in the life cycle in Zhuang society. A mother-son connection is significant to the Han Chinese family, but it is not the only significant connection in a Zhuang

family. In Han Chinese society, women play two roles, as divisive wife and as unifying mother (Sangren 1983: 14-15).⁵ In their written sources about Nong Zhigao, the Song dynasty literati portrayed only the mother-son connection, and it is in legends, passed down by the Zhuang, that Nong Zhigao's wife emerges. This difference in emphasis accords with what we know of Zhuang families. A married couple are expected to separate from the husband's natal family as soon as their first child is born. The new house and the couple are named after their first child. Ideally, parents only live with their unmarried children and finally with the youngest married son and his family. The new parents start operating their new household individually in everyday activities and ritual practice. They prepare new houses for their married sons and send gifts to their married daughters. A mother has to prepare and carry gifts to attend every ritual concerning the well-being of her daughter's children (Gao 2002). Male siblings also have to support their married female siblings (Wilkerson 2007). A woman plays a role in linking her natal family and her husband's family. Obtaining the third name from having the first grandchild is as important as giving a finely hand-made embroidered baby carrier to their daughter's first child. Support from the daughter-in-law's natal family in ritual enables a couple to obtain their third name. It is the wife, through giving birth to the first child, who links her natal family, her husband's family and her own.

Ande Dong, Ande Township, and the Six Flags

Ande township is located in a relatively wide karst valley in the drainage basin of the Zuoyou River, in which a market town and several hamlets now stand. Rivers emerge in the valley from springs in the foothills, and they provide irrigation for the paddy fields. The typical settlement is set against mountains behind and paddy fields in front, and each settlement is surrounded by forests and cavernous mountains.

When, in 1048, Nong Zhigao established his second kingdom, the Southern

Heavenly Kingdom (*Nantian guo*) at Ande, it would have been known, not as a town, but as a *dong*, a term Chinese records reserved for aboriginal settlements in the southwest. The Southern Song official, Zhou Qufei, who was posted to the area, referred to people in western Guangxi, which would have included Ande, as ‘*dong*’ men (Zhou 1999 [1178]: 133). It is not clear how Nong Zhigao occupied Ande, but by no later than the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), it was controlled by the Cen clan, and during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the chieftains there were of the Huang surname (Bai 2006: 142). Ande remained a *dong* through the Yuan and Ming eras. That was to change only by the nineteenth century, when Chinese literati culture was extending through this area, as indicated by the first appearance of poetic references for place names recorded in Chinese gazetteers.⁶

Temples of state-sanctioned gods abound in the frontier market town. They display the expansion of the Chinese state, and include the Northern Deity Temple, the Temple of the God of Agriculture, the Dragon King Temple, the *Lingshan* Buddhist Monastery, the *Ciyun* Buddhist Monastery, devoted to the Goddess of Mercy (*Guanyin*), the *Zhaixing* Tower devoted to the Pole Star, and the temple of the god *Wenchang*, who oversaw examination success. The Black Flag Army, which bore the brunt of combat in the Sino-French War, was named after the powerful black flag in the Northern Deity Temple in Ande. After the Black Flag troops defeated the French, they returned the flag to the temple at Ande. It was said that Liu Yongfu, the Black-flag commander, donated 20,000 cash to build a tower in front of the Northern Deity Temple to commemorate those who died during the war. Many of these temples were destroyed in the late 1950s, but most of them have been rebuilt in the last two decades.

No historical buildings remain from the time of Nong Zhigao’s rebellion in the eleventh century. The Nong Zhigao Temple and the “Southern Heavenly Gate”—the

name reflecting the Southern Heavenly Kingdom, which Nong was believed to have set up in Ande — were built only recently. Nong Zhigao's legend is embedded, not in buildings, but in specific locations in the valley. It is said that *lunx*, whether she was Nong Zhigao's wife or mother, died inside the cavern that now bears her name, and that the Nyaz Slays Forest,⁷ where Nong Zhigao's temple now stands and where liquidambar trees grew in the past, is sacred because Nong Zhigao's *yamen* (government office) had been established there. Nowadays, in Zhuang society, it would have been common practice for deities to be sacrificed to in a temple or at least at an altar on which a tablet bearing the deity's name has been installed. In 2002, the women of Ande collected money to build the Nong Zhigao temple in a plum orchard in which liquidambar trees had previously grown but had been chopped down during the Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s. The men, in their turn, rebuilt the Southern Heavenly Gate, to commemorate Nong Zhigao's rebellion.⁸ There might have been an interest in attracting visitors to Ande too, for the buildings would have staked Ande's claim to its history.

The communal offering to Nong Zhigao is carried out by the Six Flags (Zh. *Lufkif*), an alliance of the town and villages in the valley. According to a local man aged over 90 years of age when I interviewed him in 2005, the market had not always been part of Six Flags in the triennial offering (Zh. *haet zai*, doing fast). In 2005, when I carried out my fieldwork, the town (Zh. *gai*, Ch. *jie*) and the villages (Zh. *mbanj*, Ch. *tun*) made their offering to Nong Zhigao together. Although the town and the villages are still conceptually distinct, the boundary between village and market town has blurred, at least, as far as the conduct of public ritual is concerned.

Heroic and Political Representation

When I observed the ritual of Nong Zhigao's offering in 2005, the negative image recorded in official history, literati commentary and popular fiction had already

given way to that of the ethnic hero which had been promoted by state policies since the founding of the Chinese People's Republic in 1949. Nowadays, Nong Zhigao is a national hero who prevented the Vietnamese expansion and exposed the weaknesses of the Song dynasty. Even though Chinese scholars still debate Nong Zhigao's nationality, birthday, birthplace and motivation for rebellion, the heroic image of Nong Zhigao has been confirmed in recently compiled official Zhuang history (Huang et al. 1988; Zhang 1997). In addition, since the 1990s, the local Zhuang elite, especially people of the Nong surname who claim descent from Nong Zhigao, have been suggesting that the Nong ancestors might even have come originally from northern China. A generation has grown up in the villages, who in their childhood had heard about Nong Zhigao as a king, who at school age had been presented with the image of Nong Zhigao as a rebel, and who, now, well past middle age, are told that Nong was a national and ethnic hero. The minority of educated villagers who became cadres and teachers would have collaborated to propagate the heroic image. Annually, the Zhuang Studies Association meets and considers the place of Nong Zhigao in Zhuang history. The same combination of local pride and national patriotism would have encouraged the Nong surname to compile the genealogy in which Nong Zhigao stood out as both ancestor and national hero (Nong 2005; Nong 1996).

