



Repaying a Nuo Vow in Western Hunan:

A Rite of Trans-Hybridity?^{*}

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This paper explores the significance of a set of Han Chinese rituals and dramas known as “Repaying a Nuo Vow” (Huan Nuoyuan 還儺願), based on the study of their performance among the Miao (苗) of Western Hunan (Xiangxi 湘西). I examine the cultural significance of the Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals from three perspectives: 1) a case study of one such rites held at Hulu (葫蘆) Village in Huayuan (花垣) County on November 15–16, 2011; 2) additional data that other scholars have collected about these rites throughout Western Hunan, including among both Miao and Tujia 土家 communities; 3) historical and ethnographic information on such rituals performed in other parts of Southwest China.

The overall goal of this paper is to examine the development of and recurring interaction between Han Chinese and non-Han ritual traditions,

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as opposed to focusing exclusively on one community and its religious life. In doing so, I have attempted to distinguish between deep-rooted indigenous rites and the absorption of Daoist ritual elements introduced to Western Hunan by Han Chinese ritual specialists. This paper will show that in areas settled earlier and in great density by Han migrants, the rituals and dramas performed during Repaying a Nuo Vow retained many of their original features, including numerous liturgical texts written in Chinese that survive to the present day. In areas settled later and less extensively (including Huayuan), Repaying a Nuo Vow blended features of both Miao and Han religious traditions.

Vow-making and vow-repaying rituals are particularly well-suited for the study of cross-cultural interaction. This is because repaying a vow made to the gods constitutes a basic element in many religious cultures worldwide, including in China, with a central theme of Chinese religious life being repayment or retribution. If one relies on a chronological approach based on existing sources, one can uncover a long and complex record of Chinese terms for rituals referred as “vows” (or “oaths”) (including *yuan* 願, *shi* 誓, *meng* 盟, etc.). Rituals featuring the making and then repaying of vows to the gods encompass the entire spectrum of Chinese religious history, dating back to the ancient “spring prayer and autumn repayment” (*chunqi qiubao* 春祈秋報) rites for the god of the soil. They

benefited immensely from interactions with the members of the joint research project entitled “The Conversion of Chieftains,” the results of which recently appeared in the following volume: David Faure & Ho Ts’ui-p’ing 何翠萍, eds., *Chieftains into Ancestors: Imperial Expansion and Indigenous Society in Southwest China* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013). This paper was initially presented at the 「邊陲社會與國家建構」研討會, held at 香港科技大學 in Hong Kong on November 25-26, 2012, as part of the Area of Excellence research project (卓越學科領域計劃: 「中國社會的歷史人類學研究」) organized by David Faure. Many thanks to the following scholars for their constructive comments and critiques: David Faure, Choi Chi Cheung 蔡志祥, Ho Ts’ui-p’ing 何翠萍, Lian Ruizhi 連瑞枝, Lui Wing Sing 呂永昇, James Robson, Wang Ming-ke 王明珂, and Xie Xiaohui 謝曉輝. Subsequent drafts of the paper were enhanced by the helpful advice offered by Chen Meiwen 陳玫紋, David Holm, Huang Shu-Min 黃樹民, and Nicholas Tapp. Thanks also to Pai Pi-ling 白碧玲 and Liao Hsiung-Ming 廖滋銘 for their kind help with the maps. A special note of thanks to the two anonymous reviewers of the *Taiwan Journal of Anthropology* for their extremely detailed and helpful comments, which were instrumental in improving the paper. Finally, many thanks to Lin Jung-ju 林容如, Terre Fisher, and Guo Pei-Yi 郭佩宜 for their editorial assistance.

have played integral roles in the development of Chinese Buddhism and Daoism, and continue to flourish among Chinese communities today, including in Taiwan. Vow-making and vow-repaying rituals have long been widespread among the Western Hunan Miao as well, where they include ancestor worship rites and the renowned oxen sacrifice. In the case of the Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas, the data reveal that their development was characterized not only by the deliberate transmission of doctrine and liturgy, but also by their gradual absorption of indigenous beliefs and practices. To do justice to these complex forms of cultural reverberation and their impact on Repaying a Nuo Vow, I have chosen to combine the two key mechanisms at work into a shorthand, “trans-hybridity,” which will be used throughout the paper.

Keywords: Repaying a Nuo Vow, Western Hunan, Miao, trans-hybridity, ritual specialists

This paper explores the significance of a set of Han Chinese rituals and dramas known as “Repaying a Nuo Vow” (Huan Nuoyuan 還懺願), based on the study of their performance among the Miao 苗 of Western Hunan (Xiangxi 湘西), where they are generally referred to as *qaod nongx* 撬弄 in the local Miao language.¹ I examine the cultural significance of the Repaying a Nuo Vow from three perspectives: 1) a case study of one such rite held at Hulu 葫蘆 Village in Huayuan 花垣 County on November 15-16, 2011; 2) additional data other scholars have collected about Repaying a Nuo Vow performed throughout Western Hunan, in both Miao 苗 and Tujia 土家 communities; and 3) historical and ethnographic information on such rituals and dramas performed in other parts of Southwest China.

The overall goal of paper is to examine the historical development of and recurring interaction between Han Chinese and non-Han ritual traditions, as opposed to focusing exclusively on one community and its religious life. In doing so, I have attempted to distinguish between deep-rooted indigenous rites and the absorption of ritual elements (in this case, Daoist ones) introduced to Western Hunan by Han Chinese specialists. As we will see below, in areas settled earlier and in great density by Han migrants, the ritual and dramas performed during Repaying a Nuo Vow retain many of their original features, including large quantities of liturgical texts written in Chinese that survive to the present day. In areas settled later and less extensively (including Huayuan), Repaying a Nuo Vow blended features of both Miao and Han religious traditions.

Vow-making (*xuyuan* 許願) and vow-repaying (*huanyuan* 還願) rituals are particularly well-suited for the study of cross-cultural interaction, a process I refer to as “reverberation.”² This is because the idea of repaying a vow made to the gods constitutes a basic element in many religious cultures worldwide,³ including in China,

1 The data presented below were collected in the course of historical and ethnographic research conducted as part of my Academia Sinica Investigator Award project (Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Shengeng jihua 中央研究院深耕計畫), entitled “The Tao among the Miao: The Transformation of Religious Traditions and Ethnic Identities in Western Hunan during the Modern Era” (Jindai zongjiao yu zuqun guanxi zhi bianqian -- Yi Xiangxi diqu de Daojiao gen Miaozu zhi hudong wei taolun zhongxin 近代宗教與族群關係之演變 -- 以湘西地區的道教跟苗族之互動為討論中心). Detailed information on the project’s goals, team members, and research results may be found at: http://www.mh.sinica.edu.tw/PGGroupStudyPlan_Page.aspx?groupStudyPlanID=7.

2 Paul R. Katz, *Demon Hordes and Burning Boats: The Cult of Marshal Wen in Late Imperial Chekiang* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), pp. 114-115.

3 See for example Jacques Berlinerbrau, *The Vow and the “Popular Religious Groups” of Ancient Israel: A Philological and Sociological Inquiry* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Selva J. Raj & William P. Harman, eds., *Dealing with Deities: The Ritual Vow in South Asia* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006).

where one central theme of Chinese religious life is repayment or retribution (*bao* 報).⁴ If one relies on a chronological approach based on existing sources, one can uncover a long and complex record of Chinese terms for rituals referred as “vows” (or “oaths”) (including *yuan* 願, *shi* 誓, *meng* 盟, etc.). Rituals featuring the making and then repaying of vows to the gods are recorded all across Chinese religious history, dating back to the ancient “spring prayer and autumn repayment” (*chunqi qiubao* 春祈秋報) rites offered to the god of the soil.⁵ They also played integral roles in the development of Chinese Buddhism and Daoism.⁶ Such rites continue to flourish among Chinese communities today, including in Taiwan.⁷ Vow-making and vow-repaying rituals have long been widespread among the Western Hunan Miao as well, and include ancestor worship rites and the renowned oxen sacrifice (see below). In this paper, I will consider the ways in which Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas have molded the historical and contemporary mechanisms by which Miao and Han Chinese vow-making and vow-repaying rituals could reverberate.

The study of such mechanisms can also shed light on the nature of so-called “cultural frontiers” in modern Chinese history, regardless of whether such frontiers are conceived of as objective and mappable entities (an etic perspective) or symbolic boundaries of imagined communities, including those expressed in rituals (emic). This relates to the question of whether we choose to consider frontiers as barriers (zones of resistance that slow cultural movements or divert them into different channels) or contact zones (meeting places where hybrid cultures form, with ritual advancing such processes).⁸ In their Introduction to the edited volume *Empire at*

4 See Yang Lien-sheng 楊聯陞 (1914-1990)’s classic study “The Concept of *Pao* 報 as a Basis for Social Relations in China,” in John K. Fairbank, ed., *Chinese Thought and Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 291-309. I am deeply grateful to Steve Bokenkamp, Vincent Goossaert, Nicholas Tapp, Stephen Teiser, Wang Jianchuan 王見川, and Yau Chi On 游子安 for their guidance in considering these issues.

5 Edouard Chavannes [沙畹] (1865-1918), *Le T’ai chan: essai de monographie d’un culte chinois; appendice, Le dieu du sol dans la Chine antique* (Taipei: Ch’eng Wen Publishing Company, 1970 reprint of 1910 edition); 凌純聲, 〈中國古代社之源流〉, 《中央研究院民族學研究所集刊》, 第17期 (1964), 頁1-44.

6 Stephen R. Bokenkamp, “The Silkworm and the Bodhi Tree: The Lingbao Attempt to Replace Buddhism in China and Our Attempt to Place Lingbao Taoism,” in John Lagerwey, ed., *Religion and Chinese Society, Volume 1, Ancient and Medieval China* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2004), pp. 318-339, esp. pp. 326-331; Stephen F. Teiser, “Ornamenting the Departed: Notes on the Language of Chinese Buddhist Ritual Texts,” *Asia Major*, 22.1 (January 2009): 201-237; 黃徵、吳偉編, 《敦煌願文集》(長沙: 岳麓書社, 1995)。

7 謝賜龍, 〈新竹地區還老愿儀式之研究〉(國立中央大學碩士論文-2009)。

8 For more on these issues, see Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (New

the Margins, Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton state that one goal of the book is to assess “how state categories confront and compromise with indigenous ones, and how differences were attested in different historical contexts.”⁹ The aim of this paper is similar, although in this case the term “state” might best be replaced by “Daoist.”

When considering the nature of cultural encounters, it is essential to scrutinize the ways in which cultural knowledge is both transmitted and received.¹⁰ In this paper, I use two concepts to analyze cultural encounters associated with ritual. The first, translation, features mechanisms generally used by the state or local elites to introduce external cultural traditions (including religious ones) that gain acceptance among indigenous communities. In Western Hunan, this centered on the construction of temples to “standard” Chinese deities, as well as the introduction of the Buddhist and Daoist religions.¹¹ But reliance on translation overlooks the fact that processes of cultural cross-fertilization are not always purposeful ones. This problem can be resolved by means of the second concept, hybridity. Hybridity can account for unintentional forms of cultural assimilation, which for Western Hunan involved the lasting effects of Han Chinese contact with Miao and other indigenous cultures through their ongoing settlement in the region. In this process, aspects of Chinese culture (including rituals) became integrated into local traditions without any state intervention or active promotion on the part of Han elites. The problem with hybridity, however, is that it omits human agency, including the fact that

York: Tavistock Publications Ltd., 1985), p. 12; see also Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1994 [first published in 1969]).

9 Pamela Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton, “Introduction,” in *idem.*, eds., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) p. 3.

10 I discuss the conceptual aspects of this process in *Images of the Immortal. The Cult of Lü Dongbin at the Palace of Eternal Joy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999); 中文版 = 康豹, 《多面相的神仙——永樂宮的呂洞賓信仰》, 吳光正、劉瑋(譯), 劉耳(校) (濟南: 齊魯書社, 2010).

11 For more on such processes of cultural interaction, see 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*, ed. David G. Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 323. 中文版 = James L. Watson (著), 潘自蓮 (譯), 〈神明的標準化: 華南沿海地區天后之提昌〉, 《思與言》, 第26卷, 第4期 (1988), 頁369-397. See also the January 2007 special issue of *Modern China*, entitled “Ritual, Cultural Standardization, and Orthopraxy in China: Reconsidering James L. Watson's Ideas,” including Paul R. Katz, “Orthopraxy and Heteropraxy Beyond the State: Standardizing Ritual in Chinese Society,” *Modern China*, 33.1 (2007): 72-90. David Faure and Ho Ts'ui-p'ing present a thoughtful discussion of these issues in their Preface and Introduction to *Chieftains into Ancestors*, pp. xi-xii, 18-19.

indigenous peoples can engage in their own forms translation by adapting outside elements to their own culture preferences and purposes. Therefore, I also consider Michel de Certeau's idea of "re-employment" (*ré-emploi*) as a means of exploring how people make selections from existing repertoires, produce new combinations from what they select, and place what they have appropriated in new contexts.¹²

In the case of the Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas described in this paper, the data reveal that their development was characterized not only by the deliberate transmission of doctrine and liturgy, but also by their gradual absorption of indigenous beliefs and practices. We can also see the patrons who sponsor such ritual events, as well as the specialists who perform them, actively engaging in their re-employment. To do justice to these complex forms of cultural reverberation and their impact on the historical development of Repaying a Nuo Vow, I have chosen to combine the two key mechanisms at work into a shorthand, "trans-hybridity," which will be used throughout the paper. Similar processes of reverberation marked by trans-hybridity can be found throughout Southwest China, and these represent in large part the ability of indigenous peoples to adjust their ritual traditions despite the presence of external hegemonic cultures; they both absorb Han rites while also blending into them their own traditions. To give just one example of this, Ho Zhaohua 何兆華 has demonstrated that the Shidong 施洞 Miao in Guizhou 貴州 Province have not hesitated to "appropriate Han Chinese symbolic capital to strengthen their in-group identity."¹³ Moreover, as will be shown below, Repaying a Nuo Vow fits into a much larger ritual landscape for the making and repaying of vows. Western Hunan's cultural traditions feature a wide range of such practices, including both indigenous and Han Chinese ones, which can be performed in either Miao or local dialect by different types of specialists.

There are a number of methodological pitfalls that one must confront in undertaking such a study. To begin with, the Han Chinese exonyms used to label ethnic groups like the Miao are highly problematic, as has been aptly demonstrated

12 My analysis has been shaped by the lucid discussions of these issues summarized in Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* Second edition (Cambridge: Polity, 2008), pp. 79-81, 118-123. See also Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Edward Kamau Brathwaite, "Creolization in Jamaica," in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Gareth, and Helen Tiffin, eds., *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 202-205, as well as information from the following website: <http://www.postcolonialweb.org/poldiscourse/kz1.html>.

13 Ho Zhaohua 何兆華, "Clothes to Dye For: Cloth and Person among Shidong Miao in Guizhou Province" (Ph.D. thesis, National Tsing-hua University, 2011), pp. 441-446, esp. p. 446.

by scholars like Melissa Brown.¹⁴ The term “Miao 苗” is used in this paper as a convenience for general readers, yet it also has its share of flaws. While traditional labels for ethnic groups considered to be “Miao” have tended to focus on color (HongMiao 紅苗, HuaMiao 花苗, HeiMiao 黑苗, etc.), self appellations are far more preferable, including Qho Xiong (or Kho Xiong, Qoxiong, Kuoxiong) for Western Hunan and Northeast Guizhou, Hmu or Khanao for Southeast Guizhou, and Hmong (or Mong, A Hmao) in Sichuan, Western Guizhou, Yunnan, and the Indo-Chinese peninsula. These groups speak three mutually unintelligible languages, as well as between 30 and 40 dialects.¹⁵ All this seems closely related to a problem that Wu Xu 吳旭 discusses in his recent monograph, namely that regional and lineage identities often overshadow standard official ones, with most locals remaining largely unaware of the latter. In Wu’s case, indigenous identities are mainly expressed in culinary practices, as well as rituals during which foods are consumed.¹⁶ The importance of ritual in voicing identity is also readily apparent in the description of the Repaying a Nuo Vow below.

A second methodological concern involves the considerable controversy over the extent to which different groups labeled “Miao” (or “Hmong”) share common cultural features. While I would hardly go so far as to assume that the “Miao” of Western Hunan, other regions of Southwest China, and Southeast Asia belong to the same ethnic group, my research is committed to taking a broad comparative approach to the religious cultures of Southwest China, regardless how the different groups are labeled. In the case of Repaying a Nuo Vow, these rites are mentioned in local gazetteers across the entire region, and while their structure and contents can vary from one area to another, this should not inhibit scholars from moving beyond

14 Melissa J. Brown, “Ethnic Identity, Cultural Variation, and Processes of Change: Rethinking the Insights of Standardization and Orthopraxy,” *Modern China*, 33.1 (January 2007): 91-124. See also Brown, “Local Government Agency: Manipulating Tujia Identity,” *Modern China*, 28.3 (2002): 362-395.

15 For more on these issues, see Nicholas Tapp, *The Hmong of China: Context, Agency, and the Imaginary* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Tapp, *Sovereignty and Rebellion: The White Hmong of Northern Thailand* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989); Jacques Lemoine, “To Tell the Truth,” *Hmong Studies Journal*, 9 (2008): 1-29. See also Lemoine’s review of Louisa Schein’s book *Minority Rules in The China Quarterly*, 165 (March 2001), pp. 207-208. For more on how language can shape regional cultural systems, see David Holm, *Mapping the Old Character Zhuang Script* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 742-769.

16 Wu Xu [吳旭], *Farming, Cooking and Eating Practices in the Central China Highlands: How Hezha Foods Function to Establish Ethnic Identity* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2011), esp. pp. 2-13, 220-296, 351-355. See also Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*.

the study of one ethnic group to pursue broader comparative agendas.¹⁷

By far the most difficult issue I have faced is achieving an adequate understanding of Western Hunan's Miao culture. Han Chinese facets of rites like Repaying a Nuo Vow are much easier to grasp due to the abundance of textual evidence, but Miao culture is essentially an oral one, with very low reliance on scripts. While some religious specialists have written down their texts (or had them recorded by local scholars and experts), this has involved translating them into Chinese, with the inevitable problems of interpretation and distortion that such endeavors can entail. In addition, once such works are taken out of their local contexts, the process of fully comprehending their significance becomes even more fraught with peril. Inasmuch as I am unfamiliar with Western Hunan's Miao languages,¹⁸ I have had to rely on partners in the field for assistance (see note 1), many of whom have worked on this region's history for decades. In addition, apart from translations of local rituals and songs, I have relied on field reports about these practices, both by Han Chinese and Miao scholars. Another valuable source of information with the potential to transcend sinocentric views is research on Miao (Hmong) peoples in Southeast Asia, an area where they have lived for centuries without being subjected to the hegemony of the Chinese state.¹⁹

As noted above, field research for this paper was done in the context of my research project on the modern religious history of Western Hunan. In today's parlance, the term "Western Hunan" refers to the Western Hunan Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture (Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou 湘西土家族苗族自治州), which encompasses the Yuan River (Yuanshui 沅水) and Li River (Lishui 澧水) as well as Jishou City (Jishoushi 吉首市), plus the counties of Baojing 保靖, Fenghuang 鳳凰, Guzhang 古丈, Huayuan 花垣, Longshan 龍山, Luxi 瀘溪, and Yongshun 永順 (see Map 1). Covering an area of 15,486 square kilometers, it is bounded by Hunan to its south and east, Enshi 恩施 (Hubei 湖北) to the north, and Chongqing 重慶 (Sichuan 四川) plus Tongren 銅仁 (Guizhou 貴州) to the west. As

¹⁷ I am deeply grateful to Kang Xiaofei 康笑菲 for her guidance on these issues.

¹⁸ Western Hunan's Miao languages might best be conceived of as a patchwork of local isolates. In general peoples living on the plains or along rivers have proven more likely to adopt the use of Han Chinese, while those in remote and mountainous areas preserve more of their original linguistic features. See 羅安源, 《現代湘西苗語語法》(北京: 中央民族學院出版社, 1990); 伍雲姬, 《湘西瓦鄉話風俗名物彩圖典》(長沙: 湖南師範大學出版社, 2008).

¹⁹ See Jean Mottin, *Fêtes du Nouvel An Chez les Hmong Blanc de Thaïlande* (Bangkok: Don Bosco Press, 1979); Mottin, *Allons faire le tour du ciel et de la terre: Le chamanisme des Hmong vue dans les texts* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1982); see also Jacques Lemoine, *Entre la maladie et la mort: le chamane Hmong sur les chemins de l' Audelà* (Bangkok: Pandora, 1987).

of 2008, the Autonomous Prefecture boasted a total population of 2.65 million, of whom nearly 73 percent were listed as non-Han, mainly the Miao 苗 and Tujia 土家 ethnic groups (860,000 and 1.05 million, respectively).²⁰ The Chinese placename Xiangxi 湘西 first appeared in Six Dynasties texts, but referred to a county roughly equivalent to today's Hengyang 衡陽 City. By the Qing dynasty, Xiangxi referred to four prefectures in today's western Hunan region (Chenzhou 辰州, Yuanzhou 沅州, Yongshun 永順, and Jingshou 靖州), but was used as a formal administrative term until the Republican era, when the Nationalist government established the Western Hunan Pacification District (Xiangxi Suijingchu 湘西綏靖處), which covered a total of nineteen counties. After Liberation, the Communist authorities set up the Western Hunan Administrative Office (Xiangxi xingzheng gongshu 湘西行政公署), which had roughly the same borders as the Pacification District but encompassed three special areas (Yuanling 沅陵, Huitong 會同, and Yongshun 永順) and twenty-two counties: Yuanling 沅陵, Xupu 溆浦, Chenxi 辰溪, Fenghuang 鳳凰, Qiancheng 乾城 (today's Jishou), Yongsui 永綏 (today's Huayuan), Luxi 瀘溪 and Mayang 麻陽 for the Yuanling Special District; Huitong 會同, Zhijiang 芷江, Suining 綏寧, Qianyang 黔陽, Huangxian 晃縣, Jingxian 靖縣, Tongdao 通道, and Huaihua 懷化 for the Huitong Special District; and, Yongshun 永順, Longshan 龍山, Dayong 大庸, Baojing 保靖, Sangzhi 桑植, and Guzhang 古丈 for the Yongshun Special District. The Miao Autonomous District (Xiangxi Miaozu zizhiqu 湘西苗族自治區) was founded in September 1952, but originally only included Baojing, Fenghuang, Guzhang, Luxi, Qiancheng, and Yongsui, with Dayong, Longshan, Sangzhi, and Yongshun being added three months later for a total of ten counties. The name "Western Hunan Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture" was not adopted until September 1957, but two counties that had originally belonged to it (Dayong and Sangzhi) were reapportioned to Zhangjiajie 張家界 in January 1989, leaving the one city and seven counties that remain part of the Autonomous Prefecture today.²¹

The paper's structure is as follows: I begin with a description of the Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas that my partners and I witnessed in Hulu Village, Huayuan County. This is followed by an analysis of the rites' fundamental characteristics. In the final section I consider the essential features of these rituals' historical development, including their spatial distribution.