The officially-sanctioned commemorative ceremony for Nong Zhigao, which some local people would take to be part of the annual offering, is held proudly by the town elite. They also harbour the hope of constructing a memorial hall for Nong's Southern Heavenly Kingdom at the site of Nong Zhigao's *yamen* to serve as a museum of Ande's long history. A preparatory committee for the "Commemorating National Hero Nong Zhigao Festival" (*Jinian minzu yingxiong Nong Zhigao huodong jie*) has been formed made up of party cadres and village officials. Under the direction of the branch secretary of the Ande Street Resident Committee (*Ande Jie Jiemin*

Weiyuanhui), they meet to prepare the festival programme. They have also interviewed elderly members of the community about the rituals of the sacrifice offering as they had been traditionally practiced, and consulted the educated people in the county city about the history of Nong Zhigao's rebellion.

On the occasions I observed the celebrations, on the day of the festival, numerous guests came to visit from afar, entertainment programmes were performed by villagers and guest performing groups; a series of speeches on a local story and a national history of Nong Zhigao and Nong Zhigao's mother were given. The festival was like many of those taking place among Chinese ethnic minorities. They were adjusted to fit the notions of government officials—for instance, performers dress in traditional costumes and people get together to sing and dance. Programmes were performed in sequence in several places in Ande valley: lion dancing and folksong singing inside the *lunx* goddess's cavern; programmes were performed by local performers, speeches were given by guests and cadres in the temporary plaza near the Nyaz Slays Forest, performing groups paraded around town, and entertainment programmes carried out separately at stages in the plaza, at Ande High School and beside Ande Culture Centre. Inside the cavern, in order to “perform” tradition, local people performed lion dancing accompanied by the playing of instruments and the singing of folksongs. A recently painted picture of Nong Zhigao's mother's dressed in black as would be fitting being a “Black-clothes Zhuang” (*Heiyi Zhuang*) had been set up at the cavern entrance. In the plaza near Nyaz Slays Forest, guests and officials gave speeches on local and national versions of Nong Zhigao's rebellion to the crowd and performers. The performing groups played different roles connected to Nong Zhigao's story. The leading group, which included a gong player carrying a flag printed with the Chinese character, *Nong*, which was Nong Zhigao's surname, and two *suona* horn players. The second group represented the *lunx* goddess, consisting of

two local female singers chosen by the festival preparatory committee, a ritual specialist, and an ordinary local woman assigned by the *lunx* goddess. Then came the group carrying Nong Zhigao's palanquin group, along with his picture, and colourful flags representing the Six Flags alliance of villages and swords and spears. Other performers carried palanquins to propagate the government's policy and to represent offerings. After a series of speeches, performers paraded around town. Finally, different entertainment performances designed to commemorate Nong Zhigao, though not all were relevant to the topic of Nong Zhigao, began in different places at different times.

The organizers of the festival were predominantly men and they emphasized to me that they intended to revive the traditional practices that had been interrupted for about half a century. Nevertheless, their program was essentially meant to be non-religious. They paraded Nong Zhigao's picture in the town instead of the figure representing Nong Zhigao that was installed on the altar of his temple. There is no tablet or statue in Nong Zhigao's temple, only a flag printed a Chinese character, Nong 農, in a wall of the temple. They had also set up the picture of Nong Zhigao's mother in the cavern, which, again, because it was introduced as a novelty in the ceremony, could be argued as more an artistic than a religious representation. They chose two middle-aged women who were recognized as good singers from one of the Six Flags villages to sing a song of the *lunx* mode. They did not offer fermented wine to the deities, as was the custom, but instead, decorated the jar-shaped palanquin with two sugarcanes. However, if one expected the commemorative ceremony to be made up of a recreation of Nong Zhigao's heroic exploits as interpreted by the cadres, one could not be more wrong. The men's programme for the ceremony had not made allowance for the oral ritual specialist whose responsibility it was to invite *lunx* to the ceremony. For the villagers, it was her invitation of *lunx* which was the focus of the

festival.

The *Mehmoed*: Inviting *Lunx*

Ritual specialists play many significant roles in Zhuang social life. In southwestern Guangxi, they are of three kinds: Daoist priests (Zh. *bousdaoh*,), *bousmo* (Zh.) and *mehmoed* (Zh.). Both Daoist priests and *bousmo* are male; in contrast, *mehmoed* are female. Daoist priests make use of Chinese texts, which they chant in Southwestern Mandarin. *Bousmo* have books written in Zhuang script and conduct rituals in the Iang (Zh.) dialect. Because the Daoist priests can read both Chinese and Zhuang scripts -- the Zhuang script is based on Chinese script -- they now double as *bousmo*. In contrast, the *mehmoed* do not have books. They fall within a totally oral tradition, and they build their ritual on what and who they encounter on spiritual journeys in the company of spiritual soldiers and horses (Zh. *beeng*: soldiers, *max*: horses, hereinafter spirit soldiers, *beengmax* is a two-word phrase, can be understood as spirit soldiers and horses) and dead ritual masters, *bah*. Some rituals, such as freeing the spirits of the dead from the underworld, require the use of texts, and they fall outside the service that can be provided by the *mehmoed*. They often deal with the spirits of the living, manage the spirits of people who have experienced a bad death, for instance, by dying from accidents, and mediate between the living and their ancestors or deities. Most importantly, they are able to deliver fermented wine to ancestors, deceased *bah*, gods and goddesses. Because the *mehmoed* are able to mediate between human beings and the spirits, they are more attractive than the other two categories of ritual specialists and more audience-orientated, both in household or in community rituals. In Wilkerson's words, female ritual specialists draw on nearby cosmic forces; in contrast, Daoist priests access remote cosmic forces organized in terms of the Chinese imperium (Wilkerson 2007).