20 劉路平,《湘西名辭釋義》(北京:作家出版社,2006),頁1-5;熊曉輝、向東,《湘西歷史與文化》,北京:民族出版社,2008,頁5-19。

21 劉路平,《湘西名辭釋義》。

Case Study - Repaying a Nuo Vow in Hulu Village, Huayuan County

I began to collect primary and secondary sources about the Western Hunan's Repaying a Nuo Vow in 2010, and in November 2011 undertook field investigations in Huayuan County (see Map 2). I chose Huayuan as the focus of my research as a result of close contact with Zhang Yinghe 張應和, a renowned local scholar with a BA in history who has published extensively on this area's religious life during his career and since his retirement from the Historical Documents Office of the Western Hunan Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture (Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu zizhizhou gujiban 湘西土家族苗族自治州古籍辦). Two other key partners were Ma Shugang 麻樹剛, a retired high school teacher who also has a BA in history, and Ma Meiyin 麻美垠, a young scholar of Miao culture who recently accepted a position at the Historical Documents Office. When Zhang's team determined that a Repaying a Nuo Vow was to be performed in the village of Hulu on November 15-16, my assistant Kang Shih-yu 康詩瑀 and I scheduled a research trip to coincide with those dates, while also allowing sufficient time to interview the family sponsoring these rituals and dramas as well as the specialists who were to perform them. In addition to observing this staging of Repaying a Nuo Vow, our research centered on interviews with two different types of ritual specialists: 1) those who refer to themselves as *badaizha* 巴代扎 (pronounced *bax deip zhal* in Miao; usually labeled *Ke laoshi* 客老師 by local scholars and officials), who perform mainly Han (but also some Miao) rites that tend to derive from Daoist traditions, doing so using Chinese local dialect (*tuhua* 土話); and 2) those who refer to themselves as *badaixiong* 巴代雄 (pronounced *bax deip xongb* in Miao; usually labeled *Miao laoshi* 苗老師 by local scholars and officials), who perform rituals almost exclusively in the Miao language based on oral traditions—no scriptures or liturgical manuals are used—that exhibit markedly less Daoist influence. *Badaizha* are responsible for performing Repaying a Nuo Vow, but *badaixiong* also stage some of their own rituals in advance of that rite (see below).²² There are also female spirit mediums (*xianniang* 仙娘; *zimei* in Miao),

22 The Miao term “*ba* 巴” in *badai* 巴代 refers to the male or father, while “*dai* 代” means son; together, when referring to religious specialists, they mean “ritual master.” As for the terms “*xiong* 雄” and “*zha* 扎,” the former means “Miao” and the latter “Han Chinese.” Accordingly, a *badaixiong* 巴代雄 is a specialist who performs Miao rituals, while a *badaizha* 巴代扎 is one who performs Han Chinese ones. In terms of ethnicity, however, many *badaizha* are ethnic Miao, and quite a few specialists have received training in both ritual traditions, not to mention the mortuary rituals performed by Daoist priests (*daoshi* 道士). See 石壽貴, 〈「巴代」釋疑〉《石壽貴文選》(未刊稿, 2010), as well as

who mainly perform their rituals using Miao, but their roles in Repaying a Nuo Vow tend to be limited to determining the dates for its performance.²³

Apart from the fact that Zhang and his team members are from Huayuan, we chose this county due to its location in a Qho Xiong cultural region inhabited by people generally referred to as “Red Miao” (HongMiao 紅苗), which also encompasses the counties of Fenghuang 鳳凰 and Songtao 松桃 (the latter in Guizhou 貴州). Huayuan was exposed to Han Chinese culture later than other parts of Western Hunan, and as a result has preserved more elements of Miao religious life. It is also Western Hunan’s second smallest county in terms of population (260,000 people; only Guzhang has fewer), but possesses extensive mining resources, including some rare earths, but most notably manganese (*meng* 錳), zinc (*qianxin* 鉛鋅), vanadium (*fan* 釩), and phosphorous (*lin* 磷). It also produces some crops, including rice, peanuts, hot peppers, and tobacco, but most of its rural inhabitants tend to be the very old and very young, with men and women of working age migrating to China’s urban areas.²⁴

Our research in Huayuan centered on the town of Jiwei (Jiweizhen 吉衛鎮; jibweis in Miao),²⁵ located 39 kilometers from the county seat. Jiwei covers an area of 84.54 square kilometers at elevations ranging from 413 to 1,179 meters above sea level. Its total population in 2010 was listed as 17,246, of whom 16,735 were classified as “agricultural populace” (農業人口). Jiwei’s original name was Jiduoping 吉多坪 (*git dud nbed* in Miao, meaning a spacious plain), with the name Jiwei deriving from the establishment of a guard post (*weisuo* 衛所) site known as Chongshanwei 崇山衛 at the beginning of the Ming dynasty, where Qing authorities eventually constructed a wall and other fortifications in 1733-1735. “Jiwei” appears to be a combination of the original name plus the term “*wei*” from Chongshanwei. These terms remain fixed in local memory, and despite the adoption of new names such as Weicheng Township 衛城鄉 during the Republican era and Red Flag Commune 紅旗公社 after Liberation,

personal communications from Cheng Mingjun 程明君 and Chao Shu-Kang 趙樹岡. I should also note that the term *badai* is not pervasive throughout Western Hunan, but largely limited to Huayuan and Fenghuang.

23 See Wu Hexian [吳合顯], “Crossing the River. Xiangxi Miao Spirit Mediumship” (M.A. thesis, University of Kansas, 2010). Kang Shih-yu 康詩瑀 and Ma Meiyin 麻美垠 are currently doing field research on *xianniang* in Jiwei.

24 隆國賢, 〈花垣苗區還雛願覓蹤〉, 收入張子偉主編, 《湘西雛文化之迷》(長沙: 湖南師範大學出版社, 1991), 頁104-113. See also 熊曉輝, 向東, 《湘西歷史與文化》, 頁13-15.

25 In local Miao language, the final consonant indicates tone and is not pronounced. See 向日征, 《吉衛苗語研究》(成都: 四川人民出版社, 1999); 羅安源, 《現代湘西苗語語法》。

locals continue to use Jiwei or *jibweis*.²⁶

Located just 6 kilometers to the southwest of Jiwei, the village of Hulu lies at the foot of a renowned local peak called Lotus Flower Mountain 蓮花山. According to village folklore, Hulu's original name was Midong 米董 (*mil dongs* in Miao, meaning a large cave or hollow). One account states that the name Hulu derives from a lush pond referred to as Green Lake or Hulü 湖綠. Another more elaborate legend describes how the original settlers of Hulu faced all manner of misfortunes during their early years in the area, prompting them to consult a female spirit medium, who recommended the performance of a Repaying a Nuo Vow. The villagers also consulted a geomancer (*dili xiansheng* 地理先生), who noted that the top of Lotus Flower Mountain was shaped like the gourd (*hulu* 葫蘆) of the Bodhisattva Guanyin (Guanshiyin pusa 觀世音菩薩), prompting the people to name their village in honor of this sacred object.²⁷

At its core Repaying a Nuo Vow is about an identity that centers on the family (*Ad bloud neax* in Miao, *jiating* 家庭 in Chinese), albeit in the context of larger kinship and village networks of power, especially those based on the worship of a common ancestor by people of the same surname living in the same village (*Ad mangx zuos* in Miao, *jiazu* 家族 in Chinese). This means that any understanding of the rite's significance must be grounded on the study of local social structures. In areas like Fenghuang and Huayuan, most villages have one dominant Miao surname plus smaller surname groups, including some Han Chinese. This is the case in Hulu. As of 2010, its six hamlets were home to a total of 147 households or 644 people, almost all of whom are Miao surnamed Ma 麻 and Long 龍, whose livelihood is growing crops like rice and soybeans. A survey done during the 1980s further revealed that 89 of Hulu's then 118 households were Ma, of whom 84 were descended from same founding ancestors.²⁸ The presence of so many individuals with identical surnames has the potential to cause problems in terms of surname and lineage exogamy, and in Western Hunan the situation is further complicated by the concurrent use of both Han Chinese and Miao surnames. While most of the region's Miao have one of five main surnames (Wu 吳, Long 龍, Shi 石, Ma 麻, and Liao 廖), there are also indigenous Miao clans, literally "branch lines" (*zhixi* 支系), which range from five to twelve in number depending on the system being referred to. For example, the Han surname Wu 吳 includes the Miao clans 禾孝 (*ghaob xpt*) and 禾弄 (*ghaob*

26 麻顯毅、麻正雲，〈吉衛，吉利的衛城〉，收入《神奇的花垣·地名篇》（花垣：花垣政協文史會，2010），頁278-280。

27 麻顯毅，〈蓮花山下葫蘆村〉，收入《神奇的花垣·地名篇》，頁314-315。

28 石啟貴，《湘西苗族實地調查報告》（長沙：湖南人民出版社，1986（1940）），頁148-149。

hlongb), while Ma 麻 includes 禾卡 (*ghaob khad*) and 禾流 (*ghoab lel*). This means that people with different Han surnames might not be able to marry due to being members of the same Miao clan, while people with same Han surname could do so if they belonged to different Miao clans.²⁹ Concerns over fertility, incest, marriage, and surnames lie at the core of the flood myths performed during Repaying a Nuo Vow, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

November 12 marked the start of our fieldwork on the Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas to be performed in Hulu Village. It began with a visit to the head of the family sponsoring the ritual, a *badaizha* named Ma 麻 (religious name = Falong 法龍). One of the youngest specialists we interviewed (57 years old), Ma is only a third-generation master, but his grandfather inherited the trade from a long line of Miao masters whose names are listed on Ma's altar. Ma received a high school education and started to study rituals following the Cultural Revolution; he became a master in 1998.

There are three key types of rituals and dramas known as Repaying a Nuo Vow: 1) to give thanks for the birth of a son (*huan qiuzi yuan* 還求子願); 2) to give thanks for curing illness and/or granting longevity among the elder generation (*huan baifa yuan* 還白髮願, *huan changsheng yuan* 還長生願, *huan bing yuan* 還病願); 3) to give thanks for other acts of benevolence by the gods (*huan bao'en yuan* 還報恩願, *huan xie'en yuan* 還謝恩願). There are also rites to give thanks for the attainment of wealth (*huan qiucui yuan* 還求財願) that feature the Wutong 五通 deities,³⁰ but these are much more lavish and are rarely performed today. In the case of the Ma family, their Repaying a Nuo Vow was intended to repay a "Vow of Longevity" (*changsheng yuan* 長生願) made by *badaizha* Ma's father over twenty years ago, but his wife noted that the family was also concerned about the health of their daughter-in-law, who had suffered an illness two years ago. She had recovered and given birth to a daughter, but now they hoped that her second child would be a son. As we will see below gender, fertility, and sexuality are core themes in Repaying a Nuo Vow. Regardless of the type of vow one makes, the worshipper is given a piece of red paper (sometimes red cloth is used instead of paper) wrapped around a bamboo frame and called "vow paper" (*yuanzhi* 願紙). If the worshipper happens to be a ritual specialist,

29 同註28, 頁146-150。

30 For more on their cult, see Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way. The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). See also Ursula-Angelika Cedzich, "The Cult of the Wu-t'ung [五通]/Wu-hsien [五顯] in History and Fiction: The Religious Roots of the Journey to the South [南游記]," in David G. Johnson, ed., *Ritual and Scripture in Chinese Popular Religion. Five Studies* (Berkeley: Chinese Popular Culture Project, 1995), pp. 137-218.

the paper is placed on her/his altar, but for most people the attic is used. The paper is usually affixed to the fifth beam above the attic's floor, but if one is unable to perform a Repaying a Nuo Vow when instructed to do so by the gods (usually by means of a dream or a medium's pronouncement), the paper must be moved down a beam. When the paper reaches the lowest beam, the family is required to move it to the altar and also perform Repaying a Nuo Vow regardless of its circumstances.

A number of ethnographic accounts testify to the wide variety of motivations that can underlie the staging of Repaying a Nuo Vow. In one example, Lü Yangzheng 呂養正 recalls being sent down to the Western Hunan countryside during the Cultural Revolution (the exact location is not given). The Miao family he stayed with had a sickly son who had yet to experience puberty at an age his peers were getting married and fathering children, so his parents decided to hold these rituals and dramas in secret—at night, behind closed doors, and with no music—in order to ensure him a better future. (Whether an unfulfilled vow was the cause of the son's stunted development is not explained). Although Lü himself was not Miao, he was viewed as a guest (literally “someone sent by Chairman Mao” or *Mao Zhuxi songlaide* 毛主席送來的人) and allowed to take part. Lü also noted that Repaying a Nuo Vow was a special occasion, when people could enjoy a rare treat of meat and alcohol.³¹ A related case was reported in Yuanling 沅陵 County, where a father staged these rituals and dramas to celebrate the fact that his son had survived fighting during the Cultural Revolution.³² One of the most detailed accounts of the circumstances that prompt people to sponsor Repaying a Nuo Vow may be found in an article recently published by Liu Xinglu 劉興祿, which notes that the 68-year-old Chinese Communist Party member who decided to pay for these rituals and dramas was concerned about his wife's illness and feared that it might be due to his failure to repay a vow for good health that his grandmother had made on his behalf when he was a little boy.³³

Inasmuch as it was Ma's family sponsoring the Repaying a Nuo Vow, it would not be proper for him to officiate at their performance. Accordingly, he asked his own master, a *badaizha* named Hong 洪, to be the presiding ritual specialist. Also known as Laojin 老金 and bearing the religious name Farong 法榮, Hong is quite

31 呂養正,《湘西苗族鬼神崇拜探幽》,北京:中國文聯出版社(徐傳武主編,2001),頁73-75。

32 瞿湘周,〈沅陵縣杜家坪鄉梁開英家還儺願紀實〉,收入瞿湘周,《古老、神秘、豪放——沅陵巫教和儺文化調查紀實》(1999年5月瀘溪縣內部印刷),頁104-164。

33 劉興祿,〈湘西“瓦乡人”還儺愿的現代展演〉,《吉首大學學報(社會科學版)》,第33卷,第3期(2012),頁146-153。

young (53 years old; father to one son and one daughter) and only a third-generation master, having commenced his study of ritual traditions around age 20 and becoming a *badaizha* master around age 30. Hong's grandfather learned the family trade from two other masters named Ma Fagao 麻法高 and Ma Fawang 麻法旺, who Hong worships as his patriarchs. His father was unable to practice due to the Cultural Revolution. Hong has only a fourth grade education and does not possess any liturgical texts, so he performs solely from memorization. Unlike other local ritual specialists we interviewed, he has not served in any village government posts. Hong is a highly talented specialist, having mastered the four skills (*sigong* 四功) essential to performing *badaizha* rituals, namely singing (*chang* 唱), dancing (*wu* 舞), horn-blowing (*chui* 吹), and paper-cutting (*jian* 剪). He is also a gifted actor.

During our interview, Hong and his disciples were working to complete the altar. A true work of art, it was adorned with beautiful paper cuttings (*jianzhi* 剪紙), including both auspicious images and ritual items such as a large black "Palace of the Sun" (Taiyangdian 太陽殿), which figures in the exorcistic rituals described below. Two other large white paper cuttings represented "Surrounding the Altar Money" (Weizhuoqian 圍桌錢) and "Door Closing Money" (Guanmenqian 關門錢). Six strings bearing strips of white paper, also representing money, were hung from the ceiling. The first five, which curled inward, represented the ritual's sponsors, the *badaizha* and his troupe, and the sponsors' relatives. A sixth string, which curled outward, bore strips of paper covered with images of sinister-looking demons known as "the aggrieved" (*yuanjia* 冤家) for malevolent spirits. Behind the altar were paintings of the Three Pure Ones (Sanqing 三清), as well as Daoist marshals and the *badaizha*'s patriarchs and ancestors.³⁴ Atop the altar were placed three bushels of rice: the center one contained a paper tablet representing the Three Pure Ones, the one on the right (stage left) a paper tablet representing Lord Nuo (Nuogong 儺公), and the one on the left (stage right) a paper tablet representing Mother Nuo (Nuomu 儺母).³⁵ The masks for the latter two deities were also placed on top of the altar (see Figures 1-3). Once the altar had been completed, Hong performed a consecration ritual known as "Inviting Paper" (*qingzhi* 請紙), which involved inviting the above-mentioned deities to the altar and sharing offerings of food and wine with them.

34 Unlike the paintings that adorn many Daoist altars, these artworks are not the objects of offering rituals. See Shih-shan Susan Huang [黃士珊], *Picturing the True Form: Daoist Visual Culture in Traditional China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); see also Katz, *Images of the Immortal*, pp. 142-149.

35 The Mother Nuo tablet is burned after ritual #23 (和尚), while the Three Pure Ones tablet is burned after ritual #24 (禳星). The Lord Nuo tablet is burned after the penultimate ritual (#32; 土地 and 判官).

Despite the nominal importance of the Three Pure Ones, the deities Lord Nuo and especially Mother Nuo are the most significant to worshippers and specialists alike, in both ritual and local legend as well (see below).

The Repaying a Nuo Vow sponsored by *badaizha* Ma and his family commenced at their home early on the morning of November 15. The rites were divided into three sections, albeit with some degree of overlap. The first set of rites, for inviting deities and purifying the ritual area, are held during the daytimes. These are followed by nighttime performances of rituals and especially dramas, concluding with early morning exorcistic rituals and rites for the fulfillment of vows performed on the second day.³⁶ A full outline of these rituals is provided in Appendix 1, so only the highlights are discussed below:

5. Jiaosheng 交牲, Fajiuling 發酒令, Qinghe 慶賀 (6:57-7:27 a.m.):

Hong 洪 performed these rites with his younger brother, who is also a *badaizha*. They featured the sacrificial victims (pigs and goats) being dragged before the altar to “worship” the gods before being slaughtered (see Figure 4). Later, paper money daubed with the animals’ blood was placed on the altar in front of the Three Pure Ones, as were buckets of blood, a dead chicken, and even some dead fish.³⁷ Such practices would be unthinkable at Daoist altars throughout much of Southeast China, including Taiwan.

9. Huibing 會兵, Zaoqiao 造橋, Zaolao 造牢 (10:04-10:19):

These rites were staged by the troupe’s senior member, surnamed Long 龍, who summoned the soldiers for the evening exorcism using his whip (*mabian* 馬鞭) while also tossing out kernels of corn. Martial deities summoned during these rites included Zhang Wulang 張五郎 (also referred to as Zhang-Zhao Erlang 張趙二郎), the Five Furies (Wuchang 五猖), and the Five Legions (Wuying 五營).³⁸ All were

³⁶ Scholars like Zhang Yinghe use the following tripartite scheme: Opening the Altar (*kaitan* 開壇), Opening the Cave (*kaidong* 開洞), and Closing the Altar (*bitan* 閉壇). See 張應和, 〈苗族還儺願源流割考〉, 收入《神秘的湘西——湘西原始宗教文化研究資料匯編》(吉首: 吉首大學圖書館信息部編, 2006), 頁190-202.

³⁷ Fish offerings are often required for ancestor worship among some southwestern ethnic groups, such as the Kam (Dong) and Bouyei in Guizhou.

³⁸ For more on the cults to these deities, see Alain Arrault, “Analytic Essay on the Domestic Statuary of Central Hunan: The Cult to Divinities, Parents, and Masters,” *Journal of Chinese Religions*, 36 2008: 1-53; Patrice Fava, *Aux portes du ciel: La statuaire taoïste du Hunan* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, École Française d’Extrême Orient, 2013; in press), pp. 116-127. Guo Qitao [郭啟濤], *Exorcism and Money: The Symbolic World of the Five-Fury Spirits in Late Imperial China*, *China Research Monograph* 55

said to be under the command of Mother Nuo, who, as we will see below, plays the leading role in exorcistic rites. This is in marked contrast to Lord Nuo, who is said to be only good for engaging in bouts of heavy drinking, as indicated by his red face. Others attribute this coloring to his blushing after having incest with his sister; see below.

11. Xlama Xialuan/jiao 下馬下輦/轎 (10:42-10:54):

These rites were held to ensure that Lord Nuo, Mother Nuo, and the Three Pure Ones had actually arrived at the altar, and involve numerous rounds of throwing bamboo divination blocks (*gao* 筊). There was also lots of joking around in Miao language, in contrast to most of the rites, which are performed using local Chinese dialect.

13. Bao/BaoNuo 報/抱儼 (11:10-11:28):

Performed by Hong's younger brother, this rite featured the telling of the flood myth, especially how the sole survivors, an older brother and younger sister (Lord Nuo and Mother Nuo) had to commit incest to perpetuate the human race. Pumpkin seeds and oranges, symbols of fortune and fertility, were passed out to all the participants.

16. Qingshen 請神 (18:02-18:33):

The early evening program was the highlight of the entire ritual event for both the sponsoring family and its relatives and friends. Once dinner had ended, people crowded into the house, some playing cards, others chewing betel nut, others just chatting. After making offerings to the gods, the *badaizha* brought out masks to be used during the performances, which were placed atop stacks of paper spirit money. Senior family members were allowed to pick up and horse around with the masks as part of the relaxed atmosphere.

17. Kaidong 開洞 (Taoyuandong 桃源洞) (18:37-18:57):

This rite marked the opening the Taoyuan Cave (Taoyuandong 桃源洞), home to Lord Nuo, Mother Nuo, and other deities whose roles were to be performed during the evening's ceremonies and dramas. In Western Hunan, stagings of Repaying a Nuo Vow tend to feature two types of dramatic performances: "standard

(Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2003); 張式弘, 〈張五郎傳說述評〉, 《湖南人文科技學院學報》, 1 (2005), 頁35-38.

dramas” (*zhengxi* 正戲), staged to accompany local specialists’ rituals; and “original dramas” (*benxi* 本戲), full-length stage plays that recount the stories of deities and historical figures. In the case of the rites held in Hulu, only the former took place.

18. Ban Xianfeng 扮先鋒 (19:10-20:55):

The longest and in some ways most dynamic ritual-drama of the night, this performance was notable for a number of features. The first was cross-dressing, with Hong’s younger brother playing the role of the martial goddess known as the Vanguard (Xianfeng 先鋒). He wore traditional Miao women’s clothing and false breasts (which were freely fondled by the onlookers). At the same time, this rite had clear exorcistic features, with the Vanguard using her “Mother Nuo Command Banners” (*Nuomu lingqi* 儺母令旗) to expel all demonic forces, especially epidemics (*saowen* 掃瘟; see Figure 5). There were also conspicuous elements of local Miao culture, including not only the Vanguard’s clothing but also the singing of Miao “mountain song” duets (*shange* 山歌; *duige* 對歌), most of which center on courtship, with more than a few being ribald in nature.³⁹ Such singing involved a musical duel between one member of the *badaizha* troupe and a member of the host family. The Vanguard’s entry into the home was held up for over an hour as both sides vied to display their prowess, which also reflected patron-client and host-guest tensions and perhaps also socioeconomic issues as well, since families with the means to stage elaborate Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas tend to be better-off than their neighbors. In the end, the Vanguard was allowed to make her entrance, the demons were expelled, and more seeds and fruit were passed out to all family members, troupe members, and guests.

19. Ban Kaishan 扮開山 (I) (21:01-21:40):

This drama was performed by the youngest member of the troupe, surnamed Ma 麻, who also wore traditional Miao clothing. According to legend, Kaishan 開山 was so ugly at birth that his parents abandoned him in the mountains, where he was raised by wolves. After practicing self-cultivation, he earned the favor of Mother Nuo, who appointed him to be one of her generals (Kaishan dajiang 開山大將).

20. Ban Suanming 扮算命 (21:43-22:22):

The role of the Fortune-teller (Suanming 算命), whose main task is to assist

39 花垣政協文史會編，《神奇的花垣·情歌篇·下》（花垣：花垣政協文史會，2012），頁1-17, 43-46, 55-58, 85-101。

Kaishan, was performed by Long. This figure can be either Miao or Han Chinese depending on the host family's preference.

21. Kai(Kan)shan huanyuan 開(勘)山還願 (22:27-22:45):

Kaishan loses his axe, which the Fortune-teller helps him locate. However, a Repaying a Nuo Vow must be performed in order to get it back. Kaishan doesn't have enough money, so the family sponsoring the rituals does this deed for him as an act of merit.

25. Xianshen(qi) 獻神(氣) (00:56-01:46 a.m.):

All the animal offerings were stacked up in front of the altar, forming a veritable "mountain of meat" (*roushan* 肉山). Troupe leader Hong used his *qi* 氣 to animate the offerings, and struck them with his audience tablet (*hu* 笏) so that they could be sent to the gods that inhabit Taoyuan Cave.

26. Ban Balang 扮八郎 (1:50-3:23):

Balang 八郎, played by Long, is a Han Chinese merchant from Jiangxi 江西 who buys the offerings to take them back to Taoyuan Cave. This performance features more humor, especially when Balang haggles with Hong over the price of the offerings. The names and residences of the Repaying a Nuo Vow sponsors are recited aloud, and the offerings carried off to be cooked, with one portion reserved for the members of the *badaizha* troupe.

27. Jin(Jing)biao 進(敬)標 (3:05-3:14):

During this exorcistic rite, bamboo spears (*biao* 標) adorned with colored paper are set alight and cast out from the home's front door. The one spear that is not burned ends up being thrust into the Palace of the Sun paper cutting.

29. Youyuan (zuozheng) 游願 (作證) (4:07-4:37):

This vitally important rite was held to ensure that the gods were aware that the vow had been successfully repaid. The vow paper (*yuanzhi* 願紙) from the "Vow of Longevity" (*changsheng yuan* 長生願) rites performed by *badaizha* Ma's father over twenty years ago was brought out by the family's elder son, who stood with Hong on a bench in front of the altar. Hong used divination blocks to determine if the rites had achieved their intended goal, achieving a 100 percent success rate when tossing them through the large ring atop his master's knife (*shidao* 師刀). Words of congratulation were offered, and onlookers were invited to touch the vow paper, which was then broken up and burned.

30. Shang dashu 上大熟 (4:48-5:00):

Once the offerings had been cooked (with the exception of the chicken, which is set aside for the *badaizha* troupe), members of the host family, the troupe, and the family's guests sat around a long table for a feast. The sun had yet to arise, however, and since nobody had any appetite, red bags were passed out so that the participants could take their leftovers home for later.

31. Dasao (Bai bingma, LiNuo) 打掃 (拜兵馬, 立儼) (5:09-5:55):

This was the final exorcistic rite in Repaying a Nuo Vow, and it consisted of total warfare. Food and corn were placed in front of Mother Nuo, and after divination blocks had been thrown her mask was affixed atop a bamboo pole. Hong then carried the goddess in a mad rush throughout the home, followed by assistants who set off firecrackers and threw corn. Hong then hurled Mother Nuo out the door to a disciple (Ma) who chanted spells (*zhouyu* 咒語) and tossed divination blocks. But this was only the beginning: Mother Nuo was brought back into the house, with the bamboo pole bearing her set atop an upside down bowl with paper spirit money (*zhima* 紙馬) stacked around to help her stand (this happened on the first try, which apparently is quite rare). Once she was erect, the host family's parents knelt in front of Mother Nuo and worshipped her, while Long chanted and tossed divination blocks using his audience tablet. The parents were followed by the second son and his wife, who asked Mother Nuo for the birth of a son.

32. Ban Tudi 扮土地 and Ban Panguan 扮判官 (6:08-6:40):

The roles of the Earth God (Tudi 土地) and the Judge (Panguan 判官; literally "Judicial Officer") are usually performed separately, but since things were running late, they were staged together to save time. Long played the Earth God, walking slowly around the house with a hoe and singing humorous ditties. Hong assumed the role of the Judge, sitting at a table on which were placed the Judge's mask and Lord Nuo's paper tablet. He was joined by two family elders, who he constantly plied with pork and wine, while slamming the table with his thunder tablet of command (*leiling* 雷令) and pretending to be enraged at their words and deeds. On the one hand, this is supposed to be a serious rite, with the Judge functioning as a judicial figure entrusted with the task of confirming that the Nuo vow has actually been repaid (literally "checking off the vow" or *gouyuan* 勾願). On the other hand, the scene ended up being almost entirely comic, and in some ways a welcome relief for those who had stayed up all night. Hong concluded the performance by overturning the table and walking over it out the door. Lord Nuo's paper tablet was burned.

33. Songshen, DaoNuo, DaoWuyue 送神, 倒儺, 倒五嶽 (6:42-7:22):

Once divination blocks had been used to determine if the gods had prepared to depart, the masks for Lord Nuo and Mother Nuo were taken off the altar and placed on bamboo poles, following which they were given to the family's elder son to carry to a nearby drainage canal. All the paper cuttings adorning the altar were torn apart, taken to the canal, and burned to the sound of fusillades of firecrackers.

* * * * *

The Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas had come to an end, but special rites called "Returning to the Door" (*huimen* 回門) had to be performed three weeks later. Some specialists we interviewed claimed that such rites are performed to recall the merit officers (*shou gongcao* 收功曹) who had received sacrifices during the Repaying a Nuo Vow. According to Hong, however, Returning to the Door, also variously referred to as "Joyful Reverence to [the God of] Wealth" (*jingcaixi* 敬財喜) or "Joyful Sacrifices to [the God of] Wealth" (*jicaixi* 祭財喜), is done to invite the family's God of Wealth (Caishen 財神) to return home based on the assumption that it had been scared away by the presence of so many spirit soldiers (*bingma* 兵馬). Hong claimed that there was no need to recall the merit officers, as these had already been sent off along with Lord Nuo and Mother Nuo.

Fundamental Facets of Repaying a Nuo Vow

-The importance of repaying vows

One of the central themes of Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas is that of personal integrity. Miao religious traditions feature a wide range of rites for making and repaying vows, which are performed not only by *badaizha* specialists but by *badaixiong* as well. In the case of Repaying a Nuo Vow, the initial act of making a vow can be quite elaborate, with the rites lasting as long as a full day. This is usually performed by *badaizha* between the second and seventh lunar months. Vow-making rites open with the worshipper preparing a pig, a goat, and a chicken, all of which are sacrificed in the worshipper's home. The *badaizha* then performs rites for inviting his patriarchs (*zushi* 祖師), merit officers (*gongcao* 功曹), and soldiers (*bingma* 兵馬), after which he accompanies the worshipper in preparing the vow paper (*yuanzhi* 願紙) described above. In the next stage the *badaizha* reports to the gods stating the vow's purpose and especially the worshipper's intention to perform a Repaying a Nuo Vow should the deities respond favorably to the request. The gods are invited to witness the rite, which is concluded with the vow paper being placed on the

worshipper's altar or in the home's attic until the date when the Repaying a Nuo Vow must be performed.⁴⁰

Apart from such rites, the act of making and then repaying a vow is also an integral component of certain underworld indictment rites (*gao yinzhuang* 告陰狀) that feature the White Emperor Heavenly Kings (Baidi tianwang 白帝天王); these are referred to as “Vows to the Heavenly Kings” (*Tianwang yuan* 天王願). These rites are undertaken by people who fear their illnesses are a form of divine retribution and make a vow to the Heavenly Kings to worship them if they are cured; such people might also perform “filing indictment” rituals as a means of demonstrating their innocence of any wrongdoing.⁴¹ Making and repaying vows also lie at the core of the “Incense Dancing” (*tiaoxiang* 跳香) festival observed among the Waxiang 瓦鄉 people of Guzhang 古丈, Luxi 瀘溪, and Yuanling 沅陵 counties. Many key features of Repaying a Nuo Vow described in this paper figure prominently in “Incense Dancing.” For example, while the “Incense Dancing” festival is a communal event (as opposed to a family rite like Repaying a Nuo Vow) and has a very different ritual structure, the two main deities worshipped, Panhu 盤瓠 (Panwang 盤王; the divine canine) and his wife Xinnü 辛女, are often conflated with Lord Nuo and Mother Nuo, and both rituals can feature the telling of the flood myth. Furthermore, while the marriage between Panhu 盤瓠 and Xinnü 辛女 is hardly incestuous, it is equally unnatural.⁴² Finally, the fact that the right half of the character *hu* (瓠) contains the graph for gourd (*gua* 瓜), which the brother-sister couple use as a vessel to survive

40 Much of the data presented below was collected in the course of doing fieldwork with Zhang Yinghe 張應和. I am profoundly grateful for his help, as well as his immense patience in answering numerous follow-up questions.

41 石啟貴編著,《民國時期湘西苗族調查實錄——還儺願卷》(北京:民族出版社,2009),頁359-374. Underworld indictments and other judicial rituals are treated in my *Divine Justice -- Religion and the Development of Chinese Legal Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009). For more on judicial rituals in Western Hunan, see Donald S. Sutton, “Myth Making on an Ethnic Frontier: The Cult of the Heavenly Kings of West Hunan, 1715-1996,” *Modern China*, 26.4 (2000): 448-500; Xie Xiaohui [謝曉輝], “From Woman’s Fertility to Masculine Authority: The Story of the White Emperor Heavenly Kings [白帝天王] in Western Hunan,” in Faure & Ho, eds., *Chieftains into Ancestors*, pp. 111-137.

42 侯自佳,《中國苗族神秘的一支——瓦鄉人風俗風情》(北京:中國文聯出版社,2005),頁3-5、63-84;孫文輝,〈為了「農」與「人」的豐產:辰州跳香〉,《巫儺之祭:文化人類學的中國文本》(長沙:岳麓書社,2006),頁218-227. See also 熊長林,〈瀘溪跳香初探〉收入張子偉主編,《湘西儺文化之迷》,頁170-182;劉興祿,〈跳香:還愿儀式的別樣展演——湘西用坪「跳香」習俗調查〉,《文化遺產》,2(2011),頁112-116;明躍玲,〈神話傳說與民族認同——以五溪地區苗族盤瓠傳說為例〉,《廣西民族學院學報》(哲學社會科學版),27.3(2005),頁91-94. Thanks also to Lu Qun 陸群 for sharing some of the field data she and her students collected on these rites.

the flood, is quite suggestive in its own right.⁴³ Add to this the fact that some versions of the Lord Nuo and Mother Nuo flood myth feature a divine dog (*shenquan* 神犬) that brings from Heaven seeds of the five grains (*wugu* 五穀), which are also at the heart of the “Incense Dancing” festival,⁴⁴ and one cannot help but wonder about the extent to which these two traditions may have cross-pollinated.

As we saw in the discussion of Repaying a Nuo Vow types, pledges to perform such rites are not to be made lightly. Liturgical writings constantly stress the need to make good on one’s vows, including an 1864 text from Guzhang 古丈 featuring the following lines, the latter portion of which clearly refer to the Miao oxen sacrifice: “If you owe me (Mother Nuo?) the three meat offerings (*sansheng* 三牲; pork, chicken, fish), repay these offerings, or else the Vanguard will journey day and night (in search of offerings?)...The patron has done well in repaying the vow, both the oxen and water buffalo have been repaid (sacrificed)” (*qian wo sansheng huan sansheng, miande Xianfeng xiaoyexing...Dongjun huanyuan huan de hao, huangniu shuiniu dou huanliao* 欠我三牲還三牲，免得先鋒曉夜行...東君還願還得好，黃牛水牛都還了).⁴⁵ One late Republican-era article describes a Long 龍 family with five daughters that held a vow-making rite to pray for a son (*qiuzi yuan* 求子願). When the wife did become pregnant, the family hesitated to perform the Repaying a Nuo Vow, perhaps because they were unsure of the fetus’ gender. Only when the birth was imminent did the family realize the error of its ways, and rush to perform the rites, but it was too late: a son did indeed come into the world, but the baby was stillborn. According to the article’s author, such tales were common throughout Western Hunan.⁴⁶ It is also interesting to note that when Repaying a Nuo Vow failed to achieve its goal, blame was often placed on sorcerers who had supposedly used *gu* 蠱 poison to disrupt the rite’s efficacy.⁴⁷

At the same time, however, earnestness over repaying vows is also tempered with a sense of humor. Joking around during key ritual dramas, most notably the

43 孫文輝，〈十一悠遠歷史的足音：盤王祭〉，《巫儺之祭：文化人類學的中國文本》，頁177-200。

44 石啟貴編著，《民國時期湘西苗族調查實錄——還儺願卷》，頁3。

45 Many thanks to Wu Bingchun 伍秉純 for sharing this valuable text.

46 華麓，〈我所知道的湘西〉，收入馮益吾編，《湘西民俗》（長沙：湖南國民印務館，1945），頁12。

47 石啟貴，《湘西苗族實地調查報告》，頁520-524. See also Norma Diamond, “The Miao and Poison: Interactions on China’s Southwest Frontier,” *Ethnology*, 27.1 (1988): 1-25. For a broad conceptual treatment of the social and cultural significance of accusatory practices, see Barend J. ter Haar, *Telling Stories: Witchcraft and Scapegoating in Chinese History*, Sinica Leidensia, 71 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006).

Vanguard performance, also occurs for the Judge, who is responsible for proving that the worshipper has been faithful in fulfilling the Nuo vow. The Judge clearly must bear witness to the worshipper's fidelity (*zuozheng* 作證),⁴⁸ but the entire "judicial" process is obviously an occasion for fun involving the worshipper and/or senior family members drinking toasts with the *badaizha* and filing a series of mock indictments. Finally, the Judge marks his notebook with the word "repaid" (*huan* 還), thereby signifying the successful completion of the proceedings. In short, divine justice is achieved, but only after a significant humorous interlude.⁴⁹ The serious side to judicial rituals, of course, can be seen in rites such as "Sealing the Prison" (*fenglao* 封牢), which are held to capture and hold all demonic forces in the area, especially plague demons. There are also rites for deploying the spirit soldiers charged with capturing demonic forces, including "Gathering the Soldiers" (*huibing* 會兵) and "Roll Call" (*dianbing* 點兵).⁵⁰

The importance of vow-making and vow-repaying not only lies at the core of Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas, but the wider swath of Western Hunan's Miao diverse religious traditions, with the reverberation between these traditions constituting one form of trans-hybridity described in this paper's Introduction. Such phenomena are discussed in the earliest scholarly writings about Repaying a Nuo Vow by Academia Sinica scholars Ling Chunsheng 凌純聲 (1901-1978), and Rui Yifu 芮逸夫 (1898-1994), as well as their research assistant and local elite Shi Qigui 石啟貴 (1896-1959),⁵¹ who did fieldwork in Western Hunan from 1933 to 1936 as part of a major Institute of History and Philology research project on Southwest China undertaken between 1929 and 1943.⁵² Ling, Rui, and Shi, as well as later generations

48 石啟貴編著,《民國時期湘西苗族調查實錄——還儺願卷》,頁290-297。

49 凌純聲、芮逸夫,《湘西苗族調查報告》(臺北:南天書局,1978(1947)),頁192。

50 石啟貴編著,《民國時期湘西苗族調查實錄——還儺願卷》,頁40-48,158-166. For more on the overlap between exorcistic and judicial rituals, see my "Trial by Power -- Some Preliminary Observations on the Judicial Roles of Taoist Martial Deities," *Journal of Chinese Religions*, 36 (2008): 54-83. These phenomena are also treated in Tapp, *The Hmong of China*, p. 150.

51 凌純聲、芮逸夫,《湘西苗族調查報告》,頁178-193;石啟貴,《湘西苗族實地調查報告》,頁357-364,428-429;石啟貴編著,《民國時期湘西苗族調查實錄——還儺願卷》。

52 For more on the significance of that era's ethnographic writing, see Cheung Siu-woo [張兆和], "Miao Identities, Indigenism and the Politics of Appropriation in Southwest China during the Republican Period," *Asian Ethnicity*, 4.1 (2003): 85-114; 張兆和,〈從「他者描寫」到「自我表述」:民國時期石啟貴關於湘西苗族身份的探索與實踐〉,《廣西民族大學學報》(哲學社會科學版),30.5 (2008),頁37-45; 張秋東,〈「文化獵奇」與「政治自覺」——凌純聲等與石啟貴的湘西苗族研究比較分析〉,《樂山師範學院學報》,25.3 (2010),頁108-112. More recently, Shi Qigui's son and daughter-in-law (Shi Jianzhong and the late Ma Shulan, both emeritus professors at Beijing's Minzu daxue 民族大學) have done extensive follow-up research and worked with other scholars and local experts to

of scholars, describe a number of Miao rituals for making and repaying vows that are linked to the ox sacrifice (*nongx niex* 弄業; *zhuiniu* 椎牛 in Chinese). Two different forms of these rites exist. The first, referred to in Miao as *ghaob yand jid beal* 禾願及巴 and translated as *yuanbiao xuyuan* 願標許願 or “making a vow with a vow spear,” involves the offering of a water buffalo to the Miao ancestral spirit *Lioub Doub Lioub Nqet* 岭斗岭茄. The second, referred to in Miao as *dab niex jid beal* 大業及巴 and translated as *shuiniu xuyuan* 水牛許願 or “making a vow with a water buffalo,” also features a water buffalo, but is only done if the first rite failed to improve the worshipper’s fortunes, and the buffalo can be allowed to live if the worshipper cannot afford to sacrifice it. Both rites not only feature a water buffalo, but also use a red vow cloth, which is tied to the spear for the first type of rite and to the water buffalo for the second. This strongly indicates the reverberation between Miao and Han practices, as seen in the use of red vow paper in Repaying a Nuo Vow (see Appendix 2).⁵³

Additional clues about processes of trans-hybridity were provided by the two *badaixiong* my partners and I interviewed—one surnamed Ma 麻, the other Tian 田—both of whom live in proximity to Hulu Village. Both confirmed that they continue to perform Miao vow-making and vow-repaying rituals on a regular basis, the most important of which is known as “Sacrificing to the Family Immortals (Ancestors)” (*songt nbeat hangd ghaot* 送瑟夯果; *ji jiaxian* 祭家仙 in Chinese). This ritual features sacrifices to a broad range of spirits, including the founding ancestor of one’s own lineage and the ancestors of the Miao people as a whole (none other than Lord Nuo and Mother Nuo). There are also special pig offerings and certain taboos the person responsible for taking them home (usually the wife’s elder brother or *jiufu* 舅父) must observe. He is not allowed to encounter people with the same surname, so must announce his presence while en route; he and his family members must consume all of the meat in one sitting, and anything leftover has to be buried. There is also a simpler version of these rites, “Reverent Offerings to Forebears” (*xid xangb* 喜香; *jingfeng xianren* 敬奉先人), the contents of which vary depending on whether the ancestor in question died a natural or a violent death.

publish Shi Qigui’s field data in an extensively annotated ten-volume collection (the 《民國時期湘西苗族調查實錄》), one volume of which is devoted to Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas.