Mehmoed are women but female gender does not prohibit Zhuang women from

being possessed by Daoist deities or from performing rituals in public. They play a more central role in Zhuang society than do most spirit mediums play in south China Han society.⁹ *Mehmoed* in Zhuang society can access more kinds of spirits—gods, goddesses, ancestors, souls and ghosts—and can perform both household and communal rituals.¹⁰ They invite deities without assistance from Daoist priests or *bousmo*, and when possessed, they converse with their audiences without interpreters. Through their mouths, the gods, goddesses and ancestors make pronouncements, sometimes cast as dialogues between ritual participants and spirits. The pronouncements are taken seriously. For example, when, during a ceremony, my host family's stove god complained that their brother-in-law cooked dog and beef, he never did that again at home. In another example, a small statue of Chairman Mao was initially placed in the room housing the family altar, and it had to be moved to the balcony after the *bah* explained that Chairman Mao dealt with national affairs and should not be in the home. Apart from family affairs, the pronouncements of community gods made during rituals are often the reasons given for temple reconstruction. The ceremonies conducted in front of Nong Zhigao's temple in 2005 by the *mehmoed* involved a series of ritual pronouncements, some of which addressed the revival of tradition.

Aunt Beauty, the most popular and famous of three *mehmoed* in Big Village, had been chosen by the Six Flags villages to invite *lunx* from her cavern and to deliver wine to Nong Zhigao at his temple. Beauty, nee Huang, was born in Xilai Village in Six Flags and married into a Wang-surname family in Big Village, also in Six Flags. She has spent most of her life in Six Flags although she frequently travels to the neighbouring county of Napo to conduct rituals. In the morning on the day she was to invite *lunx*, Aunt Beauty was picked up by Grandma Huimin at her home. Huimin burned incense to invite the spirit soldiers and *bah*, they departed together for *lunx*'s

cavern.

The *mehmoed* needed the preparation before going on her spiritual journey. She invites spirit soldiers and *bah* to attend and assist her on her journey. Only after that does she dress in ritual costume and begin the voyage on spiritual horseback. She does not go alone on the journey, but is accompanied by spirit soldiers and horses, the souls of ritual assistants and the ritual host's family members or village representatives. The journey starts from the mat on which she sits at the family altar or community shrine. The group encounters spirits guarding the family, village, field, and spring, and gods and goddess of temples in the valley before they turn on the road to deliver fermented wine to a specific god. Unlike shamans of northern Asia who journey to other worlds (Eliade and Adams, 1987: 205), or South American magico-religious *nelegan* specialists (Levi-Strauss, 1963) or even the Miao and Yao who travel back to the real or imagined land of the ancestors (Chen 2003; Falk 1996), the *mehmoed* goes on a journey in the valley where the Zhuang people have lived generation after generation. She has to know from where each spirit or *bah* might be invited: the more powerful the *mehmoed*, the more spiritual soldiers and *bah* she could summon (Xiao 2007: 474).

In 2005, the ritual inside the cavern had already started after Beauty, village representatives of the Six Flags and Ande market town had arrived and set up offerings in the cavern. From inside the cavern, Beauty invited spirit soldiers and *bah* from five different places: the Dragon King Temple (inside another cavern), *Lingshan* Buddhist Monastery Temple (in a mountain), Madan Village, Guobang Village and her own Xilai Village. Whenever Beauty conducts a ritual, she has to begin by inviting the Dragon King of Ande because she was chosen by him, personally, as a *mehmoed*.¹¹ From the Dragon King Temple, she also invited Li and Lai because of an old saying known by Ande residents, "Li built a dam and Lai dug a spring" (Zh. *Laox*

leix kay pai, laox laiz kay mbos). From Lingshan, she invited three spirit soldiers or *bah*: Ling, Zhao and Chen. She invited the spirit soldiers of three other villages because those were, respectively, the village of her Daoist master's master, Mr. Wei, the village of her Daoist master, Mr. Nong, and the village of her natal family.

After successfully inviting spirit soldiers and *bah*, Beauty started her journey to visit *lunx*. She gained access to *lunx* through one of the *bah*. A dialogue between Beauty and other participants followed. At the beginning of the dialogue was a rhymed couplet sung by Aunt Beauty in a high pitch. The couplet was: "the stem of mustard plant is white, I am yawning while reaching the *bah*'s altar to discuss something" (Zh. *pyaek - gat lanz ganj kao, hao laemz kauj zongz - bah sangl - taov*). Beauty's entourage appeared excited when they heard the couplet, for they indicated that *lunx* had arrived. *Lunx* asked -- in songs -- what the purpose of invitation was and who the organizers were. The participants replied in speech instead of appropriate song. In the middle of the dialogue, *lunx* stopped singing and chastised the participant for being unable to reply in song. She, then, announced her departure and left. *Lunx*'s departure was not taken as a complete rebuff her appearance at the cavern guaranteed her attendance in the Nong Zhigao Temple in the next stage of the ceremony.

Beauty, therefore, made offerings to *lunx* and the accompanying spirits, including bodhisattvas, immortals and Nong Zhigao himself. She offered bacon, clothes, a rooster, wine, tea, a vegetarian meal, dyed glutinous rice and spirit money. The participants burnt the paper offerings, saw off the spirit soldiers and *bah*, and moved on to the Nong Zhigao Temple.

At the Nong Zhigao Temple, Beauty first visited Nong Zhigao and invited *lunx* the deities of the Six Flags to attend. In between visiting different deities she searched the wild fields for wandering and missing souls of members of the community. She invited more deities, visited more places and called back more wandering souls than

she did in the cavern, but the ritual she conducted was essentially the same. She announced the purpose of the ceremony, delivered wine to Nong Zhigao to commemorate his rebellion and informed various deities, including the Jade Emperor, the Dragon King and the Goddess of Mercy, of the family names of the organizers of the ritual. She then dressed up, and by now a huge entourage, not only of spirits but also of people, had joined her for her journey.