53 石啟貴,《湘西苗族實地調查報告》,頁415-423;凌純聲、芮逸夫,《湘西苗族調查報告》,頁141-142, 191-192;劉潤世,《湘西兄弟民族的生活與習俗》(未刊稿,1951);石啟貴編著,《民國時期湘西苗族調查實錄——祭祀神辭漢譯卷》(北京:民族出版社,2009),頁464-473。See also 張子偉、張子元,《湖南省花垣縣排碧鄉黃巖村苗族的椎牛祭》,《民俗曲藝叢書》,第71冊(臺北:施合鄭民俗文化基金會,2000), and especially the three-volume compilation of texts and commentary, 石啟貴編著,《民國時期湘西苗族調查實錄——椎牛卷》(北京:民族出版社,2009)。

Of even greater significance is the fact that vow-making rites performed by our *badaixiong* informants tended to be held between the second and seventh lunar months, while the vow-repaying rites are usually staged between the tenth and twelfth lunar months. In other words, their timing corresponds almost exactly to the vow-making and vow-repaying rites performed by *badaizha*, especially the rituals that are the subject of this paper. This suggests such rites may have originated in Daoist practices that were merged into yet also modified in the face of indigenous traditions, thereby going through the manifold processes of cultural interaction that constitute trans-hybridity. As this paper's description of the Repaying a Nuo Vow has revealed, many facets of these rites preserve and even glorify elements of Miao life that have persisted despite the hegemony of Chinese cultural traditions. Trans-hybridity is also clearly demonstrated by the fact that before any Repaying a Nuo Vow can be staged a *badaizha* must be summoned to do a "House Washing" (*xiwu* 洗屋) purification ritual, and a *badaixiong* has to perform the "Reverent Offerings to Forebears." In preparation for the Repaying a Nuo Vow we observed in Hulu, the *badaixiong* surnamed Ma 麻 had performed the "Reverent Offerings" about one month earlier, while the *badaizha* Hong 洪 staged a "House Washing" ritual fifteen days before arriving to preside over the Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas.

-Family identity

It is crucial to emphasize the centrality of family in Repaying a Nuo Vow. These rituals and dramas are not performed in temples but at home, and frequently pertain to family concerns such as health, wealth, progeny, etc.⁵⁴ One striking example is the fact that the Heavenly Kings (Tianwang 天王) are not invited to Repaying a Nuo Vow because they are considered "outside deities" (*waishen* 外神) rather than "family deities" (*jiashen* 家神), which is a striking distinction in light of their significance in Western Hunan culture. This is not to deny the importance of rites performed for individuals and communities, however.⁵⁵ Staging a Repaying a Nuo Vow does entail community involvement, especially when it comes to hosting the friends and relatives who are invited to witness the rituals and dramas, a fact attested to by a poster delineating which members of Hulu Village were to help with various cooking and cleaning chores. Nonetheless, Repaying a Nuo Vow is essentially about an

54 凌純聲、芮逸夫, 《湘西苗族調查報告》, 頁178-179; 左漢中, 《民間繪畫》(長沙: 湖南人美術出版社, 1994), 頁38-43; 石啟貴編著, 《民國時期湘西苗族調查實錄——還儺願卷》, 頁1-8。

55 See the typology of rituals in 李懷蓀, 〈五溪巫風與「槓菩薩」〉, 《民俗曲藝》, 83 (1993), 頁85-104。

identity that centers on family life. As a result, in the course of performing these rites, family and local identity are more significant than ethnic identity, a point I will elaborate on in the Conclusion. The central importance of the family is also frequently mentioned in local gazetteers, including those mentioned above as well as a detailed account preserved in the 1821 edition of the *Chenxi County Gazetteer* (*Chenxi xianzhi* 辰谿(溪)縣志; see below, Appendix 3, #1).⁵⁶ Such patterns occur in other parts of Southwest China as well, with Chen Meiwen 陳玫姣 noting the links between vow-making/repaying rites and marriage patterns in Pan Yao 盤瑤 society.⁵⁷

-Gender, fertility, and sexual humor

Family concerns about fertility and progeny constitute prime motivations for sponsors of Repaying a Nuo Vow. Even in the case of the rites we witnessed in Hulu, which were held to repay a “Vow of Longevity” (*changsheng yuan* 長生願), fertility remained a vital issue, with the second son and his wife asking Mother Nuo for male offspring. Such issues figure even more prominently in rituals and dramas specifically designed to ask for the birth of a son (*qiuzi yuan* 求子願) and to give thanks for the fulfillment of that request (*huan qiuzi yuan* 還求子願). According to Hong 洪, in the former, the wife’s elder brother (*jiufu* 舅父) is asked to carry an umbrella plus a bundle signifying the baby to be born, while in the course of repaying the vow the wife’s elder brother must carry both the umbrella and a bundle full of paper money plus other offerings. The latter rites also feature a memorial (*shuwen* 疏文), which, while referring to Daoist deities, is primarily concerned with family fertility (see Appendix 4). Beginning with Ling Chunsheng and Rui Yifu, scholars doing field investigations in Western Hunan have observed similar rites involving the use of bundles (often referred to as a “Nuo baby” or Nuo’er 儺兒), which are usually placed on the married couple’s bed.⁵⁸ Rites in other parts of Southwest China feature a pumpkin (*nangua* 南瓜), which both represents fertility in the sense of being full of seeds and is also linked to the gourd (*gua* 瓜) in flood myths. The pumpkin is presented to the wife by a deity referred to as the Immortal Official of the Flower Grove (Hualin xianguan 花林仙官) or Sister of the Flower Grove (Hualin zimei 花林子妹, Hualin jiemei 花林姐妹).⁵⁹

56 李懷蓀, 〈湘西儺戲調查報告〉, 《民俗曲藝》, 第69期(1991), 頁255-294, esp. 275.

57 陳玫姣, 《從命名談廣西田林盤古瑤人的構成與生命的來源》(臺北:唐山出版社, 2003)。

58 凌純聲、芮逸夫, 《湘西苗族調查報告》, 頁183-185。188; 李懷蓀, 〈儺儀送下洞評析〉, 《民俗曲藝》, 116(1998), 頁21-44。

59 David Holm, *Killing a Buffalo for the Ancestors: A Zhuang Cosmological Text from Southwest China* (DeKalb, IL: Southeast Asia Publications, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois

Since the theme of fertility features so prominently in Repaying a Nuo Vow, it should hardly be surprising that its rituals and dramas frequently include expressions of potent sexuality. The editors of Western Hunan's late-Qing gazetteers certainly noticed this phenomenon, with one 1877 *Qianzhou fuzhi* 乾州廳志 account cited in Appendix 3 (#2) containing a disparaging remark about these “songs being utterly vulgar and crude” (*qi qu zuiwei bili* 其曲最為鄙俚). In addition, there is an account in the *Old History of the Tang Dynasty* (Jiu Tangshu 舊唐書) of an official and renowned poet named Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842), who, while banished to Langzhou 郎州 (now Changde 常德, Hunan) for ten years, rewrote the contents of local songs and attempted to teach these new texts to the ritual specialists who sang them (*wei xinci yi jiao wuzhu* 為新辭以教巫祝). Similar accounts also occur in the case of Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. 340-278 BCE) and the *Nine Songs* (*Jiuge* 九歌) (see Appendix 3, #3-4).⁶⁰

During his long years of field research on Western Hunan's Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas, Li Huaishun 李懷蓀 often observed the importance of sexuality and humor, noting that some of the mudras (*jue* 訣) used by local specialists are graphic depictions of male and female genitalia.⁶¹ Other local scholars, such as Wu Xiyun 吳曦云, have not hesitated to play up the ribald aspects of these rites, explaining that a vital difference between Repaying a Nuo Vow and the classical Great Exorcism is that the latter is a violent expulsion ritual, while the former combines themes of exorcism and fertility. Wu goes so far as to claim that the “for the Miao, the mission of Repaying a Nuo Vow is one of propagation” (*Miaozu zhi zai shengzhi de chou Nuo* 苗族旨在生殖的酬儺).⁶² Dirty jokes are a common feature of many of the ceremonies and dramas performed during the evening hours, including even those featuring the Monk Deity (Heshangshen 和尚神),⁶³ and anyone who

University, 2003), pp. 198-199. Some specialists in Western Hunan claim that this goddess is the daughter of Taishang laojun 太上老君 (Laozi 老子); her hagiography is discussed below.

60 See David Hawkes, trans. & ed., *The Songs of the South. An Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poems by Qu Yuan and other Poets* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), pp. 18-19, 96-97. See also Arthur Waley, ed., *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955) should be “See David Hawkes, trans. & ed., *The Songs of the South. An Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poems by Qu Yuan and other Poets* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), pp. 18-19, 96-97. See also Arthur Waley, ed., *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955)”

61 李懷蓀, 〈五溪巫風與「楨菩薩」〉, 頁99-101, 103; 李懷蓀, 〈儺儀送下洞評析〉, 頁30-31, 42-44. The striking importance of humor in Chinese religious life is discussed in Meir Shahar, *Crazy Ji. Chinese Religion and Popular Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

62 吳曦云, 《紅苗風俗》(香港: 天馬出版社, 2006), 頁62-65, 192-196。

63 周明阜、吳曉玲、向元生、龍京沙等編, 《凝固的文明》, (西寧: 青海人民出版社, 2006)。See also 瞿湘周, 〈沅陵縣杜家坪鄉梁開英家還儺願紀實〉。

has witnessed Repaying a Nuo Vow will have heard worshippers and specialists alike proclaim that “Without dirty words/jokes, the deities cannot be efficacious” (*buijiang chouhua/pihua shen buling* 不講醜話/痞話神不靈). Such views are common throughout Southwest China. In just one example, Ho Ts’ui-p’ing 何翠萍 notes that for some Jingpo 景頗 rituals only elder women who have borne children are entitled to make dirty jokes during the performances.⁶⁴

Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas also exhibit the reversal of gender roles, something most clearly seen in the Vanguard’s performance.⁶⁵ The importance of female deities played by male performers has long been a feature of such dramas in other parts of Hunan (as well as all over China), as indicated by one passage from the 1536 edition of the *Hengzhou Prefectural Gazetteer* (*Hengzhou fuzhi* 衡州府志) (see Appendix 3, #5). The reversal of gender roles can also be seen in the presence of numerous women warriors, starting with Mother Nuo, who, as we saw above, clearly supersedes Lord Nuo in terms of ritual significance. Another key example is the Vanguard.⁶⁶ Based on the 1864 texts from Guzhang 古丈 cited above and the stories recited by *badaizha* in Huayuan 花垣 today, we can see that the Vanguard’s hagiography exhibits remarkable continuity, with both versions recounting how a childless couple is finally blessed with a daughter after the wife undergoes a twelve-year pregnancy. This unusual girl exhibits striking intelligence and aptitude, and starts to study ritual techniques at age 15, becoming a renowned exorcist who specializes in expelling epidemics (see Appendix 3, #6-7).⁶⁷ Moreover, the atypical pregnancy of the Vanguard’s mother plus the Vanguard’s own martial prowess echoes themes in the cult of the goddess Lady Linshui (Linshui furen 臨水夫人).⁶⁸ Women warriors also figure prominently in the “Incense Dancing” festival and the cult of the goddess Matron Ge (Ge niangniang 乞娘娘), whose hagiography states that she led

64 何翠萍，〈生命、季節和不朽社會的建立——論景頗、載瓦時間的建構與價值〉，收入黃應貴編，〈時間、歷史與記憶〉（臺北：中央研究院民族學研究所，1999），頁157-228。

65 Other accounts may be found in湖南土家族苗族自治州編，〈湖南民族民間舞蹈集成〉（北京：中國舞蹈出版社，1992），頁226-227, 254, 301-303. See also 凌純聲、芮逸夫，〈湘西苗族調查報告〉，頁188-189。

66 For more on cross-dressing and other forms of role reversal in Chinese ritual dramas, see Piet van der Loon, “Les Origines Rituelles du Theatre Chinois,” *Journal Asiatique*, 165 (1977): 141-168; 中文版 = 龍彼得著，王秋桂、蘇友貞譯，〈中國戲劇源於宗教儀典考〉，〈中外交學〉，第7卷，第12期（1979），頁523-547。

67 Additional data on the Vanguard may be found in 周明阜等，〈凝固的文明〉；孫文輝，〈打頭陣的女神：儺戲《搬先鋒》〉收入孫文輝，〈巫儺之祭：文化人類學的中國文本〉，頁42-50。

68 See Brigitte Baptandier, *The Lady of Linshui. A Chinese Female Cult*, translated by Kristin Ingrid Fryklund (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008)；康詩瑀，〈臨水夫人信仰的儀式活動：以臺南臨水夫人媽廟為例〉，〈民俗曲藝〉，第154期（2006），頁133-200。

a victorious military campaign in the South Seas (Nanhai 南海) during the Eastern Han dynasty.⁶⁹

Another wonder woman is the daughter of Taishang laojun 太上老君, who is usually referred to in the Huayuan area as the Sister of the Flower Grove (Hualin zimei 花林子妹). According to her hagiography, she fell in love with Zhang Wulang 張五郎 (Zhang-Zhao Erlang 張趙二郎) when he was Taishang laojun's disciple, helping him learn the most secret ritual techniques that her father had been unwilling to transmit to him. When Taishang laojun discovered this, the young lovers decided to elope, with the Sister using her sanitary napkin to ward off the arrows that were being shot at them.⁷⁰ And then there is Woman Mengjiang, whose tears for her deceased husband brought down part of the Great Wall. She plays a prominent role in numerous Repaying a Nuo Vow dramas, especially those performed in the Tujia 土家 regions of Yongshun 永順 and Longshan 龍山. Some plays are imbued with sexual overtones, especially those entitled "Jiangnü Dips in the Pool" (Jiangnüer xia chitang 姜女兒下池塘), which portray a young man peeking at her and eventually enjoying her favors. Unmarried women and young girls are forbidden to watch these performances.⁷¹

Finally, the more elaborate forms of Repaying a Nuo Vow can include a number of full-length stage plays about women. Some, including "Woman Pang" (Pangshinü 龐氏女) and "The Dragon King's Daughter" (Longwangnü 龍王女), recount the suffering of young brides at the hands of their mothers-in-law, but the most renowned drama concerns a goddess variously known as the Seventh Elder Sister (Qijie 七姐), Seventh Immortal Maiden (Qixiannü 七仙女), or the Matron Who Grants Sons (Songzi niangniang 送子娘娘). Some traditions describe her as an immortal maiden who descended to earth to marry the filial son Dong Yong 董永,⁷² but there are Western Hunan informants who claim she is the seventh daughter of the Jade Emperor (Yuhuang dadi 玉皇大帝), while others state that she is patron deity of the area's female mediums.⁷³ There are also stage plays about Guan Suo 關索

69 熊長林, 〈瀘溪跳香初探〉收入張子偉主編, 《湘西儺文化之迷》。

70 李懷蓀, 〈梅山神張五郎探略〉, 《民族論壇》, 4 (1997), 頁50-54。

71 胡健國, 〈綜述〉, 《湖南地方劇種志叢書(二)》(長沙:湖南文藝出版社, 1989), 頁468-487. See also <http://www.shimen.gov.cn/Item/13012.aspx>.

72 David Holm, "The Exemplar of Filial Piety and the End of the Ape-men: Dong Yong [董永] in Guangxi and Guizhou Ritual Performance," *T'oung Pao*, 90 (2004): 32-64.

73 石啟貴編著, 《民國時期湘西苗族調查實錄——還儺願卷》, 頁198-209, 225-232. Some areas of Western Hunan are home to rituals for "Inviting the Seventh Maiden" (qing Qigu niangniang 請七姑娘娘) or "Transforming into the Seventh Maiden" (hua Qigu niangniang 化七姑娘娘), which feature the possession of young girls. See 古丈縣民間文學集成辦公室編, 《中國歌謠集成-湖南卷-古丈縣

(the third son of Guan Yu 關羽), which, like those about unusual women, are usually staged using Chenhe Gaoqiang 辰河高腔 musical forms.⁷⁴

The prominence of so many female deities in Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas may be linked to the importance of women in Western Hunan's traditional Miao culture. This is not to deny the existence of gender-based divisions of labor and responsibility among local Miao, and the fact that most marriages tended to be virilocal. Be that as it may, however, accounts dating back to the Qing dynasty describe Miao women learning to use firearms and helping their menfolk load these weapons in the heat of battle. Miao women are also described as having been key figures in resolving feuds known as "beating the aggrieved family" (*da yuanjia* 打冤家). One result of their status in Miao society is that Miao areas were said to have lower rates of female infanticide.⁷⁵ Women also organized and helped lead numerous uprisings during the Qing and Republican eras, including one headed by female mediums that swept through Huayuan, Fenghuang, Jishou, and Songtao in 1941-1942.⁷⁶

Southwest China is a vast region, possessing a rich variety of kinship structures and gender-based divisions of labor. In some areas, women's prominence in ritual life has declined over time, in large part due to the imposition of Han Chinese lineage structures and their associated values. In Central Hunan, for example, research by Chen Zi'ai 陳子艾 suggests that goddesses and female specialists linked to the Taoyuan Cave (Taoyuandong 桃源洞) or the Eighteen Caves of Meishan (Meishan shibadong 梅山十八洞)⁷⁷ have been superseded by male deities and Daoist specialists,⁷⁸ while Chen Meiwen 陳玫汶's fieldwork among the Pangu Yao 盤古

資料本》(古丈縣民間文學集成辦公室, 1988); 古丈縣民間文學集成辦公室編, 《中國民間故事集成-湖南卷-古丈縣資料本》(古丈縣民間文學集成辦公室, 1990). Chen Meiwen 陳玫汶's research describes a deity known as Qigujie 七姑姐, venerated in some Yao areas of central Guangxi as both a woman warrior and a goddess who grants offspring.

74 李懷蓀, 〈湘西儺戲調查報告〉, 頁283-290; Beaud, "Masques en parade".

75 吳曦云, 《紅苗風俗》, 頁87-91. For similar accounts of women on the Taiwan frontier, see 羅士傑, 〈略論清同治年間臺灣戴潮春案與天地會之關係〉, 《民俗曲藝》, 第138期 (2002), 頁279-303. See also Jacques Lemoine, "Fonction et rébellion. La place de la femme à l'intérieur et à la périphérie du monde chinois," *Social Anthropology*, 5.3 (1997): 255-275.

76 Paul R. Katz, "'Jumping Immortals' (跳仙) -- Religion and Resistance among the Western Hunan Miao during the Republican Era," paper presented at the Institute of Modern History Seminar (中央研究院近代史研究所討論會), September 12, 2013.

77 For more on the idea of eighteen caves in non-Han cultures, see 李亦園, 〈章回小說《平閩十八洞》的民族學研究〉, 《中央研究院民族學研究所集刊》, 第76期 (1993), 頁1-20.

78 陳子艾, 〈「桃源洞」花蓬的信仰文化內蘊和洞與洞神的衍變及原因〉, 收入陳子艾、華瀾 (Alain Arrault) 編, 《「湘中宗教與鄉土社會」調查報告集》, 2冊 (北京: 宗教文化出版社,

瑤 in Guangxi 廣西 reveals that women's roles in local rites tend to be restricted to singing and preparing essential foods.⁷⁹ As Ho Ts'ui-p'ing notes in a recent article on this subject, "The transformation of the Chinese state changed the value of women and created new gender ideals for women in rituals and myths, but it also marginalized women in terms of their political role and status."⁸⁰ Still, other scholars, especially those working on non-Han peoples of Southwest China, have convincingly documented the central role that female specialists continue to play in indigenous ritual systems, due in large part to effective resistance against the hegemony of Han Chinese values and practices.⁸¹

-Flood and incest myths

The motifs of fertility resulting from atypical sexuality are also readily apparent in the flood myth, told during the "Reporting the Nuo [Legend]" (baoNuo 報儺) section of Repaying a Nuo Vow. This story must be told with each ritual cycle, traditionally in Miao (there are also versions told in local dialect), with the protagonists having Miao names (the Chinese translation from the Miao epic *Tales of Ancient Times* [Gulaohua 古老話] may be found in Appendix 5).⁸² Rui Yifu collected four versions of the flood myth during his fieldwork in Western Hunan in 1933, and published his findings in an article completed on Christmas Day 1936 and published in 1938.⁸³ Each of these versions tells of the conflict between a man (*koy.kegy* in Miao)

2013; in press). The papers in this volume were originally presented at a conference of the same name, held in Loudi 婁底, Shuiche 水車 on June 24-29, 2006.

79 陳玖姣, 《從命名談廣西田林盤古瑤人的構成與生命的來源》。

80 See Ho Ts'ui-p'ing, "Gendering Ritual Community across the Chinese Southwest Borderland," in Faure & Ho, eds., *Chieftains into Ancestors*, pp. 206-246. See also He Xi [賀喜], "The Past Tells It Differently: The Myth of Native Subjugation in the Creation of Lineage Society in South China," *Chieftains into Ancestors*, pp. 138-170; Xie, "From Woman's Fertility to Masculine Authority," *Chieftains into Ancestors*, pp. 125-130; 王淑英, 《多元文化空間中的湄神信仰儀式及其口頭傳統》(北京: 民族出版社, 2011), 頁42-67.