After Aunt Beauty had dressed, she proceeded on the spiritual journey. The first destination of the journey was the altar of the Nong Zhigao Temple where the god first had to be accessed through a *bah*. In order to reach the god, Aunt Beauty transformed herself several times: she was a tutelary spirit walking through twelve doors and a *bah* was woken by the spirit and asked for the purpose of the visit. Resuming the personage of the spirit she answered his questions and finally, in the place of the temple god, she spoke for a few minutes, beginning with, “I am suddenly sitting on an offering table and on the altar.” That was the god speaking. He said he appreciated the villagers’ efforts to carry out the ceremony to commemorate Nong Zhigao’s rebellion. He claimed that he was really guarding Nyaz Slays Forest. Furthermore, he asked ritual participants whether they acknowledged the origin of the practice of entering the cavern. Ritual participants requested him to tell them. Therefore, he told a story about Nong Zhigao’s rebellion and the death of Nong’s wife inside the cavern. He also mentioned the division of labor into Six Flags. Some villagers sold candies; other villagers carried goods. A series of comments and compliments followed. He declared that the commemoration would be an event of entertainment. Because the central and regional governments supported the activity, spirits, who were *yin*, had to hide.¹² It was on this day before the commemorative ceremony that old people and the spirits had their day of entertainment. He complimented the ritual representatives on carrying out a ritual to invite the gods of

the Six Flags to participate in the banquet. Finally, he reminded them that since all the village gods would come that day, it was unnecessary to carry out an individual ritual on the second day of the second lunar month, and the ritual of returning wine (Zh. *boiz*: return, *lauj*: wine) was to be conducted in the eighth lunar month. The god left immediately after the decision was announced.

Again, the details are important. Ritual participants confirmed to me several times that the god who made the speech was Nong Zhigao, but in the speech, the *mehmoed* invoked two names, Ndoeng Nyaz Slays and Nong Zhigao, representing two different periods of time. I was told: “In the past, the place was really called Ndoeng Nyaz Slays; nowadays, people call it the site of the Nong Zhigao rebellion” (Zh. *doek - gons lej rig yax Ndoeng Nyaz Slays gaj raix lor, geys ar gyog deih - yas lej yax kiv - ngiq*). It is clear when they said Ndoeng Nyas Slays that they meant the god or spirit of Nyaz Slays Forest. The term “rebellion” has been used very frequently in recent literature and so, the god’s name was understood and replaced by “Nong Zhigao *kiv - ngiq*” (Nong Zhigao’s rebellion). Therefore, the place names and the god’s names tell two stories: Ndoeng Nyaz Slays represents the period some time in the past when the liquidambar trees surrounding Nong Zhigao’s *yamen* had grown, and Nong Zhigao’s rebellion reveals an acceptance and utilization of political terminology in today’s China. In other words, the god who possessed Aunt Beauty could as easily have been the spirit of Nyaz Slays Forest as Nong Zhigao, the rebel.

After the appearance of the god, Aunt Beauty and her followers continued their spiritual journey. They left the temple and walked into the melon and bean gardens, ginger and sugarcane fields, peach and plum orchards. When they arrived at one end of the street, they encountered Huaguang, the god of blacksmiths and silversmiths. They stopped by Tingdah (Zh. place name) and Tingdoengz (Zh. place name), in which General Yang Wenguan complained that his temple had not been completed

yet. The *mehmoed* recalled wandering spirits and ritual participants, burnt paper clothes, spirit money and human-shaped paper cutting (Zh. *maolang*) to call back souls of members of the Six Flags. They went on to the mire in front of the house, to the duck and goose pond in front of the villages, and to the springs and fields.

Aunt Beauty had to invite *lunx* again through her *bah* and so she walked through twelve doors again to wake up the *bah* who was able to access the goddess. She reached the *bah*, but he was wondering why there had been no fermented wine. Ritual participants explained that they were too rushed to make fermented wine, begged his forgiveness, and promised that they would make it the following year. A soft drink bought from a grocery store replaced the typical fermented wine offering.¹³ The *bah* mentioned that Ande would be famous because many people from afar, such as Taiwan and Hong Kong, would attend the festival. Ritual participants requested the *bah* to protect Ande even though they had not prepared fermented wine.

They also requested to him again to invite *lunx* to talk to them. At this point, *lunx* possessed Aunt Beauty. Like the first instance of the goddess' possession inside the cavern, on this second occasion in the Nong Zhigao Temple, she made use of a rhyme couplet in her singing. It said, "the stem of mustard plant is white, I am yawning and reaching *zongfan baozhang* (Ch.) (Zh. *Pyaek - gat zej ganj kao, hao - laemz kauj zueng - fan zangv - bao*)." Participants at the ceremony could not explain what the couplet meant but told me it had been passed down from generation to generation. The ninety-year-old villager that I had spoken to explained to me the relationship between *zueng - fan* (Zh.) and *zangv - bao* (Zh.). "The *zueng - fan* was higher *baozhang* in ranking. A *zueng - fan* managed two *baozhang*. The *baozhang* had to ask villagers in remote villages beyond Six Flags to collect firewood and grass. The *zueng - fan* and *baozhang* were chosen among people in Six Flags (interview, August, 30, 2005)." I suspect in Zhuang *zangv - bao* might be *baozhang* in Chinese, meaning the

head of a household registration grouping, *bao*, and *zueng - fan* might be equivalent to *zongfan*, which perhaps referred to an overarching official position (the implication of *fan* in this context is unclear). Again, not a great deal can be deduced from this line, but the reference to official positions might be significant. Significant too, was that although the participants at the ceremony could not explain what the line meant, they took it as an indication that *lunx* was present. A forty-minute dialogue followed, mainly between *lunx* and Mother Xian, who represented all ritual participants by singing *lunx* mode with the *lunx* goddess in antiphonal style. They reached agreement, *lunx* would attend the commemorative activities on the following day.

After that, the gods and goddesses from both Six Flags and Ande market were all invited, offered wine and offerings, and conversed with. Unlike Nong Zhigao and *lunx*, who were concerned about the commemorative event itself, the village gods were concerned about the affairs of their villages, especially regarding the villagers' health and safety. They spoke mainly with village representatives. *Yahzah*, whose responsibility was to look after livestock and poultry, requested a new temple for the village god of Big Village. The request invoked the villagers' apology for placing *Yahzah* in a simple shrine. The most powerful god, whose temple was in Lingshan, was the first one to attend the feast among gods and goddesses in the town. He had a fairly long conversation with ritual participants through the *mehmoed*'s mouth, mainly complaining about the simplification of the ritual and delivering a warning to them about the activities of the following day. Other gods also had their say. The god of the three-level tower in front of the Northern Deity's temple talked about Nong Zhigao's rebellion and the story of Nong Zhigao's wife. The village god of Pona, the Northern Deity himself, and others came in order to speak to ritual participants. Some of them were temporarily housed in the *Lingshan* Temple and they requested individual temples to be built for them.

The procession delivered offerings, passed the door of purification and crossed the seas of the masters¹⁴. Then they returned and sent the spirit soldiers and *bah* home. Finally, the *mehmoed* and her followers had dinner together in front of the temple. The ritual was completed.

In sum, the community was very much in control of the ceremonial sequence of events. History was invoked to bring to life the past and the present, represented by a spirit of the Nyaz Slays Forest and Nong Zhigao himself to cast Nong and his mother—or wife, according to women—as communal protective deities. The ambiguous god of the temple, who could be Nong Zhigao or the spirit of Nyaz Slays Forest, was the host of the feast, while *lunx* and other gods and goddesses had been invited to attend. Different gods and goddesses had different requests, opinions, comments or responsibilities. The journey of visiting and inviting the deities recreated the ritual of delivering wine intended to integrate the Six Flags and Ande market. Villagers were familiar with most of the place-names of the journey and the gods and goddesses. Two features of the local worldview were illustrated clearly in the ritual; firstly, that the god works together with a goddess in maintaining the well-being of the valley; and secondly, that in invoking history in building the community myth, the deities have had to transcend time. The permanence of geography as indicated in the temple or the cave conceals their transition from community god or goddess into historical figures. Of this, more will be said below.

However, before I close this section, it is important to report what Aunt Beauty said to me afterwards. The ritual was incomplete, for the villagers did not bring fermented wine to the gods, and, perhaps even more importantly, they did not report the family names of the ritual organizers. The latter omission has ritual bearing and has to be understood in relation to the pacification of lost souls.

Whether the *mehmoed* performs a ritual for a family or for the entire community,

the women of the host family or community representatives have to collect the clothing of each family member and place them in a bamboo-woven basket for the *mehmoed* to recall and relocate lost souls. The basket symbolizes a house or a community.¹⁵ Every family serves in turn to collect money and rice, buy offerings, and prepare the meat sacrifice and fermented wine, as well as to consult and pick up the *mehmoed* for village rituals. The family name and the ages of every family member are reported to the deities. Unlike the Daoist priest's ritual, personal names are not important for the *mehmoed* and the male head of household is not the only name reported by her to the deities during the ritual. Therefore, when the *mehmoed* encounters a wandering soul on her journey, she addresses his or her age and asks ritual participants to call back them by offering chicken and duck, human-shaped paper-cuttings and spirit money to the spirits controlling him or her. Being able to identify individual family members is important because sometimes the family asks the *mehmoed* to comment on each individual's fortune (Gao, 1999: 28-29). At Ande, when delivering wine to Nong Zhigao, the ritual entourage composing of at least two enthusiastic women from each Six Flag village and the market, did not prepare the clothing basket, and thus the family names were uncertain and the consultation over individual fortune was not carried out. Aunt Beauty dealt with the omission skillfully, reporting to the deities the surname and age of the oldest person in Six Flag and the market town. However, obviously, she noticed the omission.

Conclusion

There has long been the practice in southwestern Guangxi to locate the temples of the Guanyin bodhisatva in caverns. Her cavern temples are more numerous than song goddesses. Guanyin protects children; folk-singing provides the occasion for courtship during the spring and autumn before seeding and after harvest. Together, they are deities that relate to production and growth.

A passage in the local history of the county where Ande is located, *Guishun zhilizhou zhi* (1899, 3: 3a), corroborates this observation. It records that the indigenous people divined early each year the result of the harvest by observing the moistness of a rock in the cavern at Zhaoyang Pass. It is not clear whether that was a reference to *lunx*'s. People of more than 80 years remember that they had heard or seen Daoist priests from the Huang family in Big Village in the 1950s praying inside *lunx*'s cavern and sometimes making water flow from a terrace-shaped rock. They say that if the water flowed, a good harvest was predicted.

In contrast to the cave spirits, Ande villagers also have a vivid memory of the august presence of the protector of Nyaz Slays Forest. They recall the punishment of the villagers in Goat Spring Village who collected liquidambar leaves as fuel. An infectious disease spread in the village until the villagers sacrificed a pig to beg the spirit's forgiveness. In addition, when a temple was built for him in the forest, he required passers-by to dismount from their horses, or alight from their sedan chairs, and even close their umbrellas or remove their hats. There was a magistrate who did not get off his horse and he was unable to continue on his way until he did.

Sacrifice to local deities for productivity or protection was, and is, common all over China. Typical of Zhuang rituals, however, gender becomes part of the essence: the procession to *lunx*'s cavern and then Nong Zhigao's temple, on the observation of his defeat in rebellion, led by the *mehmoed*, shows very clearly that female and male spirits have to work together to bring about the desired effects. Moreover, the deities appearing in pairs are gendered in landscape. In Ande, the goddess—Nong Zhigao's wife or mother—is located in a cavern while Nong Zhigao is located in a temple. The caves and buildings not only the female and the male, but also the natural and the governmental. The goddess is located in a geographic location that is unmovable, but, in contrast, the god is housed in a temple, where it was at one time a *yamen*—that is, a

government office. To add to that activities and transformation and one can see how the pairs correlate: *lunx* sings, and her singing spreads far beyond her cavern, while the *yamen* was replaced by liquidambar trees. “The altar of the *bah* is over liquidambar trees” was repeated several times in the sequence of inviting spiritual soldiers and *bah*. At the invitation of the Dragon King, the rhymed couplet reads “The palace of *bah* is over a liquidambar tree; the altar of flower is in the Dragon King, Ande.” Aunt Beauty repeated “the palace of *bah* is over a liquidambar tree” every time she referred to a location where the altar of a *bah* was located. Liquidambar leaves are used to dye glutinous rice offered to ancestors in the third lunar month when people go to tend ancestral tombs. Similar reference to the ancestor may be documented in Ayong village, home of the Nong-surname *tusi* of Guangnan. There it is said that Nong Zhigao’s mother hid in a cavern while Nong Zhigao was once worshipped as an ancestor in an ancestral hall although he is now worshipped as a community god in the community temple. The male is linked to the ancestor, but he has to be enticed to protect by the singing of the female.