81 David Holm, "The Redemption of Vows [還願] in Shanglin [上林] (Guangxi)." *Minsu quyí* 民俗曲藝, 92 (1994): 853-916; Kao Yaning [高雅寧], "Singing a Hero in Ritual: Nong Zhigao [儂智高] and His Representation among the Zhuang People in China". Ph.D. thesis, University of Melbourne, 2010; see also Kao, "Chief, God, or National Hero? Representing Nong Zhigao in Chinese Ethnic Minority Society," in Faure & Ho, eds., *Chieftains into Ancestors*, pp. 42-65; 高雅寧, 《廣西靖西縣壯人農村社會中「魔婆」的養成過程與儀式表演》(臺北: 唐山出版社, 2002).

82 湖南少數民族古籍辦公室編, 《中國少數民族古籍·苗族古籍之二·古老話》(長沙: 岳麓書社, 1990), 頁249-251。

83 芮逸夫, 〈苗族的洪水故事與伏羲女媧的傳說〉, 《中央研究院歷史語言研究所人類學集刊》(1938), 頁155-203, esp. 155-156. According to the article's preface, Shi Qigui 石啟貴 and Shi Honggui 石宏規 (1898-1982; a native of Yongsui who was elected to Legislative Yuan and fled to Taiwan with other KMT elites in 1949) played important roles in assisting Rui's research.

and the thunder god (Leigong 雷公; *koy.soy* in Miao), which results in the world being inundated by a massive deluge. Only the man's son and daughter survive, riding out the storm in a giant gourd that grew from one of the thunder god's teeth. They eventually realize that it is up to them to repopulate the world, and consummate their relationship after a series of tests to confirm Heaven's approval.⁸⁴ However, their first "child" is a ball of flesh,⁸⁵ which, when sliced up, turns into countless human beings who are bestowed the five surnames Wu 吳, Long 龍, Shi 石, Ma 麻, and Liao 廖. The four versions vary in one important way, namely, whether it is the older brother or the younger sister who takes the initiative in pursuing the incestuous relationship. Earlier versions, such as the *Tales of Ancient Times* (*Gulaohua* 古老話), claim that it was the younger sister, which may again reflect the prominence of women in both Miao society and Repaying a Nuo Vow.⁸⁶

Rui Yifu and later Wen Yiduo 聞一多 (1899-1946)⁸⁷ identified this brother-sister couple as Lord Nuo and Mother Nuo, but the legend about them is also linked to the story of Fuxi 伏羲 and Nüwa 女媧 (Nügua). Before she became linked to Fuxi, N?wa originally appears to have been worshipped as an independent creator goddess

84 One such test involved rolling two stones down the sides of mountains to see if they would join at the bottom. Some accounts claim that the terms Eastern Mountain (Dongshan 東山) and Southern Mountain (南山) in Lord Nuo and Mother Nuo's titles refer to these two mountains. See also 李懷蓀's detailed study of these myths and their cultural significance entitled 〈五溪地域巫文化的變遷和儺神東山聖公、南山聖母〉, 《民俗曲藝》, 第106期 (1997), 頁97-166.

85 The motif of giving birth to a lump of flesh may have links to beliefs in China and the West about unusual beings having been born with the placenta or caul (for China, this would include deities like Li Nezha 李哪吒). Other deities, like the Monkey God (Sun Wukong 孫悟空) spring to life from round stones, which may also be related to the idea of *huntun* 混沌. In addition, the gourd frequently appears as a symbol for the womb. Highly stimulating studies of these phenomena include Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft & Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries*, translated by John & Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Norman J. Girardot, *Myth and Meaning in Early Taoism: The Theme of Chaos* (Hun-tun) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Rolf A. Stein, *The World in Miniature. Container Gardens and Dwellings in Far Eastern Religious Thought*, translated by Phyllis Brooks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

86 芮逸夫, 〈苗族的洪水故事與伏羲女媧的傳說〉, 頁156-168. An animated version of this story, prepared by the Institute of History & Philology, Academia Sinica (中央研究院歷史語言研究所), may be found at the following website: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEVjuix6710>. An English version has also been produced; see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_XSvtw5eds. See also 胡其瑞, 〈宗教祭儀與數位典藏的整合——以湘西苗族還儺願儀式為例〉, paper presented at the 2009 TELDAP International Conference. Taipei, February 23-27.

87 聞一多《伏羲考》(上海:上海古籍出版社, 2006). Wen originally published in 1940. A critique of this work may be found in Robin McNeal, "Constructing Myth in Modern China," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 71.3 (2012): 679-704.

associated with water and fertility, including during the “wearing the hairpin” (*ji* 笄) coming-of-age rites for young girls.⁸⁸ Her relationship to flooding is also apparent in the legend of Great Yu (DaYu 大禹), who tamed the raging waters, although such flood stories do not always mention the act of incest.⁸⁹ Tales about Nüwa only began to feature Fuxi during the Han dynasty, the earliest known written account of this couple’s incestuous acts following a flood appearing in a ninth-century work entitled *Duyi zhi* 獨異志 compiled by Li Kang 李亢. The entire flood myth seems a hybrid in its own right, a story of non-Han origins that merged with other legends and cults transmitted to Southwest China by Han Chinese. David Holm has aptly described this process as “classical Chinese myths grafted onto native material.”⁹⁰ This might explain why the main characters have Miao names and the legend tends to be performed in Miao songs like those contained in the *Gulaohua* 古老話.⁹¹

Both flood and incest myths as well as the worship of this brother-sister couple circulated throughout Western Hunan and other parts of Southwest China as early as the Ming dynasty (see Appendix 3, #8), and continue to do so today. The entire tradition is marked by considerable diversity however. For example, the deity who helps the brother-sister couple survive the flood is variously identified as Taishang laojun 太上老君, Taibai jinxing 太白金星 (the star god Venus), or the Bodhisattva Guanyin 觀音. The size of the family varies as well, with some versions describing as many as three to seven brothers who work together to trap the thunder god in order to feed his flesh to their gravely ill mother.⁹² Some versions of the flood myth

88 Nüwa 女媧’s links to fertility and water are also reminiscent of Linshui furen 臨水夫人; see Baptandier, *The Lady of Linshui*.

89 For more on Nüwa 女媧’s links to fertility and other aspects of the flood myth, see Mark Edward Lewis, *The Flood Myths of Early China* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), pp. 8-11, 111-125; Holm, *Killing a Buffalo for the Ancestors*, pp. 192-202. The significance of interactions between non-Han and Han cultural traditions is also explored in Tapp, *Sovereignty and Rebellion*, as well as Wolfram Eberhard, *The Local Cultures of South and East China, translated from the German by Alide Eberhard* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968).

90 Holm, *Killing a Buffalo for the Ancestors*, pp. 192-195. See also Victor H. Mair, “Southern Bottle-Gourd (*hulu* 葫蘆) Myths in China and their Appropriation by Taoism,” in *Zhongguo shenhua yu chuanshuo xueshu yantaohui* 中國神話與傳說學術研討會 (Taipei: Center for Chinese Studies, 1996) pp. 185-228.

91 石啟貴編著,《民國時期湘西苗族調查實錄——還雛願卷》,頁89-157。

92 花垣縣民間文學集成辦公室編,《中國民間故事集成-湖南卷-花垣縣資料本》(花垣縣民間文學集成辦公室,1986),頁5-11;鳳凰縣民間文學集成辦公室編,《中國民間故事集成-湖南卷-鳳凰縣資料本》(鳳凰縣民間文學集成辦公室,1987),頁3-11;保靖縣民間文學集成辦公室編,《中國民間故事集成-湖南卷-保靖縣資料本》(保靖縣民間文學集成辦公室,1990),頁1-5;懷化地區民間文學集成辦公室編,《中國民間故事集成-湖南卷-懷化地區分卷》(懷化地區民間文學集成辦公室,1989),頁14-26、30-34. One of the Fenghuang versions sounds suspiciously like

performed in Huayuan contain an additional element, namely the daughter of the Dragon King falling ill after being drenched in the flood waters, and not being healed until a Repaying a Nuo Vow is held, with the Dragon King inviting the Sister of the Flower Grove (Hualin zimei 花林子妹) and her lover Zhang Wulang 張五郎 (Zhang-Zhao Erlang 張趙二郎) to help preside over the rituals.⁹³ In other parts of Southwest China, the children's father is said to be none other than the Daoist Heavenly Master Zhang (Zhang Tianshi 張天師),⁹⁴ while versions collected by Samuel R. Clarke (1853-1946) during his years as a missionary among the Miao in Guizhou 貴州 refer to the invention of fire. Clarke notes that the elder brother is only referred to as "Fuxi" when the myth is recounted in Chinese, which suggests the importance of language issues in processes of trans-hybridity.⁹⁵

Despite such variation, the entire story fits a pattern of marriage and incest taboos expressed in flood myths worldwide, including the Judeo-Christian and Indian traditions,⁹⁶ but especially tales told throughout Southwest China and Southeast Asia, many of which feature gourds, tests, unusual flesh ball offspring, etc.⁹⁷ While the names of the protagonists (and the deities who aid them) in these stories differ considerably, there is nonetheless remarkable continuity in terms of concern with incestuous marriages, which in turn seems related to marriage networks and systems of surname and lineage exogamy such as those for Hulu Village described above. In his research on the Zhuang 壯/僮, David Holm has observed that these practices feature both "considerable Chinese influence" combined with a "non-Chinese Tai bedrock." Moreover, the data he has collected reveal that state pressure to enforce surname exogamy caused severe difficulties for wife-taking and wife-giving families, who ended up establishing a new system of lineage branches with distinctive surnames in order to avoid any possible appearance of incest.⁹⁸ Given that many

the temptation of Eve found in Genesis, but the fruit used is a peach, not an apple.

93 隆國賢, 〈花垣苗區還雛覓蹤〉。

94 張澤洪, 《文化傳播與儀式象徵——中國西南少數民族宗教與道教祭祀儀式比較研究》(成都:巴蜀書社, 2007)。

95 Samuel R. Clarke, *Among the Tribes in South-west China*, prologue by Nicholas Tapp (Hong Kong: Caravan Press, 2009 reprint of 1911 edition), pp. 17, 60-70. See also David C. Graham, *Folk Religion in Southwest China* (Washington: The Smithsonian Institute, 1961).

96 These are discussed in Lewis, *The Flood Myths of Early China*, pp. 1-15.

97 Dang Nghiem Van, "The Flood Myth and the Origins of Ethnic Groups in Southeast Asia," *Journal of American Folklore*, 106 (1993): 304-337. See also Holm, *Killing a Buffalo for the Ancestors*, pp. 173, 195, 197-198.

98 Holm, *Killing a Buffalo for the Ancestors*, pp. 178-182, 199-202, pp. 182 & 201. See also Ho Zhaohua, "Clothes to Dye For," pp. 341-347, 425-428.

flood myths refer to the invention of surnames for the offspring of the incestuous couple, while others claim that the flood itself was punishment for an incestuous relationship, it would seem reasonable to assume that the prevalence of such stories in local ritual traditions such as Repaying a Nuo Vow, which emphasize fertility and the family, reflects anxieties about marriage networks and gender relations, as well as the imposition of hegemonic values by the Chinese state.

Essential Features in the Historical Development of Repaying a Nuo Vow

As noted in the introduction, Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas are not indigenous to Western Hunan but rather a complex amalgam of Han Chinese and Miao religious traditions, with most of the personages portrayed during the dramatic performances also appearing in similar rituals and dramas throughout much of Southwest China. Regrettably, however, most previous scholarship has viewed the history of these rites from top-down and linear perspectives, treating them as outgrowths of the ancient Chinese Great Exorcism (Danuo 大傩). For example, Rui Yifu 芮逸夫's early research on the Repaying a Nuo Vow cited sources like the *Qinzhong suishiji* 秦中歲時記 by Li Nao 李淖 (fl. 880s), which contains references to Lunar New Year expulsion rituals with possible links to the Great Exorcism that featured Lord Nuo and Mother Nuo (*suichu Nuogong Nuomu* 歲除傩公傩母) as evidence of its Han Chinese origins.⁹⁹ In addition, Edward Davis maintains that the Great Exorcism spread from the Song court to the countryside, with the animal and demonic spirits of the classical rites being replaced by various martial deities (most notably *yuanshuai* 元帥).¹⁰⁰ Such arguments are not without merit, but tend to be based on the loose use of terms like “Nuo dramas” (*Nuoxi* 傩戲), which have become all-encompassing exonyms for a wide range of Han and non-Han traditions.¹⁰¹ A

99 芮逸夫, 〈苗族的洪水故事與伏羲女媧的傳說〉, 頁 168-169。

100 Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001).

101 These various types of ritual dramas are examined in numerous issues (including special issues) of the journal 《民俗曲藝》, as well as the 86-volume 《民俗曲藝叢書》. Thoughtful discussions of the term “Nuo drama” include Sylvie Beaud, “Masques en parade: Étude d’une identité à la jonction du politique et du rituel: l’exemple du Théâtre de Guan Suo [關索] (Yunnan, Chine)” (Ph.D. thesis, Université de Paris-Ouest, Nanterre, 2012); Regina Llamas, *On the Origins of Chinese Theater: From Its Roots in Ancient Modes of Performance to the Play “Top Graduate Zhang Xie”* (Unpublished manuscript). As we will see below, similar problems have afflicted terms such as “Meishan culture” (Meishan wenhua 梅山文化) and “Meishan religion” (Meishan jiao 梅山教).

larger flaw is that these views overlook the ways in which the development of rituals like the Great Exorcism was shaped by the reverberation between state, Daoist, Buddhist, and local traditions.¹⁰² Such reverberation also marked the relationship between Han and non-Han religious traditions, a process brilliantly described by the late Judith Magee Boltz (1947-2013) in her article entitled “Not by the Seal of Office Alone.”¹⁰³ The result of these patterns of interaction is what we see today, with Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas retaining some exorcistic features but being largely centered on family and fertility, performed mainly in local dialect but also having Miao songs and dialogues, and featuring deities that blend elements of both Han Chinese and Miao cultures. One clear example is Lord Nuo and Mother Nuo, deities mentioned in Song sources for north China that in Western Hunan (and other parts of Southwest China) became merged with local flood and incest myths as well as fertility cults.

Data collected by Zhang Yinghe 張應和 and Li Huaishun 李懷蓀 on the transmission patterns of Repaying a Nuo Vow in Western Hunan indicates that these rituals and dramas arrived in the region during the Kangxi 康熙 and Qianlong 乾隆 eras, a time when the Qing dynasty was actively extending its rule and Han settlement was growing at a rapid pace.¹⁰⁴ Their research also demonstrates that Repaying a Nuo Vow initially spread from east to west along the Yuan River (Yuanjiang 沅江), starting in Yuanling 沅陵, Luxi 瀘溪, and Mayang 麻陽, progressing from there along the You River (Youshui 酉水) into the Tujia areas of Longshan 龍山 and

102 See my review of Davis' book in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 62.2 (December 2002): 449-462.

103 Judith M. Boltz, “Not by the Seal of Office Alone: New Weapons in the Battle with the Supernatural,” in Patricia B. Ebrey & Peter N. Gregory, eds., *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), pp. 241-305.

104 For overviews of Western Hunan's historical development during the Qing, see Donald S. Sutton, “Violence and Ethnicity on a Qing Colonial Frontier: Customary and Statutory Law in the 18th Century Miao Pale,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 37.1 (2003): 41-80; Sutton, “Ethnicity and the Miao Frontier in the Eighteenth Century,” in Pamela Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton, eds., *Empire at the Margins*, pp. 190-228; Sutton, “Myth Making on an Ethnic Frontier.” See also Daniel McMahon, “New Order on China's Hunan Miao Frontier, 1796-1812,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 9.1 (2008): 1-26; McMahon, “Geomancy and Walled Fortification in Late Eighteenth Century China,” *Journal of Military History*, 76.2 (2012): 373-393. There is also the pioneering work of Xie Xiaohui 謝曉輝, including her doctoral thesis and related results such as 〈苗疆的開發與地方神祇的重塑〉, 《歷史人類學學刊》, 第6卷, 第1-2期 (2008), 頁111-146, as well as more recent research like “From Woman's Fertility to Masculine Authority.” The work of Tan Biyou 譚必友, is also well worth consulting, especially his book 《清代湘西苗疆多民族社區的近代重構》(北京: 民族出版社, 2007).

Yongshun 永順, as well as places with mixed populations such as Baojing 保靖 and Guzhang 古丈. The transmission of these rites continued along the Wu River (Wuxi 武溪) and Mayang River (Mayanghe 麻陽河) before arriving in the core Miao regions of Jishou 吉首, Fenghuang 鳳凰, and Huayuan 花垣. In areas settled relatively early and by large numbers of Han Chinese migrants, Repaying a Nuo Vow remained largely unchanged, with performances nearly exclusively based on Han ritual texts. However, areas where fewer Han migrants chose to settle (such as Huayuan) tended to be characterized by a greater prevalence of Miao culture, and the processes of trans-hybridity were more likely to occur there. In these areas, the introduction of new ritual traditions, combined with unexpected adjustments and modifications thereto, resulted in Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas that blended features of both Miao and Han religious traditions.¹⁰⁵

Gazetteer accounts can be quite useful for tracing the spread and development of Repaying a Nuo Vow across Western Hunan. By the early eighteenth century, a number of gazetteers testify to the widespread popularity of these rites. One of the earliest records may be found in the 1705 edition of the *Yuanling County Gazetteer* (*Yuanling xianzhi* 沅陵縣誌), which was subsequently reproduced in the 1765 edition of the *Chenzhou Prefectural Gazetteer* (*Chenzhou fuzhi* 辰州府志) (see Appendix 3, #9). This text emphasizes the importance of local specialists (derogatively referred to as *wu* 巫) as well as the rituals and dramas they performed, particularly those involving the ancient legend of Woman Mengjiang (Mengjiangnü 孟姜女). There are also references to the “ludicrous” nature of these performances (*huangdan bujing* 荒誕不經). Perhaps of greatest value is a work entitled “Song of the Divine Shaman” (Shenwuxing 神巫行) by the education official (*jiaoyu* 教諭) Xiang Zhaolin 向兆麟 (a Hubei native and 1686 provincial graduate [*juren* 舉人]), which features vivid depictions of the Repaying a Nuo Vow and the benefits these rituals and dramas could have for the families who sponsored them. Similar but shorter accounts are preserved in works like the 1745 *Yongshun County Gazetteer* (*Yongshun xianzhi* 永順縣志) and the 1755 *Luxi County Gazetteer* (*Luxi xianzhi* 瀘溪縣志), the former

105 張應和, 〈苗族還儺願源流考〉, 《吉首大學學報(社會科學版)》, 12.4 (1991), 頁97-104.

This essay has also been reprinted in 周明阜, 張應和, 謝心寧編著, 《沅湘儺辭匯覽》(香港: 香港國際展望出版社, 1992), 頁400-413, and 張應和, 《苗鄉探奇》(成都: 四川民族出版社, 1994), 頁119-130. See also 李懷蓀, 〈湘西儺戲調查報告〉, 頁274-278; 李懷蓀, 〈五溪地域巫文化的變遷和儺神東山聖公、南山聖母〉, 頁102-110. For transmission routes among the Tujia 土家, see 雷翔, 〈還壇神探源〉, 《湖北民族學院學報(社會科學版)》, 13.4 (1995), 頁40-41, 44; 李翹宏, 〈土王的子民——中國土家族的歷史與文化研究〉(國立清華大學博士論文, 2008).

source noting that Repaying a Nuo Vow had been transmitted to Yongshun from Chenzhou 辰州 (see Appendix 3, #10). In addition, the chapter on customs (*fengsu* 風俗) in the 1765 *Chenzhou Prefectural Gazetteer* confirms the central place of the family in Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas, as well as the key roles of the specialists who performed them (see Appendix 3, #11).¹⁰⁶

Repaying a Nuo Vow enjoyed continued popularity during the nineteenth century. For example, the 1871 edition of the *Baojing County Gazetteer* (*Baojing xianzhi* 保靖縣志) reveals the significance of Lord Nuo and Mother Nuo during these performances, stating that “two images of the Nuo Lords (a man and a woman) must be set up in the central hall of the house during the sacrifices” (*ji shi bi she Nuowang nannü er xiang yu tingzhong* 祭時必設儺王男女二像於庭中). In addition, the 1877 edition of the *Qianzhou Sub-prefectural Gazetteer* (*Qianzhou tingzhi* 乾州廳志) points to the family’s key place in these rites, the apparently coarse nature of local dramatic performances, and the existence of separate rites for repaying vows to the Heavenly Kings (Tianwang 天王). The description of Repaying a Nuo Vow in the 1878 edition of the *Longshan County Gazetteer* (*Longshan xianzhi* 龍山縣志) is noteworthy for mentioning the use of masks as well as stressing the importance of exorcistic rites during local performances (see Appendix 3, #2, 12-13).

We have more detailed knowledge of Repaying a Nuo Vow during the Republican era due to a wider range of sources, including surveys conducted by governments officials and ethnographers, as well as the writings of a Fenghuang native, Shen Congwen 沈從文 (1902-1988). Jeffrey C. Kinkley’s research reveals that by the twentieth century Repaying a Nuo Vow had developed into an integral component of what he refers to as “Sino-Miao religion,” serving as “a multipurpose religious ceremony having roots in several strands of the Chinese and Miao religious traditions.”¹⁰⁷ Other accounts note that, as late as 1929, the military leader Chen Quzhen 陳渠珍 (1882-1952) sponsored a mammoth seven-day performance, perhaps as a means of enhancing his legitimacy.¹⁰⁸ In addition to these sources, there are also reports by trained ethnographers, including Sheng Xiangzi 盛襄子, which

106 李懷蓀, 〈湘西儺戲調查報告〉, 頁278-279。

107 Jeffrey C. Kinkley, “Shen Ts’ung-wen’s Vision of Republican China” (Ph.D. thesis. Harvard University, 1977), pp. 28, 298-300; Kinkley, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen* (Stanford University Press, 1987). See also Edward A. McCord, “Ethnic Revolt, State-Building and Patriotism in Republican China: The 1937 West Hunan Miao Abolish-Military-Land-Resist-Japan Uprising,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 45.6 (2011): 1499-1533. Western Hunan’s local cultures are also described in the writings of the missionary Chen Xinchuan 陳心傳 (1893-1971), 《五溪苗族古今生活集》(長沙: 嶽麓書社, 2012; originally published in 1937).