Nevertheless, looking into the local history, the two versions of *Guishun sub-prefecture gazetteer* (1968 [1848], 1899), one finds no references to liquidambar trees, *yamen* or Nong Zhigao. The cultural paradigm uncovered through my own observation of ritual practices is obviously different from the paradigm revealed in written sources. The men at the celebration emphasize that Ande was the site where Nong Zhigao established his second kingdom, and, fittingly, the commemorative ceremony was designed for Nong Zhigao, not the rebel, but the national hero. However, their description, and design, exercised no monopoly on a political interpretation of the event. The Nong Zhigao celebration, conducted mostly by women, has revived a new community. The Six Flags village alliance, which had excluded Ande, the market town, is now a new community. In the past, each village

had conducted rituals for their individual village gods. From 2005, the village rituals have merged and the commemoration ceremony has created a new ritual community of all the villages of the alliance and Ande market town combined. The new ritual community has built a new temple and, aside from the Nong Zhigao celebration, conducts an annual ritual for the god of agriculture.

The *yamen* and the liquidambar trees have now disappeared. The temple as it exists today was built anew in a plum orchard in 2002. In the Ande area, the Nong family does not claim that they are Nong Zhigao's descendants. However, the earlier practice has continued to locate Nong Zhigao and his wife, or mother, at different places in the valley. As the Zhuang Nong-surname elite develop a new identity for themselves by announcing proudly that Nong Zhigao is their ancestor, the ritual dialogue between the *mehmoed* and her followers tell of an earlier practice, in which the chieftain had served principally as community deity.

Reference

- ANDERSON, JAMES (2007) *The Rebel Den of Nung Tri Cao: Loyalty and Identity along the Sino-Vietnamese Frontier*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- BAI, YAOTIAN (2006) "Baise Zhuangzu Censhi shouling xingshuai shilue"(A brief history of Cen family of Zhuang chieftain in Baise). Pp. 128-60 in Li Fuqiang [ed.], *Zhongguo Zhuangxue* (Chinese Zhuang Studies). Beijing: Minzu chubanshe.
- CAI, PEI-RU (2001) "Chuansuo tianren zhiji de nüren: Nü tongji de xingbie tezhi yu shenti yishi" (Women cross the heaven and the earth: the gender characteristics and body consciousness of female spirit mediums). Taipei: Tangshan chubanshe .
- CHEN, MEI-WEN (2003) "Cong mingming tan Guangxi Tianling Pangu Yao ren de guocheng yu shengming de lai yuan" (Naming, Personhood, and the Source of Life in the Iu-Mien (Pangu Yao) Society, Tianlin, Guangxi). Taipei: Tangshan chubanshe.
- ELIADE, MIRCEA and CHARLES J. ADAMS (1987) *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*. New York: Macmillan.
- FALK, CATHERINE (1996) "Upon Meeting the Ancestors: The Hmong Funeral Ritual in Asia and Australia." *Hmong Studies Journal* 1, 1:1-11.
- FAURE, DAVID (1988) "Notes and Queries: the Man the Emperor Decapitated." *Journal of Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 28:198-203.
- GAO, YANING (1999) "Zhuangzu nongcun de liangxing fengong: Guangxi Jingxi xian Ludong xiang Xiaohong cun Dabaxuan tun de tianye diaocha" (Zhuang

division of labor in rural villages: A research report on Dabaxuan Hamlet, Xiaohong Village, Ludong Township, Jingxi County, Guangxi). Pp. 15-23 in *Guoli Qing Hua daxue Renleixue yanjiusuo bashiqi xueniandu shuqi tianye gongzuo baogao* (Institute of Anthropology, National Tsing Hua University Summer Fieldwork Practicum Research Reports for 1998). Xinzhu: National Tsing Hua University.

——(2002) *Guangxi Jingxi xian Zhuangren nongcun shehuizhong me²¹⁴mo:t³¹ (mopo) de yangcheng guocheng yu yishi biaoyan* (The Process of Becoming a Female Spiritual Medium me²¹⁴mo:t³¹ and Her Ritual Performances in South Zhuang Society of Jingxi County, Guangxi). Taipei: Tangshan chubanshe.

——(2005) "?an¹kjoŋ⁵, mi, rou yu Jingxi Zhuangren renguan." (?an¹kjoŋ⁵, rice, meat and Personhood in Jingxi). *Minsu Quyí* 150:27-68.

Guishun zhilizhou zhi (1899) (*The Gazetteer of Guishun Sub-prefecture*).

Guishun zhilizhou zhi (1968 [1848]) (*Gazetteer of Guishun sub-prefecture*), He Fuxiang [ed], Repr. Taipei: Chenwen chubanshe.

HANSEN, VALERIE (1990) *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

HOLM, DAVID (2004) *Recalling lost souls: the Baeu Rodo Scriptures, Tai cosmogonic texts from Guangxi in southern China*. Bangkok: White Lotus.

HU, WEI (1998) [1549] *Nanzhao yeshi* (Informal history of Nanzhao). Dali: Dali Baizu zizhizhou wenhuaju.

HUANG, JIAXIN (2004) "Zhuangzu de yingxiong, jiazhu he minzu shen: Yi guixi Cen

da jiangjun weili" (The Zhuang people's hero, clan and national god: a case study on General Cen in west Guangxi). *Guangxi minzu xueyuan xuebao, zhexue shehuikexue ban* 26, 3:104-107.

HUANG, XIANFAN, HUANG ZENGQING, and ZHANG YIMIN (1988) *Zhuangzu tongshi* (The Comprehensive History of the Zhuang). Nanning: Guangxi minzu chubanshe.