108 李懷蓀, 〈湘西儺戲調查報告〉, 頁278。

contains detailed accounts of local customs, including judicial rituals enacted in Heavenly Kings temples and Repaying a Nuo Vow performances.¹⁰⁹ Additional data on Repaying a Nuo Vow may be found in the above-mentioned writings of Academia Sinica scholars Ling Chunsheng 凌純聲 and Rui Yifu 芮逸夫, as well as their research assistant and local elite Shi Qigui 石啟貴.

While the ethnographic data for this paper derive from a particular performance of Repaying a Nuo Vow in Huayuan County, it is imperative to recognize that similar rituals and dramas flourish throughout Western Hunan today, not only among the Miao 苗 but also the Tujia 土家 and Han Chinese, in places ranging from Dayong 大庸 (Zhangjiajie 張家界) in the north to Fenghuang 鳳凰 in the southwest, and encompassing areas with mixed Miao-Tujia populations such as Baojing 保靖 and Guzhang 古丈.¹¹⁰ Perhaps even more importantly though, hybrid rituals blending features of Daoism and indigenous traditions are a key facet of the entire religious culture of Southwest China, which not only includes the Miao, Tujia, and Han, but also the Yao 瑤, Zhuang 壯/僮, and other ethnic groups. Similar practices in Central Hunan (Xiangzhong 湘中)¹¹¹ include the ritual drama known as “Han Xin 韓信’s Revenge” (Huan Duchang/chang yuan 還都猖/昌願), which has been studied in detail by Patrice Fava.¹¹² Repaying a Nuo Vow is also performed in Tujia 土家 areas of Hubei 湖北 bordering Western Hunan, most notably Enshi 恩施, especially the area covering today’s Laifeng 來鳳 and Xuan’en 宣恩 counties. Some late-Qing accounts claim that these rites were transmitted to Hubei by migrants from Hunan during the middle of the eighteenth century, which is supported by the consistent emphasis on the family’s role in staging Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas, as well as

109 盛襄子, 《湘西苗區之設治及其現狀》(重慶: 獨立出版社, 1943); see also the reprinted version in 張永國編, 《民國年間苗族論文集》(貴州省民族研究所, 1983), 頁47-71. See also 石宏規, 《湘西苗族考察紀要》(長沙: 飛熊印務公司, 1933). For more on Republican-era surveys, see Tong Lam [林東], *A Passion for Facts: Social Surveys and the Construction of the Chinese Nation-State, 1900-1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

110 周明阜等, 《凝固的文明》。See also 石壽貴, 〈儺祭概述〉, 《石壽貴文選》(未刊稿, 2010); 石維剛、張應和編, 《感受邊城》, 收入《湘西民族民俗文化叢書》, 第10冊(北京: 中國民族大學出版社, 2009); 《湘西苗族百年實錄》, 2冊(北京: 方志出版社, 2008)。

111 See especially the papers by Alain Arrault, Michela Bussotti, Mark Meulenbeld, David Mozina, and James Robson in the special issue entitled “Religion et société locale: Études interdisciplinaires sur la région centrale du Hunan (Interdisciplinary Studies on the Central Region of Hunan),” edited by Alain Arrault, *Cahiers d’Extrême Asie*, 19 (2010; but actually published in the Fall of 2012).

112 Patrice Fava, *Aux portes du ciel: La statuaire taoïste du Hunan*, pp. 98-109. See also his documentary entitled “Han Xin’s Revenge: A Daoist Mystery” (École Française d’Extrême Orient & CNRS Images, 2005).

mention of deities like Lord Nuo and Lady Nuo plus the Heavenly Kings and the importance of Woman Meng dramas (see Appendix 3, #14-16).¹¹³ Like similarities have been noted for Guangxi 廣西¹¹⁴ and Guizhou 貴州 as well (see Appendix 3, #17).¹¹⁵ Illustrations of Repaying a Nuo Vow regularly appear in late imperial Miao albums. In open acknowledgement of cultural interaction, the poem accompanying one such image includes the lines “The Tu (indigenous) people have gradually assimilated the customs of the Chinese, Today who knows what their costumes are like?” (*türen jian bei Huafeng ran, jinri yiguan fu ruohe?* 土人漸被華風染，近日衣冠復若何？).¹¹⁶

The spatial distribution of Repaying a Nuo Vow may be related to the development of different ritual traditions, including those frequently referred to as “Lüshan Teachings” (Lüshanjiao 閩山教) and “Meishan Teachings” (Meishanjiao 梅山教). While I am highly cautious about the over-wide application of such labels, I do concur with David Faure’s observation about the need to consider the importance of transportation networks used by merchants, migrants, and the military in the spread of ritual knowledge.¹¹⁷ Similar views have also been formulated by scholars like Ye Mingsheng 葉明生, Li Huaisun 李懷蓀, Hu Tiancheng 胡天成, Zhou Jiangang 周建剛, and Huang Jianxiang 黃建興, with Ye and Huang in particular providing highly stimulating analyses of the similarities between different ritual traditions that spread from Fujian 福建 to Hunan 湖南. In addition, both Ye and Li note that many commonalities are apparently due to migration networks among Fujian and Jiangxi natives that included religious specialists, who might be traced to the Shenxiao 神

113 田國興，〈試論武陵「儺愿」之發生——兼論北方儺與南方儺的關係〉，《絲綢之路文化與中華民族文學國際學術研討會專輯》，第22期（2012），頁17-21。林河，〈儺史——中國儺文化概論〉（臺北：東大圖書，1994）；袁豔梅編，〈古儺史料——湖北方志卷〉（北京：中央民族大學出版，2003）。

114 Holm, “Redemption of Vows,” pp. 856-857.

115 Kristofer Schipper, “A Play about Ritual: The ‘Rites of Transmission of Office’ of the Taoist Masters of Guizhou (South West China),” in Dick van der Meij, ed., *India and Beyond: Aspects of Literature, Meaning, Ritual and Thought: Essays in Honour of Frits Staal* (London: Kegan Paul, 1997), pp. 471-496.

116 Nicholas Tapp & Don Cohn, *The Tribal Peoples of Southwest China. Chinese Views of the Other Within*, with the assistance of Frances Wood (Bangkok: White Lotus Co. Ltd., 2003), pp. 26-110. See also Laura Hostetler & David Deal, ed. & trans., *The Art of Ethnography: A Chinese “Miao Album”* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006); Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

117 科大衛 [David Faure], 〈從禮儀標籤到地方制度的比較——本項目的一種總結〉，發表在中國社會的歷史人類學中期學術會議，香港中文大學，2011年8月25日至27日

霄 and Tianxin zhengfa 天心正法 traditions of the Song dynasty.¹¹⁸ And, if one adopts an even broader perspective, there is no reason not to consider possible reverberations between Chinese and Southeast Asian cultures, especially in the case of the flood stories described above.¹¹⁹ As Kao Yaning 高雅寧 points out in her study of the Nong Zhigao 儂智高 story in Zhuang religious culture, such phenomena “exhibit a dialectic between experiential dimensions that are near (Southeast Asian cultural structure) and those that are distant (the Chinese state).”¹²⁰

In line with the historical processes proposed above, the rites I have been observing and reading about exhibit clear patterns of diversity while also possessing a remarkable degree of coherence. As we can see from Appendix 6, there is significant variation in the number of rituals and dramas performed in the course of a single Repaying a Nuo Vow, as well as the order in which such rites are performed, the names used to label them, etc. At the same time, a number of key themes run through each performance: the need to fulfill one’s vows, the power of deities (especially female ones) to expel demonic forces, the cardinal role of female fertility in preserving the family line, and the pervasive presence of humor, including frequent and overt sexual innuendo.

Another issue related to spatial distribution involves the extent to which rites like Repaying a Nuo Vow adhere to Daoist ritual structures. As Terry Kleeman properly points out, “A cursory examination of the history of Daoism shows that non-Chinese ethnic groups have played a significant role in Daoism from the beginning, that Daoism remains an influential religion among ethnic minorities within and outside China..., and that archaic forms of Daoism survive among non-Chinese peoples.”¹²¹ This point has been decisively demonstrated by classic studies of the Yao 瑶 by Michel Strickmann, Jacques Lemoine, and Shiratori Yoshiro 白鳥

¹¹⁸ My information here is drawn from the following three conference papers: 葉明生, 〈共生文化圈的巫道文化形態再探討——從張五郎信仰探討閩山教與梅山教關係〉; 胡天成, 〈重慶的“還霄願”祭祀儀式〉; 周建剛, 〈梅山教淵源略探——試論宋代新符籙道教對梅山教之影響〉. All were presented at the 海峽兩岸宗教與區域文化暨梅山宗教文化研討會, 長沙、南嶽、新化, 2010年7月3日至9日; See also 李懷蓀, 〈梅山神張五郎探略〉, 《民族論壇》, 4 (1997): 50-54; 李懷蓀, 〈五溪地域巫文化的變遷和儺神東山聖公、南山聖母〉, 頁107-110; 黃建興, 〈中國南方法師儀式傳統比較研究〉(香港中文大學博士論文, 2013)。

¹¹⁹ Holm, *Killing a Buffalo for the Ancestors*, p. 195; Lewis, *The Flood Myths of Early China*, pp. 109, 123-124.

¹²⁰ Kao Yaning, “Singing a Hero in Ritual” pp. iii, 49.

¹²¹ Terry Kleeman, “Ethnic Identity and Daoist Identity in Traditional China,” in Livia Kohn & Harold Roth, eds., *Daoist Identity: History, Lineage, and Ritual* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), pp. 23-38, esp. p. 24.

芳郎,¹²² as well as more recent work by scholars like Eli Alberts.¹²³ Be that as it may, there is a tendency to view Daoism's interaction with non-Han groups from a top-down perspective, most notably portraying it as a "civilizing agent" that helped promote processes of sinification (Hanhua 漢化). Such arguments downplay the extent to which Daoism was itself shaped by the indigenous traditions it encountered (not to mention those it grew out of). This problem is apparent in recent Chinese scholarship that tends to either label non-Han religious traditions using derogatory terms like "shamanistic religion" (*wujiao* 巫教) or "ghost religion" (*guijiao* 鬼教), or else classify them according to various categories using the term "teachings" (Mayangjiao 麻陽教, Henanjiao 河南教, Hunanjiao 湖南教, etc.) that have little meaning on the ground.¹²⁴ Another problem occurs when one attempts to identify disparate groups of ritual specialists as belonging to a single Meishan 梅山 religious tradition.¹²⁵ As David Holm has observed, the use of Han Chinese terms to label non-Han religious traditions often conceals local diversity under the panoply of some sort of sinocentric unity, and neglects the fact that such diversity casts considerable doubt on claims about Daoism's role in advancing Chinese civilization.¹²⁶ One possible solution might involve viewing these disparate traditions using a broader and more neutral exonym such as "Shijiao" 師教 (literally, Teachings of the [Ritual] Masters), especially since this term is also used as an autonym in some parts of Southwest China.¹²⁷ The methodological soundness of such an approach has yet to be adequately assessed.

Even in instances where distinct ritual traditions have been identified, there

122 See for example Michel Strickmann, "The Tao among the Yao: Taoism and the Sinification of South China," in 《歴史における民眾と文化——酒井忠夫先生古稀祝賀記念論集》(東京: 國書刊行會, 1982), pp. 23-30; Jacques Lemoine, *Yao Ceremonial Paintings* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1982); 白鳥芳郎編, 《僛人文書》(東京: 講談社, 1975).

123 Eli Alberts, *A History of Daoism and the Yao People of South China* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2007); Alberts, "Commemorating the Ancestors' Merit: Myth, Schema, and History in the 'Charter of Emperor Ping [評皇券牒]," *Taiwan Journal of Anthropology* [臺灣人類學刊], 9.1 (2011): 19-65. See also Ralph A. Litzinger, *Other Chinas: The Yao and the Politics of National Belonging* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); 陳玖姁, 《從命名談廣西田林盤古瑤人的構成與生命的來源》。

124 Examples of these tendencies may be found in 張澤洪, 《文化傳播與儀式象徵——中國西南少數民族宗教與道教祭祀儀式比較研究》。For more on the early overlap of Daoism and shamanic traditions, see 林富士, 《中國中古時期的宗教與醫療》(臺北: 聯經出版公司, 2008)。

125 This topic is also discussed in 呂永昇, 〈湘中「梅山」道教的儀式與演變趨勢〉, 發表在「正一與地方道教儀式」研討會, 金門喜來樓, 2012年9月22日至23日。

126 Holm, "The Exemplar of Filial Piety and the End of the Ape-men," pp. 34, 63-64.

127 See for example 李懷蓀, 〈五溪巫風與「禳菩薩」〉, 頁263; 李懷蓀, 〈五溪地域巫文化的變遷和儺神東山聖公、南山聖母〉, 頁116-125; 黃建興, 〈中國南方法師儀式傳統比較研究〉。

remain questions about the extent to which so-called “Daoist” beliefs and practices have actually influenced non-Han peoples. In the case of Central Hunan, while there has been interaction between various ritual traditions, most exhibit vivid Daoist characteristics, being performed by specialists known as *shigong* 師公 or *fashi* 法師 who identify themselves as Orthodox Unity Daoists (Zhengyi *daoshi* 正一道士) or Yuanhuang ritual masters (Yuanhuang *fashi* 元皇法師) or sometimes both.¹²⁸ This stands in marked contrast to the *badaizha* of Western Hunan, who seem to have been less profoundly influenced by Daoist traditions. While the texts and altars of some Western Hunan *badaizha* bear the characters Yuanhuang 元皇, and some of their altar paintings feature both Yuanhuang and Orthodox Unity deities, the specialists we interviewed in Huayuan do not identify themselves as being affiliated with either of these movements, stressing instead the importance of master-discipline transmission networks.

In the case of Repaying a Nuo Vow, it is essential to recall that local rites not only preserve Daoist beliefs and practices but also numerous elements of Miao culture, including Miao songs and the bloody sacrificial offerings described in my field report as well as the ethnographic writings of earlier scholars. In the case of the rituals we witnessed, perhaps the most striking image was the piles of paper money daubed with the animals’ blood and buckets of the same blood placed on the altar in front of images the Three Pure Ones. Such practices would be anathema to elite Daoist practitioners who strove to reform communal practices by insisting that the gods (including the Three Pure Ones) be worshipped with vegetarian offerings, and even ritual masters who choose to identify themselves as Daoists would generally reserve such offerings for the spirit soldiers under their command, not exalted celestial beings.¹²⁹ All this suggests that the Repaying a Nuo Vow as staged among the Miao of Western Hunan may help us reconsider the question of interaction between local traditions and Daoism, as well as what we term the Daoist liturgical

¹²⁸ Patrice Fava, 2013. *Aux portes du ciel: La statuaire taoïste du Hunan*. See also Alain Arrault, “La société locale vue à travers la statuaire domestique du Hunan,” *Cahiers d’Extrême Asie*, 19 (2010): 47-132; David Mozina, “Daubing Lips with Blood and Drinking Elixirs with the Celestial Lord Yin Jiao: The Role of Thunder Deities in Daoist Ordination in Contemporary Hunan,” *Cahiers d’Extrême Asie*, 19 (2010): 269-303; James Robson, “Among Mountains and Rivers: Tracking the Spread of Religion in Central Hunan,” *Cahiers d’Extrême Asie*, 19 (2010): 9-45.

¹²⁹ Terry Kleeman, “Licentious Cults and Bloody Victuals: Sacrifice, Reciprocity, and Violence in Traditional China,” *Asia Major*, 7.1 (1994), 185-211; Paul R. Katz, “Daoism and Local Cults -- A Case Study of the Cult of Marshal Wen,” in Kwang-ching Liu and Richard Shek, eds., *Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), pp. 172-208. See also Katz, “Trial by Power”.

framework. As James Robson pointed out in a recent conference paper, one standard narrative of the relationship between Daoism and local communities involves that religion's links to a liturgical framework that enables it to act as a civilizing force (see for example the works on Yao Daoism cited above).¹³⁰ In the case of Western Hunan, however, the data on the ground suggest less the cultural hegemony of an imported Daoist tradition but rather the reverberation between Daoism and a wide range of diverse local traditions. While these rites exhibit some Daoist influence, they also contain elements of this region's Miao culture, which in turn suggests that Daoism experienced its own processes of indigenization, albeit exhibiting significant variation depending on the extent to which the local culture of the area it had spread to had been molded by Han Chinese beliefs and practices.¹³¹

Conclusion: Ritual reverberation and trans-hybridity

The data on Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas that I have been able to collect so far point to the significance of trans-hybridity as a means of analyzing the interaction between Miao and Han Chinese religious cultures. Both the historical and ethnographic evidence presented here reveal that the spread of Repaying a Nuo Vow is the result of continual reverberation between different ethnic groups and their cultural traditions, with all actors involved in these processes making an impact on their development. I maintain that these processes of transmission and reception feature both translation (deliberate attempts at modifying their contents) and hybridity (inadvertent actions with unintended consequences), hence the expression trans-hybridity. It is also essential to note that processes of trans-hybridity occurring in these areas were in large part due to local traditions adapting in the face of outside cultural forms, both adopting (re-employing in Certeau's terminology) Han Chinese rituals and incorporating them into indigenous ones.

Zhang Yinghe 張應和 views Repaying a Nuo Vow as a “new blend of Miao and Han cultures” (*Miao-Han wenhua de xin ronghe* 苗漢文化的新融合),¹³² pointing out that, “It is not a primordial form of Miao shamanic culture but the product of process of interpenetration, merging, absorption, and reconstruction on the part of both Miao shamanic and Daoist cultures” (*bushi danyi yuanshengtai Miaowu wenhua, er*

¹³⁰ James Robson, “Manuscripts from the Margins: On the Historical and Religious Dimensions of the Central Hunan Region,” paper presented at the 「邊陲社會與國家建構」研討會。

¹³¹ 李懷蓀, 〈五溪地域巫文化的變遷和儺神東山聖公、南山聖母〉, 頁116-125; 張應和, 〈苗族還儺願源流考〉, 頁100-101。

¹³² 張應和, 〈苗族還儺願源流考〉, 頁103-104。

shi Miaowu wenhua yu Daojiao wenhua huxiang shentou, ronghui, xishou, chongzu de chanwu 不是單一的原生態苗巫文化，而是苗巫文化與道教文化互相滲透、融匯、吸收、重組的產物。¹³³ Apart from the rather loose use of the term “shaman” (*wu* 巫), Zhang’s assessment is largely on the mark and echoes ideas expressed by Rui Yifu in his classic study of Western Hunan’s flood myths, which he referred to as a “blend of Han and Miao [cultures]” (*Han-Miao tonghua* 漢苗同化).¹³⁴ In other words, the reverberation between Miao and Han cultures as seen in Repaying a Nuo Vow appears to have resulted from both willful and unintentional forms of interaction, thereby conforming to the definition of trans-hybridity presented here. Such trans-hybridity can also be seen in Miao songs. Some, which can be sung in Miao, tell the story of the flood myth, but others that are invariably sung in local dialect contain overt anti-Miao sentiments, including lines reading “When the five Miao surnames rose in rebellion, there was no peace for the people and deities failed to be efficacious” (*wuxing Miaozu duo zuoluan, renjian bu’an shen buling* 五姓苗族多作亂，人間不安神不靈).¹³⁵

Similar patterns of adopting and adapting elements of Han Chinese culture may be found in other parts of Southwest China, reflecting what David Holm describes as “pervasive cultural code switching and complex patterns of mutual encapsulation.”¹³⁶ Further evidence in the work of Ho Zhaohua shows that, “Shidong Miao time contains elements from the Han calendar, but the two are not simply fused into one; elements of Han culture have been transformed and integrated into Shidong Miao cultural logic.”¹³⁷ One might also consider these issues in light of John Shepherd’s distinction between acculturation (adopting customs from another group) and assimilation (identifying with another group).¹³⁸ Such patterns are closely linked to issues of language and the reverberation between Han and Non-Han

133 Personal communication, June 1, 2012. The full communication reads as follows: “苗族的還儺愿儀式，不是單一的原生態苗巫文化，而是苗巫文化與道教文化互相滲透、融匯、吸收、重組的產物，它是一個典型的苗巫文化與道教文化的複合體，是苗巫文化和道教文化融合的結晶，二者缺一不可。”

134 芮逸夫，〈苗族的洪水故事與伏羲女媧的傳說〉，頁163-164. Additional analysis of the hybrid features expressed in local flood myths may be found in 李懷蓀，〈五溪地域巫文化的變遷和儺神東山聖公、南山聖母〉，頁97-98, 110-116.

135 麻成志，〈論儺神和三天王〉，收入《苗族歷史討論會論文集》（湘西土家族苗族自治州民族事務委員會，1983），頁575-583, esp. 580.

136 Holm, “The Tao among the Zhuang,” p. 387. See also Holm, “Exemplar of Filial Piety,” pp. 34, 64; Kao Yaning, “Singing a Hero in Ritual,” p. 39; Tapp, *The Hmong of China*, pp. 151, 153-154, 165-166.

137 Ho Zhaohua, “Clothes to Dye For,” p. 135.

138 John Shepherd, *Statecraft and Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600-1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 362-364.

traditions. While in Western Hunan Repaying a Nuo Vow rituals and dramas tend to be performed almost exclusively using local dialect, they also retain deities and stories that represent the preservation of indigenous traditions, while the flood myth can be recited in either Miao or local dialect, depending on the needs of the patrons and/or performers.¹³⁹ Similarly, the Zhuang perform the roles of local deities using indigenous rather than Han song modes. Thus while Chinese figures are included in local folklore, indigenous figures also end up being absorbed into the mainstream of Chinese history.¹⁴⁰ In the end, it often proves difficult to tease out exactly who copied whom.