HUANG, XIANFAN (1983) *Nong Zhigao* (Nong Zhigao). Nanning: Guangxi renmin

LEVI-STRAUSS, CLAUDE (1963) "Chapter X: The Effectiveness of Symbols." Pp. 186-205 in *Structural Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books.

LI, TAO (1985) [1182] *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian* (Draft for a continuation of *The Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.

LUO, CAIJUAN (2008) "Shehui jiyi yu lishi biaoshu: Yige yunnan Zhuangzu shequ zhong de 'Nong Zhigao' " (Social memory and historical presentation: "Nong Zhigao" in a Zhuang community in Yunnan), Ph.D. thesis, Institute of Anthropology, The Central University for Nationalities, Beijing, China.

NONG, DINGSHENG (2005) *Yunnan Nong (Nong) shi zupu* (Genealogy of Nong (Nong) Surname in Yunnan). Privately published.

NONG, YUNQING (1996) *Guangxi Jingxi xian Dajia xiang Dalong tun Nongshi Butuan Jiazuo Zupu* (Genealogy of Nong surname butuan lineage in Dalong hamlet, Dajia township, Jingxi county, Guangxi province). Privately published.

PAN, QIXU (1998) "Yi na wenhua yanjiu wei jichu jianli zhuangxue tixi de lilun jiagou" (Constructing a theoretical system of Zhuang Studies based on na (paddy

- fields) culture). *Guangxi minzhu yanjiu* 1:77-92.
- POTTER, JACK M. (1974) "Cantonese Shamanism." Pp. 207-31 in Arthur Wolf [ed.], *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- SANGREN, P. STEVEN (1983) "Female Gender in Chinese Religious Symbols: Kuan Yin, Ma Tsu, and the 'Eternal Mother'." *Signs* 9, 1:4-25.
- SEAMAN, GARY (1981) "The Sexual Politics of Karmic Retribution." Pp.381-96 in Emily Ahern and Hill Gates [ed.], *The Anthropology of Taiwanese Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- TAN, QI (1995) *Zhuangzu tusi zhidu* (The System of Zhuang native chieftain). Nanning: Guangxi Renmin chubanshe.
- TAPP, NICHOLAS (1996) "The Kings Who Could Fly Without Their Heads: 'Local' Culture in China and the Case of the Hmong." Pp.83-98 in Liu Taotao and David Faure [ed.], *Unity and Diversity: Local Cultures and Identities in China*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- TOOK, JENNIFER (2005) *A Native chieftaincy in Southwest China: Franchising a Tai chieftaincy under the Tusi system of late imperial China*. Leiden; Boston: Brill.
- WATSON, JAMES (1985) "Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T'ien Hou ("Empress of Heaven") Along the South China Coast, 960-1960." Pp. 292-324 in David G. Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, Evelyn S. Rawski and Judith A. Berling [eds.], *Popular culture in late imperial China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

WILKERSON, JAMES (1999) "Anticipating Memory: 'Celebrating Longevity' in Ludong Township, Jingxi County, Southwestern Guangxi." Paper read at Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, 1999, November, at Chicago, IL.

———(2007) "Negotiating local tradition with Taoism: Female ritual specialists in the Zhuang religion." *Religion* 37:150-163.

WOLF, MARGERY (1978) *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

———(1990) "The Woman who didn't become a shaman." *American Ethnologist* 17, 3:419-430.

XIAO, MEI (2007) "Chang zai wu lu shang: Guangxi Jingxi Zhuangzu 'moyi' yinsheng de kaocha yu yanjiu" (Singing in the road of wu: investigation into and research on the soundscape of "mo ritual.") Pp. 328-494 in Cao Benye [ed.], *Zhongguo minjian yishi yinyue yanjiu, huanan juan (xia)* (Research on local ritual music in China, south China Volume (2)). Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue xueyuan.

YANG, SHUZHE (2007) *Shigong, yishi yu xinyang: Zhuangzu minjiang shigongjiao yanjiu* (Research on Ritual Masters in Zhuang Folk Society). Nanning: Guangxi Renmin chubanshe.

YU, JING and ZHONG XUN (1976) *Wuxi ji, fu Yu Xianggong zouyi* (Yu Jing's Collected Works, including his memorials). Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi.

ZHAN, BIZHU (1998) "Wangyi yu qi yishi biaoyan: Taiwan dangdai nüxing lingmei

de minzuzhi diaocha" (Wangyi and their ritual performance: An ethnographic research on female spirit mediums in modern Taiwan), M.A. thesis, Institute of Anthropology, National Tsing Hua University, Xinzhu, Taiwan.

ZHANG, SHENGZHEN [ed.] (1997) *Zhuangzu tongshi* (A Comprehensive History of the Zhuang). Beijing: Minzu chubanshe.

ZHONG, YOULAN (1994) "Guan'ao Chamoufo de chubu yanjiu" (A preliminary research on Chamoufo in Guan'ao). Pp. 129-196 in Yu Guanghong and Wei Zhezhi (James Wilkerson) [ed.], *Jinmen shuqi renleixue tianye gongzuo jiaoshi lunwenji* (Proceedings of anthropological fieldwork summer workshop in Jinmen). Taipei: Insitute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica.

ZHOU, QUFEI (1178) [1999] *Lingwai daida* (A categorical description of the region beyond the passes). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.

ZHUANG, YINGZHANG and LI QIAOHONG (1997) "Furenma yu chamoufo: Jinmen yu huidong diqu de nuxingshen jiqi xinyang bijiao" (Furenma and chamoufo: Comparison of goddesses and beliefs in Jinmen and Huidong areas). Pp.63-89 in Huang Yinggui and Ye Chunrong [ed.], *Cong zhoubian kan hanren de shehui yu wenhua: Wang Songxing xiansheng jinian wenji* (Analyzing society and culture of Han people: a collection in commemorating Mr. Wang Songxing). Taipei: Insitute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica.