Much work remains to be done, but if successful, research on trans-hybridity may be able to shed light on questions of interest to a wide range of scholars. One such issue involves the ways in which the contemporary Chinese state and local actors attempt to manipulate religious traditions in order to define (or redefine) ethnic identity.¹⁴¹ While the authorities continue to be concerned about the revival of what they label “superstition” (*mixin* 迷信), local elites work to have their religious traditions recognized as forms of “intangible cultural heritage” (*fei wuzhi wenhua yichan* 非物質文化遺產) so they can help attract tourists and stimulate economic development. This transforms the image of the frontier from a place of danger to a land of wonder.¹⁴² The rituals and especially the dramas associated with Repaying a Nuo Vow have in fact become increasingly legitimized, beginning with state-sponsored performances, conferences, and publication projects during the 1980s and 1990s. Present-day staging of local rituals under the rubric of intangible cultural

139 李懷蓀, 〈五溪地域巫文化的變遷和儺神東山聖公、南山聖母〉, 頁110-111. See also Tapp, *The Hmong of China*, pp. 151, 152, 157, 165.

140 Kao Yaning, “Singing a Hero in Ritual,” pp. 36, 49-50.

141 Thomas S. Mullaney, “Ethnic Classification Writ Large: The 1954 Yunnan Province Ethnic Classification Project and its Foundations in Republican-Era Taxonomic Thought,” *China Information*, 18.2 (2004): 207-241; Nicholas Tapp, “The Han Joker in the Pack: Some Issues of Culture and Identity from the Minzu Literature,” in Thomas S. Mullaney, ed. *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation and Identity of China's Majority* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), pp. 147-170.

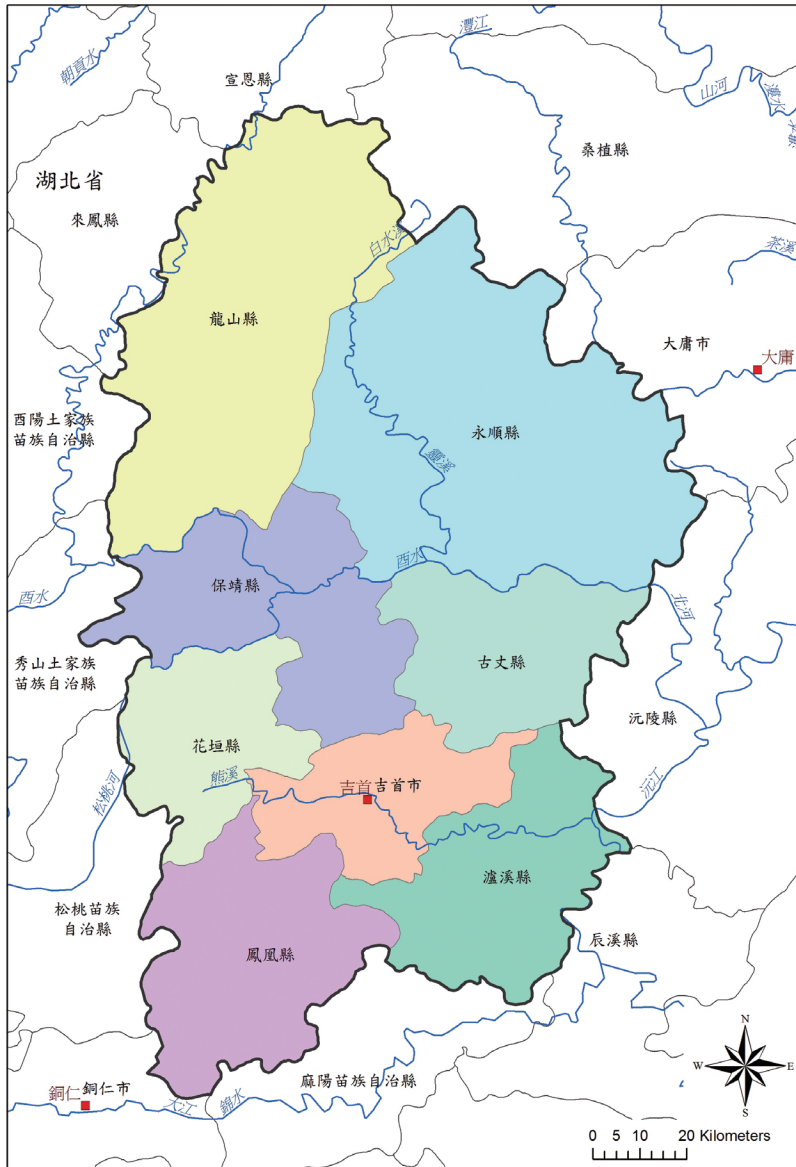
142 Louisa Schein, *Minority Rules: The Miao and the Feminine in China's Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Li Lan, “The Changing Role of the Popular Religion of Nuo (儺) in Modern Chinese Politics,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 45.5 (2011): 1289-1311; Litzinger, *Other Chinas*, pp. 190-211. For a thoughtful and broad consideration of these phenomena, see Tim Oakes and Donald S. Sutton, eds., *Faiths on Display: Religion, Tourism, and the Chinese State* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010). See also Robson, “Manuscripts from the Margins,” as well as 王明珂, 〈由方志到民族誌〉, 發表在「邊陲社會與國家建構」研討會。

heritage seems to augur well for their preservation long term.¹⁴³

Another key issue for future consideration is the performative aspect of ritual, particularly the ways in which those like Repaying a Nuo Vow can provide an arena where people try to cope with historical changes that shape their lives and the fate of their communities, or where they can negotiate their place in existing social structures.¹⁴⁴ Such performances engage in selective construction of the past via contemporary concerns, especially as a way to cognitively navigate the present. As we have seen, Repaying a Nuo Vow figures prominently in the formulation of cultural categories, particularly those based on indigenous value systems that center on family and locale. As a result, the performance of these rituals and dramas regularly gives voice to concerns that are integral to the perpetuation of the family, including fertility, marriage networks, incestuous relationships, gender roles, etc. All of this suggests that observing Repaying a Nuo Vow can help us gather valuable clues about manifold facets of cultural life that mark the historical development of local communities.

¹⁴³ 胡健國，〈綜述〉，《湖南地方劇種志叢書（二）》，頁486-487；李懷蓀，〈湘西儺戲調查報告〉，頁291-292。It is essential to recall that the performances of the 1980s and 1990s were staged for the exclusive viewing of scholars and officials, with nearly all ritual features being excised.

¹⁴⁴ James Wilkerson, "Performance as a Mechanism for Social Change," in James Wilkerson and Robert Parkin, eds., *Modalities of Change: The Interface of Tradition and Modernity in East Asia* (New York: Berghahn, 2012), pp. 225-240. See also Kao Yaning, "Singing a Hero in Ritual," pp. 16, 50.



Map 1. Xiangxi 湘西 (Original map may be found in the文化大學地理學系, digitized by 中央研究院人社中心地圖與遙測影像數位典藏計畫.)

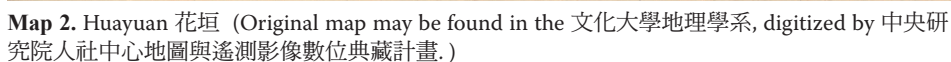




Figure 1. Nuo altar 儺壇 (Photograph by 康詩瑀)

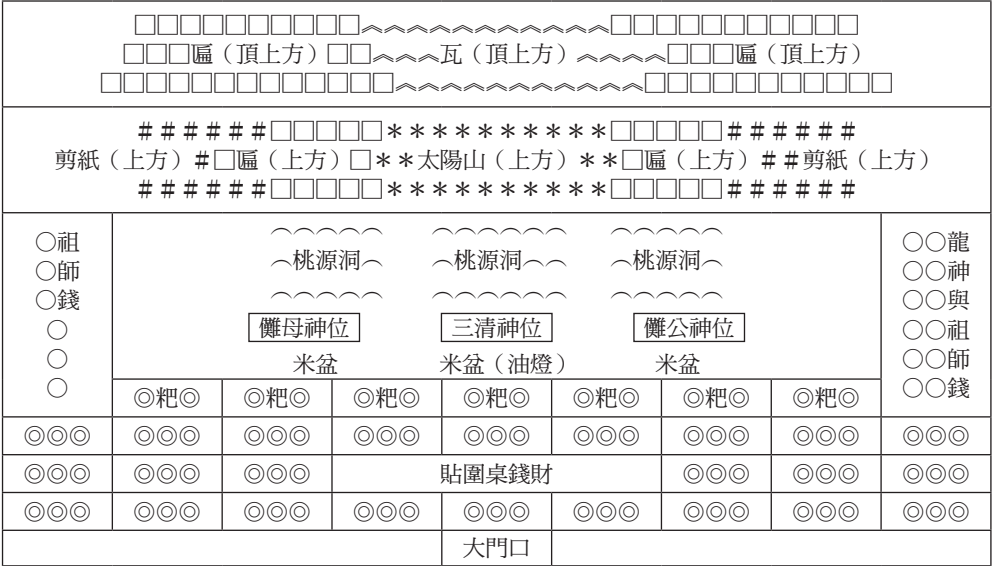


Figure 2. Layout of Repaying a Nuo Vow Ritual Space 還儺願的場景布置圖 (Drawing by 康詩瑀)

圖示：
◎◎◎：粬粬共計120個
○○○：右邊代表龍神錢財與祖師錢財，左邊代表祖師錢財
~~~~~：桃源洞    □□□：匾    \*\*\*：太陽山  
#####：裝飾的剪紙    ~~~~：瓦

|            |             |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|            |             |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 主人家錢財      | ◎           | ◎ | ◎ | ◎ | ◎ | ◎ | ◎ |
| 巴代錢財       | ○           | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 叔叔錢財       | *           | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| 兄弟錢財       | □           | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| 舅舅錢財       | ※           | ※ | ※ | ※ | ※ | ※ | ※ |
| 姑姑錢財       | ▣           | ▣ | ▣ | ▣ | ▣ | ▣ | ▣ |
| 冤家錢財（向外貼）  | Ω           | Ω | Ω | Ω | Ω | Ω | Ω |
|            | 門口上方（貼關門錢財） |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 門口右邊貼四值功曹圖 |             |   |   |   |   |   |   |

**Figure 3.** Eaves Layout of Repaying a Nuo Vow Ritual Space 還攤願的場景布置圖：屋簷部分  
(Drawing by 康詩瑀)

圖說：  
每排紙錢有七張，每個代表的紙錢都不一樣，共有七排，貼的方式除了冤家錢財向門外貼，其他要向門裡面貼。全部的錢財都是白色的剪紙，關門錢財也是。



**Figure 4.** Jiaosheng 交牲 (Photograph by 康詩瑀)



Figure 5. Xianfeng saowen 先鋒掃瘟

(Photograph by 康詩瑀)

## Appendix 1: Outline of Repaying a Nuo Vow rites as performed in Hulu Village

1. 鋪壇（請殿） (4: 25-5: 13)
2. 安意（請神） (5: 20-6: 05)
3. 起灶（安司命） (6: 22-6: 38)
4. 起土地 (6: 40-6: 50)
5. 交牲，發酒令，慶賀 (6: 57-7: 27)
6. 發功曹 (7: 52-8: 07)
7. 送早餐 (8: 28-8: 33)
8. 結界，結營 (9: 38-10: 01)
9. 會兵，造橋，造牢 (10: 04-10: 19)
10. 立營，圓發酒，領受 / 御 (10: 29-10: 41)
11. 下馬下輦 / 轎 (10: 42-10: 54)
12. 開光 (10: 45-11: 07)
13. 報 / 抱攤 (11: 10-11: 28)
14. 勸酒 (11: 30-12: 00)
15. 下馬，眾殿吃飯 (12: 02-12: 28)
16. 請神 (18: 02-18: 33)
17. 開洞（桃源洞） (18: 37-18: 57)
18. 扮先鋒 (19: 10-20: 55)
19. 扮開山 (I) (21: 01-21: 40)
20. 扮算命 (21: 43-22: 22)
21. 開（勘）山還願 (22: 27-22: 45)
22. 扮開山 (II) (22: 45-23: 03)
23. 扮和尚 (23: 12-23: 40)
24. 禳星（安龍神） (00: 12-00: 47)
25. 獻神（氣），發酒令 (00: 56-01: 46)
26. 扮八郎 (1: 50-3: 23)
27. 進（敬）標 (3: 05-3: 14)
28. 紅盤酒 (3: 27-3: 55)
29. 游願（作證） (4: 07-4: 37)
30. 上大熟 (4: 48-5: 00)
31. 打掃（拜兵馬，立攤） (5: 09-5: 55)
32. 扮土地 + 扮判官（勾願） (6: 08-6: 40)
33. 送神，倒攤，倒五嶽 (6: 42-7: 22)

## Appendix 2: Key primary sources

### 1. 《辰谿(溪)縣志》(1821)，卷十六，風俗，七

祈禳：如求財、求嗣、求雨、禳災、禳病，必延巫致祝，或請道士建醮燃燭。又有還儺願者，遇有祈禳，先於家龕焚香叩許，擇吉酬還。至期備牲牢，延巫至家，具疏代祝。鳴金鼓，作法事，扮演《桃源洞神》、《梁山土地》及《孟姜女》等劇。主人衣冠隨巫拜跪，或一日、三日、五日不等。其名有三清願、朝天願、雲霄願、白花願之屬。親友送賀，分擲錢賞巫，曰歌錢。又鄰里有病，互為斂財延巫，列名祈禱，曰保福。

### 2. 《乾州廳志》(1877)，卷五，風俗，四~六

至於歲時祈賽，不一其名，宰牲延巫，為諸戲舞曰還儺愿，親友賀以禮物，多係羊酒米粢米花，外贈曰歌錢，其曲最為鄙俚。宅外宰牲，祀三侯神曰還大愿。

### 3. 《新校本舊唐書》，列傳，卷一百六十，列傳第一百一十，劉禹錫

叔文敗，坐貶連州刺史，在道，貶朗州司馬。地居西南夷，土風僻陋，舉目殊俗，無可與言者。禹錫在朗州十年，唯以文章吟詠，陶冶情性。蠻俗好巫，每淫祠鼓舞，必歌俚辭。禹錫或從事於其間，乃依騷人之作，為新辭以教巫祝。故武陵谿洞間夷歌，率多禹錫之辭也。

### 4. 《楚辭補註》，卷第二，九歌第二

《九歌》者，屈原之所作也。昔楚國南郢之邑，沅、湘之間，其俗信鬼而好祠。其祠，必作歌樂鼓舞以樂諸神。屈原放逐，竄伏其域，懷憂苦毒，愁思沸鬱。出見俗人祭祀之禮，歌舞之樂，其詞鄙陋。因為作《九歌》之曲。

### 5. 《衡州府志》(1536)，卷四，二十三

風俗事女神。每家畫一軸神。分班而坐，多不可數。中標題云：「家居侍奉李家天子三樓賢聖神仙。」兩旁提云：「三千美女」、「八百嬌娥」。歲晚用巫者，鳴鑼鼓吹角。男作女粧：始則兩人執手而舞，終則數人牽手而舞。從中翻身，輪作筋斗。或以一人仰臥，眾人筋斗，從腹而過。亦隨口歌唱。黎明時起，通宵乃散…可一笑也！

### 6. 《儺願戲》科儀本

白旗先鋒口詞：父母二老無兒女，立意天高酌願心，每日靈山去許願，全靠靈山二尊神，許願三朝一七滿，靈山應驗就懷身，凡人懷胎十二月，仙女懷胎十二春，懷胎十二月頭滿，房中產下女兒身，女兒落地哭一聲，堂上公婆著一驚，女兒落地哭兩聲，銅盆打入洗吾身，女兒落地哭三聲，羅裙緊包在娘身，一週二歲兒伶俐，三歲四歲地中行，五歲六歲多聰明，七八九歲長成人，不卻長大年十五，將身寄在玉皇門，憐吾多伶俐，勅賜先鋒第一名，賜白旗一大面，百家門下掃財門，手執白旗掃上東，東方掃開太陽宮，手執白旗掃上南，南方掃開鐵朝山…手執白旗掃入中，將軍掛印滿堂紅，上掃雪花來蓋頂，下掃黃龍三轉身，左掃加官來進祿，右掃六合去同春，再掃戶主招財路，五路求財遇貴人，天瘟掃

送天堂去，地瘟掃入地獄門，牛瘟掃歸牛客去，豬瘟掃送賣豬人，麻瘟掃送麻□去，痘瘟掃入痘山林，五瘟百鬼掃出去。

#### 7. 花垣縣葫蘆村扮先鋒

上洞桃源來，上洞桃源門不開。下洞桃源行，下洞桃源門不開。中洞桃源行，中洞桃源門不開…我來的是初來客，不識哪位是夫人，張主東李主人，請來堂前作個揖，請來堂前見個面，岳王有事我擔情…我的大姐守來守父母，二姐守來守母，有我三姐年紀小，獨獨伶俐在娘神，別人懷人十個月，我娘懷我十二春，我十二個月才見面，娃娃落地哭三聲，銅盆打水金盆倒，麻布落地毛在身，一歲兩歲娘還坐，三歲四歲娘還心，五歲六歲齊長大，七歲八歲九歲讀書文，讀宗先讀細學起，寫字要寫像大人，六本四書都讀過，後讀一本鬼命經。岳王見我都力量，請我當個先鋒娘。岳王見我都靈靈，請我當個先鋒神，送我高官我不要，要把北極扭邪真。

#### 8. 史惇（明），《痛餘雜錄》

辰州俗供神像，有頭而無軀者，曰「羅神」。一于思紅面，號東山聖公；一珠絡窈窕，號南山聖母。兩人兄妹為婚，不知其所治，楚黔皆祀崇之。

#### 9. 《辰州府志》（1765），卷五十，藝文纂，雜識，二十九

沅陵雜記辰俗巫作神戲，搬演孟姜女故事，以釀金多寡，為全部，半部之分。全者演至數日，荒誕不經，里中習以為常。沅陵教諭向兆麟，有神巫行，云：汝有病，何須藥？神君能令百病卻。汝祈福，有嘉告，神君福汝萬事足。走迎神，巫吹角，嗚嗚，巫來降神。牲醴具陳，牽牛執豕神具至。只殺豕剗羊，神保是康。坎坎擊鼓，備極媚嫵。神憑巫語，汝翁病行愈，錫汝以純嘏，拜送神巫剛出門，阿郎哭爺已聲吞，走過東鄰還歌舞，今年高廩富禾黍，明年多財復善賈。事事稱意惟憑汝，願唱一部孟姜女。

#### 10. 《永順縣志》（1745）卷四，風俗，四

永俗酬神，必延辰郡巫師演唱儺戲，設儺王男女二神像於上，師巫諷咒禮神，討筭以卜吉凶。至晚，演儺戲，敲鑼擊鼓，人各紙面，有女裝者，曰孟姜女；男扮者，曰范七郎。

#### 11. 《辰州府志》（1765），卷十四，風俗考，十

疾病服藥之外，惟聽命于巫。幸而愈，則巫之功；不愈，則醫之過。又歲時祈賽，惟僧道意旨是從。有上元醮、中元醮、土地壽、梓潼壽、城隍壽、伏波壽、儺神壽、佛祖壽、火官壽、五通壽、儺神會、龍船會、聖母會、降香會、陽塵會。又有桃源山洞、雲霄娘娘、雲霧仙娘、梅山諸神之稱。又三五歲一祀錢神，其祭以小瓦罐，插六七寸竹管於內，用五色綢條十餘層裹於管頭，置於正寢，割牲延巫，或一日、三日，名曰「還儺願」，唱《孟姜女》戲。親友來觀者，以錢擲賞，名曰「歌錢」。其曲最為鄙俚，每一會費至百餘金，親友所擲，亦積至數十金，巫人以為利。藪廳邑中不為所愚者鮮矣。

#### 12. 《保靖縣志》（1871），卷二，風俗，六十八~七十二

凡酬願追魂，不論四季，擇日延巫祭賽儺神，祭時必設儺王男女二像於庭中，旁列滿堂畫軸神像，願大者搭臺演儺神戲。

13.《龍山縣志》（1878），卷之十一，風俗，十三~十五

大儺供儺神男女二像於堂，薦牲牢饌醴，巫者戴紙面具演古事，如優伶戲者，更擐甲執斧，經房室，若有所驅除，擊鼓鳴鉦跳舞歌唱，逾日乃已。

14.《來鳳縣志》（1866），卷二十八，風俗，二百五十二

村民頗信巫覡，疾病不服藥，多聽命于神，方邑侯《竹儂詩》所謂「女蘿山鬼紛勾惹，長奉巫師不信醫」是也。一曰還天王願。病中許之，愈則召巫酬之，值傘大門外，改天王牌位，割牲，陳酒禮燒黃蠟香，匍匐致敬乃已，席地觀飲。有忿爭不白者，亦舁神出，披黃紙錢，各立誓詞，事白乃已。一曰還儺願。延巫，屠豕，設儺王男女二像，巫戴紙面具，飾孟姜女、范七郎，擊鼓鳴鑼，歌舞竟夕。

15.《施南府志》（1834），卷十，典禮·風俗，一百六十

初春，祭社祈年，合村釀飲，歲終還願酬神，各具羊豕祭於家，皆以巫師將事。

16.《鶴峰州志》（1822），卷十四，雜述，十二~十三頁

又有祀羅神者，為木面具二，其像一黑一白，每歲於夜間祀之，名曰完羅願。此湖南客戶習俗，按遂林李如石《蜀語》云：「壇神名主壇羅公，黑面，手持斧，吹角，設像於室，西北隅去土尺許，歲暮割牲延巫賽之」。考《炎徼紀聞》曰：「羅羅本盧鹿而訛，為羅羅有兩種：居水西十二營林谷馬聲漕溪者，為黑羅羅，曰：烏蠻。居幕後者為白羅羅，曰：白蠻俗尚鬼，故曰羅鬼」。

17.《黎平府志》（1892），卷二下，風俗，一百三十九

端公所奉之神，製二鬼頭，一赤面長鬚，曰師爺，一女面，曰女媧，曰師娘，謂之伏羲、女媧。臨事，各以一竹承其顙，竹上下兩篋圈，衣以衣，倚於案左右，下承以大碗，其右設一小案，上共曰五猖，亦有小像。巫黨捶鑼擊鼓於此。巫或男裝，或女裝。男者依紅裙，帶觀音七佛觀，以次登壇，左執神帶，右執牛角，或吹、或歌、或舞，抑揚跪拜以娛神，曼聲徐引，若戀若慕，電旋風轉。至夜深，大巫舞袖揮袂，小巫戴鬼面，隨扮土地神，受令而入，受令而出，曰放五猖。事畢，移其神像於案前，令虛立梔中，歌以送之，仆則誚神去矣。

## Appendix 3: Memorial requesting the birth of a son (求子願疏文)

疏文

三清玉皇门下 恭

太上天心正法行營，拜授皇母院内九万九千九百龙凤金階，统管五十四州五营，金毫骑虎、黄沙倒洞、北极龙邪伏魔、斩鬼玄都御史、内外行营，判斩天下不正鬼神，代天宣化，为臣弟子○○○诚惶诚恐，顿首俯伏，百拜上言。臣冒罪表，为

大中国 省 县 乡 村管辖处土地祠下居住。奉  
聖首愆酬愿，求嗣谢恩，保安信士 人同缘 氏， 右係  
合家眷等，即日上干

洪造，下鉴凡情，伏祈信士

三清殿上，巍巍不动之天尊

岳府院内滞碍生之主宰，伸沾天空之祥光，俯查凡情之遇（愚）昧，生居中土，添在人伦，感天地盖代之恩，谢日月照临之德，叨皇王水土之复，蒙神庇佑，可续衣食，年无片善之功，月有万愆之咎，暑往寒来，少伸报答，伏维信士，自于 年 月 日 时，建生配婚 氏，缺少麒麟贵子，难生枯荣，不孝有三，无后为大。是日，夫妇二人，诚心叩许

五岳华山大殿圣帝，诸尊位前，祈赐贵子。良愿一中，今不忘恩。

是以卜取今月吉日良旦，命筵善献，家请

上圣证盟，一心修建

太上元皇正教三洞行营，酬愿求嗣，谢恩保安。法事一中，今则法事初起，科范首行， 尚愿圣宫高远，凡意难通，谨录来词，所合具表，闻者

右谨具墨表一方，函 首拜。表上

籐录院内掌钩上员仙官，殿下呈进，恭望诸位圣前劫昔许之愿，早降麒麟贵子，叩还谢恩之英人。家庭清泰，老幼安康。伏乞圣慈，赦宥欠合，祈奉功德，籐表上谷，祈赐贵子，儿孙百般遂意，万事

亨通。以今于冒

圣恩，不胜惶汉，

以文之至 谨表

大中国 年 月 日 诚惶恐，稽首顿首，  
百拜

表上

這份疏文的附註如下

附言：此疏文是还求子愿的。是在送神那早上，烧桃源洞于河边或田坎边  
时，疏文先生诵读的。——麻树纲

#### Appendix 4: Flood myth in Gulaohua 古老話

##### 巴龍奶龍<sup>145</sup>

要說當初災難事，水有源頭樹有根，  
生兒育女在世上，遠古天下早有人。  
分出父母親兄妹，天地人倫十分明，  
天上仵索管世界，地下仵本治乾坤。  
二人都是神明子，法術高明本領硬，  
一在天來一在地，可嘆不睦起戰爭，  
此事前面已唱過，且唱災後兄妹情。  
齊天大水消盡了，兄妹二人幸生存。  
二人隨瓜落地上，山山水水不見人。  
禽畜死完，世人歸陰，  
未聽鳥叫，不聞蟲聲，  
豬牛羊馬絕種，遍地荒涼冷情。  
兄妹二人驚呆了，無話可說憂在心。

<sup>145</sup> 巴龍奶龍：苗族傳說是仵本的一對兒女。又有人說是白苗的祖先。

舉世男女只兩個，不可長遠孤零零。  
妹妹生來心靈巧，想與哥哥結成婚，  
相依相伴患難共，開言說與哥哥聽。  
哥哥聽到回言答，這事實在費思尋，  
我倆同娘共父養，不知別姓外來人。  
妹妹聽了回言道，事到如今莫遲疑，  
並非世上人煙密，到外商量到處行，  
只剩我你人兩個，無處無緣可定親，  
不如我倆為婚配，合成夫妻一對人，  
乘早成婚好生養，免得日後絕人根。  
哥哥主意拿不穩，說是一切聽天命，  
我倆園裡去砍竹，將竹劈開兩半分，  
各拿一塊坡頭去，由頂拋下到墻坪，  
若是竹子合成了，兄妹兩人便成婚。  
妹妹聰明心靈巧，劈竹兩分根連根，  
二人齊把竹塊拋，丟了下去看分明。  
下山看竹雙合一，哥哥還是心難定。  
左思右想怎麼辦，再憑石磨卜分明，  
若是磨子又合了，就與妹妹結成婚。  
二人抬磨上山去，各站一邊共同推，  
滾下磨子下山看，看看是否又合成？  
哪知妹妹先用計，先把磨子緊相合，  
貼緊牢固看不出，推下果然又同心。  
哥哥看得無話說，未必這是天意定？  
急時心中出主意，撒腿逃走又如何？  
哥哥急急往前跑，妹妹匆匆隨後跟，  
趕了三天三夜半，腹中饑餓不留情，  
用盡平生吃奶力，只見行蹤難靠近。

後來趕到狹路上，一頭獅子在前面，  
 眼看獅子攔了路，只得向後打轉身。  
 妹妹見哥回身轉，不停腳步對面迎，  
 雙手將哥抱住了，青天白日結成婚。  
 兄妹因此成婚配，「天作之合」一雙人。  
 成婚一年有一子，兩年三載連連生，  
 世代繁育年長久，漁細漁熬滿眼人。<sup>146</sup>  
 百家姓根從此起，合成部落創乾坤。  
 後來子孫遍各地，兄妹成為原始祖，  
 始祖傳說一代代，世代後人敬為神。  
 承前啟後懷祖先，年年秋後祭如在。  
 《後換歌》篇這裡止，水落灘頭停一停。

龍六玉 口述

龍炳文 錄整

## Appendix 5: Miao rites for making and repaying vows

湘西苗族巴代雄專用苗語進行祭祀的對象有大祖、元祖、寨祖、家祖、雷祖、龍祖、祖師、穀粟祖、日月神祖等。本卷祭日月神等十四堂祭儀中，大致可以分成五種類型，一因鬼怪以為不祥而求驅除，如祭日月神，洗屋，洗貓兒，退作怪的古樹。二因病求癒，如祭家先，贖魂，驅鬼，生孩祭穀神。三因遇災或失財而求發旺，如祭五穀神，願標許願，水牛許願。四因人死而尋亡安亡，如替新亡招魂，敬奉先人（本堂是無病無死而常祭）。五因糾紛而求仲裁，如誓血。

……二、祭家先（*songt nbeat hangd ghaot*，送琶夯果），苗民生病，吃藥不癒，就要許願「祭家先」，或在病時舉行，或在病癒之後還願。事前主人須至母舅家報信，請舅家六男一女共七人來作陪神。如舅家人數不足七人，可由舅轉請他人補足之，但所請之人，不得與主人同姓。日期可以不必挑選，只需避過以下幾種忌日：如家中生小孩，須滿月後方可做；生貓須隔一個月，生牛、馬、狗、豬、羊要過十二天之後，敷雞、鴨、鵝要過三天後，家有喪事或族人別家有喪事，須隔十二天。舅家若未過以上的忌日，則外甥家來報信時，可回絕之。如

146 漁細漁熬：古代水名，後形成地名。

主人因求病速愈，不能延擱，亦可由主人另請，例不得請同姓之客。祭家先的儀式，共分第一節請神（*ceit ghunb*，村肱），第二節除怪（*jit gheix*，擠格），第三節交牲（*giaod nbeat*，交琶），第四節送神（*songt ghunb*，送肱）共四節，自早至晚，須時一整日。值得注意的是，在交牲將豬打死後，舅輩抬回豬腿，俗謂忌肉，苗稱安候。此肉出門，與祭主同姓人均得回避，回到舅家，只限吃一頓，餘肉連骨均要深埋，祭規甚嚴，無人膽敢冒犯。

三、敬奉先人（*xid xangb*，喜香），喜香有兩種情況，一是不因任何故事而舉行的稱「常祭」，另因死人安魂而舉行的稱「特祭」。至於「常祭」，按湘西苗區習俗，苗家一年大都舉行一次，也有數年一次的。均於秋收後舉行，地點在屋內火坑旁，時間在早晨。其大意是，請祖先們把主人口箕內的酒肉跟粑粑都領去吃，現燒紙錢給大家，吃完了你們回原住所去，要保佑凡間的子孫。人間子孫早晚吃飯，都要首先敬奉到你們的，你們知道子孫有任何災禍，要下來竭力排解。做此堂法事，巴代自始至終都是坐的，所擺的酒肉和粑粑，主人家與巴代共食，餘下可分別帶走。

……九、願標許願（*ghaob yand jid beal*，禾願及巴）：俗稱暖牛籠：本神辭是從鳳凰地區記錄的，唯神辭中略都略天是吉首土語的。苗家舉行大祭典前，一般都先向湘西苗民椎牛祭典所敬奉的大祖神 *Lioub Doub Lioub Nqet* 「岭斗岭茄」（略都略天）許願。許椎牛願有的用水牛，有的只用一塊土紅綢緞布條系在一副銀手圈上作為願標。此法事屬於後者。

十、水牛許願（*dab niex jid beal*，大業及巴）：祭主用願標許願後，運氣仍然不佳，只得買牛。牛買回後剪下牛後額鬃毛一束，包於原繫於銀圈之綢緞之一頭，並舉行交牛椎願法事。其神辭大意为，以前許願不靈，所以運氣還不見好，主人積了錢財，到市場買得一頭體角肥大的水牯，擇定今日的好日子，請巴代我來交牛，求祖神收領。此神交給大祖神後，仍退給祭主餵養，祭主若有能力，到時椎牛就用此牛，椎不起牛的，此牛不能宰殺，亦不能出賣，只能餵養下去，直至死亡，死後舉行簡單法事，用其頭、四腿和五臟敬送大祖神。

Appendix 6: Comparison table of Repaying a Nuo Vow rites 還僮願科儀法事比較表  
(List by 康詩瑋)

| 類別<br>順序 | 一                 | 二        | 三        | 四         | 五        | 六   | 七              | 八         | 九        | 十            | 十一         |
|----------|-------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----|----------------|-----------|----------|--------------|------------|
| 1        | 鋪壇<br>(請殿)        | 請神<br>安位 | 安裝<br>神香 | 安藝<br>取水  | 請師       | 安司命 | 請總師<br>化水      | 斗僮頭       | 鋪壇       | 鋪壇           | 繞壇         |
| 2        | 安意<br>(請神)        | 祭灶       | 藏身       | 請殿        | 起場       | 發鑼鼓 | 起建             | 借衣<br>借帽  | 紮灶       | 割灶           | 啟師         |
| 3        | 起灶<br>(安司命)       | 交生牲      | 起殿       | 紮灶<br>紮土地 | 起宅       | 安土地 | 安壇             | 喜灶<br>喜大門 | 安土地      | 發鼓           | 敬土地        |
| 4        | 起土地               | 發功曹      | 安慰       | 退下<br>敬粬粬 | 接龍<br>謝土 | 鋪壇  | 請神名            | 燒堂        | 發功曹      | 發功曹          | 申法與<br>發功曹 |
| 5        | 交生                | 會兵       | 請神       | 交牲        | 發牒       | 接街  | 發鑼鼓<br>交牲      | 打鈸        | 結界       | 請神           | 封祭         |
| 6        | 發功曹               | 立藝       | 交生牲      | 殺雞        | 鋪位       | 作橋  | 安灶             | 師刀畫地      | 造牢       | 造橋           | 上香         |
| 7        | 吃早飯               | 報僮       | 發功曹      | 下車下馬      | 接駕       | 封牢  | 請當坊<br>土地      | 請水        | 解洗       | 解穢           | 接橋         |
| 8        | 結界<br>結營          | 勸酒       | 造牢<br>造席 | 隔堂隔殿      | 下馬       | 會兵  | 發功曹            | 收桌        | 造橋       | 行壇<br>結界     | 傳茶<br>度酒   |
| 9        | 會兵<br>造橋<br>造牢    | 開洞       | 起街       | 會兵        | 開洞       | 接駕  | 接街             | 請神再唱      | 紮寨       | 安營<br>扎寨     | 唱下馬歌       |
| 10       | 立營<br>圓發酒<br>領受/御 | 扮先鋒      | 架橋       | 圓發酒       | 接靈王      | 求子  | 接香             | 拷角請神      | 掃殿       | 會兵           | 喝下馬酒       |
| 11       | 下車<br>下輦/轎        | 算命       | 報僮       | 開光        | 和洞       | 勸酒  | 立藝             | 打答        | 點兵       | 迎神           | 呈牲         |
| 12       | 開光                | 和尚       | 迎神<br>接駕 | 報僮        | 速壇       | 下馬飯 | 開光             | 慶賀        | 開光<br>點像 | 開光<br>點像     | 判三牲        |
| 13       | 報/抱僮              | 讓生       | 請下馬      | 勸酒        | 掃路       | 唱僮歌 | 下馬             | 搶戒        | 迎聖<br>接駕 | 下馬           | 開財門        |
| 14       | 勸酒                | 交死牲      | 立藝       | 立意立者      | 呈牲       | 點兵  | 卜僮             | 造錢几       | 勸酒       | 上表           | 求下馬筭       |
| 15       | 下馬<br>眾殿吃飯        | 八郎       | 造酒       | 下馬        | 趕牲       | 討告  | 祭神             | 造蓆        | 打監<br>領科 | 僮堂本戲<br>上午結束 | 上熟         |
| 16       | 請神                | 游願       | 開光       | 領受        | 邀猖       | 開洞  | 求表<br>謝表<br>架橋 | 造牢        | 散花紅      | 傳表           | 安花壇        |
| 17       | 開洞                | 上大熟      | 下馬飯      | 開洞        | 上熟       | 扮先鋒 | 勸酒             | 造橋        | 求子       | 保管           | 燒錢山        |
| 18       | 扮先鋒               | 土地       | 討告       | 先鋒        | 交標       | 扮送子 | 請神下馬           | 遣兵場       | 唱僮歌      | 開霄洞          | 和會交標       |
| 19       | 扮開山(I)            | 判官       | 開洞       | 算命開山      | 出標       | 扮開山 | 唱僮歌            | 拜王母       | 師道<br>盤問 | 開戲洞          | 舞土地        |
| 20       | 扮算命               | 立僮       | 二十四標     | 和尚        | 勾簿       | 扮算匠 | 討告             | 發五猖       | 討告       | 搬八郎<br>下午結束  | 勾願         |
| 21       | 開(勘)<br>山還願       | 送僮       | 尋山<br>探子 | 讓星曬土      | 設圓       | 扮師娘 | 開洞             | 發功曹       | 搞將       | 搬先鋒          | 送神         |
| 22       | 扮開山(II)           | 和尙<br>道士 | 先鋒       | 騰牲        | 倒標       | 扮鐵匠 | 打太子            | 昌陰橋       | 進表齊奏     | 搬開山          |            |
| 23       | 扮和尚               |          | 砍山       | 扮八郎       | 接回<br>壇駕 | 扮和尚 | 先鋒             | 調法主       | 開洞交標     | 搬算匠          |            |
| 24       | 讓星<br>(安龍神)       |          | 算命       | 打開封壇      | 和下洞      | 交牲  | 算命             | 排神        | 和洞霄      | 搬師娘          |            |
| 25       | 獻神(氣)<br>發酒令      |          | 鐵匠       | 游願        | 僮戲       | 扮八郎 | 開山             | 昌下馬       | 上熟科      | 上熟           |            |
| 26       | 扮八郎               |          | 和尚<br>道士 | 上大熟       | 開洞門      | 上熟  | 和尚道士           | 開光        | 游願撒願     | 搬判官          |            |
| 27       | 進(敬)標             |          | 交死牲      | 領受        | 伴郎君      | 燒願  |                | 撤橋        | 搬先鋒      | 送神           |            |
| 28       | 紅盤酒               |          | 八郎       | 點兵<br>收兵  | 設喜       | 扮土地 |                | 交生        | 搬開山      |              |            |

|    |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  |            |           |  |  |
|----|--------------------|--|-----------|----------------|------|-----|--|------------|-----------|--|--|
| 29 | 游願<br>(作證)         |  | 交熟        | 立儺<br>討告<br>倒儺 | 送春   | 扮判官 |  | 立營         | 搬算匠<br>鐵匠 |  |  |
| 30 | 上大熟                |  | 講願根       | 扮土地            | 邀回馬猖 | 進標  |  | 扳儺         | 搬師娘       |  |  |
| 31 | 打掃<br>(拜兵馬,<br>立儺) |  | 游願        | 扮判官            | 打洞笏  | 孟姜女 |  | 賀標         | 搬郎君       |  |  |
| 32 | 扮土地, 扮<br>判官(勾願)   |  | 搬兵<br>打寨  | 倒五嶽            | 勾簿   |     |  | 進標         | 呈牲        |  |  |
| 33 | 送神<br>倒儺<br>倒五嶽    |  | 立儺        | 灑藝             | 送靈王  |     |  | 封壇開壇       | 搬八郎       |  |  |
| 34 |                    |  | 搬土地       | 灑神屋            | 送神   |     |  | 下馬請<br>神再昌 | 搬泗州<br>和尚 |  |  |
| 35 |                    |  | 判官        | 倒桌             | 回聖   |     |  | 謝東君        | 搬土地       |  |  |
| 36 |                    |  | 請上馬<br>送神 |                | 安五神壇 |     |  | 討笏         | 孟姜女       |  |  |
| 37 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 合會         | 搬判官       |  |  |
| 38 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 開洞         | 辭聖        |  |  |
| 39 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 栲角請蓆       | 撒藝        |  |  |
| 40 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 開光         |           |  |  |
| 41 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 探子         |           |  |  |
| 42 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 仙風         |           |  |  |
| 43 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 開山         |           |  |  |
| 44 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 呈生         |           |  |  |
| 45 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 八郎         |           |  |  |
| 46 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 和尚         |           |  |  |
| 47 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 封壇酒        |           |  |  |
| 48 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 昌願棍        |           |  |  |
| 49 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 上熟請神       |           |  |  |
| 50 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 打笏         |           |  |  |
| 51 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 游願         |           |  |  |
| 52 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 勾願         |           |  |  |
| 53 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 謝東君        |           |  |  |
| 54 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 沖營         |           |  |  |
| 55 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 土地         |           |  |  |
| 56 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 判官         |           |  |  |
| 57 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 上馬送神       |           |  |  |
| 58 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 撤營撤洞       |           |  |  |
| 59 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 倒儺         |           |  |  |
| 60 |                    |  |           |                |      |     |  | 送倒壇        |           |  |  |

\*資料說明：還儺願底本科儀(1-11)對照表，依次為：

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2. 〈吉衛鎮白果村洪樹金現場口述實錄〉
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4. 〈吉衛鎮葫蘆村麻樹森手抄本〉
5. 〈沅陵縣杜家坪鄉梁開英家還儺願紀實〉
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7. 〈湘西鎮楊玉清手抄本〉
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# 湘西還儺願儀式及其跨混性

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本文根據湘西苗人歷史研究與田野調查，試圖解釋「還儺願」這個漢族儀式及戲劇表演的意義。有關「還儺願」的主要文化意涵，可以從三個方面來探討：1）個案研究——在花垣縣葫蘆村於2011年11月15-16日所舉行的儀式活動；2）其他學者所收集到的有關湘西還儺願儀式的資料，其中包括了苗與土家聚落之案例；3）中國西南地區類似儀式展演的記載。

文章的整體目標是檢視漢族及非漢族宗教傳統的歷史發展及連續性互動，也就是本文所謂之「跨混性」（trans-hybridity）。筆者試圖區分根深蒂固的湘西苗人在地儀式，和引進且吸收自漢族神職人員的道教儀式元素。以當地歷史發展來說，在漢族較早移入、其人口密度較高的地區，還儺願儀式保留了许多原有的漢人宗教文化特徵，特別是眾多的中文科儀本。相較之下，漢族移民較晚、其人口密度較低的地區（如花垣縣），還儺願儀式則明顯混合了苗族和漢族的多元宗教傳統。

許願及還願儀式非常適合研究跨文化互動，因為向神祇許願與還願在世界各宗教文化中是一種基本元素。中國也不例外，尤其償還與報應是中國宗教文化中的一組核心。從編年式研究來看，可以發現「願」、「誓」、「盟」等詞彙的紀錄長遠而複雜。向神祇許願及還願的儀式涵蓋整個中國宗教歷史的光譜，從古老的社神（土地神）春祈秋報，到整合入中國佛教與道教的发展；此類儀式依舊活躍於現今的華人地區，包括臺灣。許願及還願儀式也長久廣存於湘西苗族文化中，例如當地祖先祭拜儀式及著名的椎牛活動。本文的重點在於思考還儺願儀式如何在過去及當代形成了苗人與漢人許願、還願儀式互動的機制。

關鍵詞：還儺願，湘西，苗族，跨混性，神職人員