GLOSSARY

CHARACTER LIST

A Nong	阿儂
Ande	安德
Ande Jie Jiemin Weiyuanhui	安德街街民委員會
Ayong	阿用
Baima	白馬
baozhang	保長
cha mou fo	查某佛
Ciyun	慈雲
Cen Tianbao	岑天保
Debao	德保
dong	峒
Guangnan	廣南
Guanyin	觀音
Heiyi Zhuang	黑衣壯
Huaguang	華光
<i>jitong</i>	乩童
jie	街
jimi zhou	羈縻州
Jingxi	靖西
Jinian minzu yingxiong Nong Zhigao huodong jie	紀念民族英雄儂智高活動節
Lingshan	靈山
Liu Yongfu	劉永福
Maguan	馬關
Mazu	媽祖
Mo Yi	莫一
Nantian Guo	南天國
Nong Zhigao	儂智高
shang shen de	上身的
Tianhou	天后
tun	屯
tusi	土司
Wenchang	文昌
Yang Wenguang	楊文廣

yamen	衙門
yin	陰
Yu Jing	余靖
Zhaixing	摘星
Zhaoyang Guan	照陽關
Zhaoyang runshi	照陽潤石
zongfan	總番
Zuoyou Jiang	左右江
zushi	祖師

-
- 1 I give the transliteration in the De-Jing Zhuang dialect , which is spoken in Debao, Jingxi and Napo counties. Transliteration in Zhuang is prefaced by Zh. and Han Chinese by Ch.
 - 2 *Yah*: grandmother, *lunx*: a folksong mode sung in Napo county.
 - 3 For examples of deities, ancestors and spirits appearing in pairs in Zhuang mythology and rituals, see Holm (2004), Pan (1998) and Wilkerson (1999).
 - 4 A similar theme is found among people in the Pearl River Delta and Li people in Hainan Island (Faure, 1988) and among Hmong (Tapp, 1996).
 - 5 Women have other connections, as a mother-child-grandchild, and in the “uterine families”, but to an older woman, “her son is her family” (Wolf, 1978: 36). The rite of breaking the blood bowl also illustrates the connection between son and mother and the disadvantage of the female gender (Seaman, 1981).
 - 6 For instance, in the Daoguang reign (1821-1851), the local Guishun sub-prefecture gazetteer, *Guishun zhilizhou zhi* (He, 1968) recorded Zhaoyang Pass as a scenic spot under the literati the four-character title “the slippery rock in Zhaoyang” (*Zhaoyang runshi*).
 - 7 The forest is called Ndoeng Nyaz Slays. Ndoeng means forests. Nyaz is the Chinese-load word from *ya* of *yamen*. Slays means officials. The place name means the forest of official’s *yamen*.
 - 8 The gate was initially built in 1995 but destroyed when the government expanded the road.
 - 9 Female Cantonese shamans in a village in the Hong Kong New Territories are able to carry out a public rituals annually but they are only possessed by ghosts instead of deities (Potter, 1974). In Huidong county, most spirit mediums (*shang shen de*) are women but they are not like those female spirit mediums (*cha mou fo*) in Jinmen Island near Xiamen, whose status is lower than that of male spirit mediums (Zhuang and Li, 1997). In northern Taiwan, a male shaman diagnosed a potential female shaman as being tormented by a malicious ghost instead of possessed by a god, because of her marginal role genealogically (a woman is always a newcomer to her husband’s family) and socially (the woman’s husband’s family, a Chen family, is a newcomer in the Lin village) (Wolf, 1990). Not all women in Taiwanese Han society are prevented from being spirit mediums, but unlike male spirit mediums (*jitong*) who are mostly possessed by specific male deities, female spirits mediums are

usually possessed by ancestors either in good death or bad death (Zhan, 1998). Male spirit mediums always perform in village temples to deal with communal affairs; in contrast, female ones are consulted by female clients concerning family affairs at their private altars set up at home (Zhong, 1994). In southern Taiwan, a few spirit mediums are women (Cai, 2001). Neither male nor female spirit mediums in Taiwanese Han society can conduct rituals without a ritual master's direction.

10 In the context of this article, I use "soul" to refer the Zhuang concept of *kvaen* and *vuenz*, the latter being a Chinese loan term. According to local ritual specialists, people have twelve *kvaen* and three *vuenz*. People died violently become ghosts but can be transformed into spirit soldiers. I use "spirit" to refer the souls of people who die naturally or guarding spirits such the spirit of the forest. The word "soul" is emphatically not to be understood as having anything in common with any Christian or other English meaning.

11 Old women in Big Village and Ande market recalled how powerful she was when she was chosen by the Dragon King. She ate a porcelain cup when she conducted a ritual to deliver wine and crossed a river without getting wet. Aunt Beauty described the process of being with the Dragon King "I slept several days without eating anything and on the eighth, ninth and tenth day, I ate a couple of baskets of pomelo leaves. Then I ran to (the shrine of) the Dragon King. Over there were rocks and water. They saw me come out without getting my clothes wet." (interview, March, 10, 2005)

12 This was a reference to the *yin-yang* division. The *yang* sphere belonged to light and the living. The *yin* sphere belonged to darkness and the dead.

13 Fermented wine is normally prepared by widows and made of glutinous rice. After the date of a ritual is decided, ritual specialists also choose a date for making fermented wine. It is said that only widows can make sweet fermented wine. According to Aunt Beauty, fermented wine is used to show one's respect to gods and ancestors. Only *mehmoed* are able to deliver fermented wine to ancestors in household rituals or to gods or goddesses in community rituals. The *bah* have to conduct a ritual of delivering wine to their dead masters every year, namely "opening the road of wine" in which, *bah* masters and pupils come together.

14 Crossing of the seas of masters is *gvas haij zojslay* in Zhuang. *Zojslay* is *zushi*, a Chinese loan word meaning "masters".

15 In Zhuang societies, men weave different kinds of bamboo containers for the storage or transport of agricultural products. Some of them are with a lid and others without. *Gyongs* (Zh.) is the one with a lid and carried by women to exchange gifts among households (Gao, 2005). The container was also used in ritual as plastic or metal containers are not popular in this area. Besides containing clothes, the bamboo-woven lid was filled with rice and inserted with three incense sticks for inviting spiritual soldiers and ritual masters.