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Religious Polemics in the Song

The Song Dynasty is an important period in the study of the history of Chinese religious denunciatory discourse. This is for the following two reasons. One is that there are more state records available to us today compared to the earlier periods. Source materials such as the *Song Huiyao* 宋會要 (preserved in the Ming encyclopaedia *Yongle Dadian* 永樂大典) provide us with contemporary records of religious policies. The other reason is that polemic against lay activities – a common theme of later imperial history–began in the Song. It is also in the Song (Southern Song, more precisely) that lay activities began to be considered as seditious and even rebellious – a prevailing view of the late imperial authorities.

The Song polemic against lay religion was certainly influential in the transmission of religious denunciatory discourse in late imperial China. It is thus easy to assume, mistakenly, that the Song polemical language differs little from that of late imperial China. This would lead to a misunderstanding of the Song perception on religion, especially lay religion. This paper aims to study the Song polemic against lay religion in the contemporary context, hoping to show how polemical words were used and understood by contemporaries and how some new connotations were added in the course of transmission.

In the paper, I am going to trace a few religious polemical words such as *zuodao* 左道 or “left way,” *yao* 妖 or “demonic” and its variants and the Song label *chicai shimo* 喫菜事魔 or “eating vegetables and dedicating oneself to devils.” Instead of being influenced by the later religious polemics, I attempt to understand these words the context of the contemporary religious situation. In other words, I will look at the use of words in the description of certain events. My paper makes the following points.

- A) The very old term *Zuodao* 左道, which in the Han Dynasty was not always used in the religious sense, was in the Song largely connected with esoteric techniques 術 such as *yansheng* 厭勝 or voodoo and *zaogu* 造蠱 or manufacturing poison, while its political use was in decline.

- B) Although *yaojiao* 妖教 or “demonic teachings” was a common denunciation of lay religious groups throughout the Song, its connotation did not remain the same. When first introduced, it had little demonological implication, despite the use of *yao* 妖 (literally meaning demon). Lay religious groups were not associated with esoteric techniques either.
- C) While words like *yaoren* 妖人 or “demonic people” and *yaoshu* 妖術 or “demonic techniques” were largely religious, the term *Yaozei* 妖賊 or “demonic rebels” was not necessarily applied to religious rebels in the early Song, as one would expect in late imperial texts. Its particular connection with religious rebels probably started in the Southern Song.
- D) *Chicai shimo* 喫菜事魔 was probably first used in connection with Manichaeism and later extended to any lay gathering (especially those following a vegetarian diet). It originally had no demonological implications nor was it associated with esoteric techniques.
- E) The Fang La 方臘 rebellion (1121-1122) in the late Northern Song was a critical point in the transmission of religious polemical discourse and the development of the perception of lay religion. Polemical terms which had originally been only associated with illegal lay gathering such as *Chicai shimo* and *yaojiao* were given an additional demonological implication and lay groups in general were perceived as possessing magical techniques and rebellious tendencies after the Fang La rebellion.

As well as focusing on these polemical words, I will also pay particular attention to the change of discourse on the Fang La rebellion. No connection with *chicai shimo* or *yaoshu* was made in the contemporary sources in the Song Huiyao. It was not until the Southern Song, especially during the Shaoxin 紹興 period (1131-1161), that Fang La was labelled as *chicai shimo*, while at the same time polemical terms used for esoteric techniques like *zuodao* and *yaoshu* were applied to Fang La as well. *Zuodao* and *yaoshu* also became widely used together with *chicai shimo* and *yaojiao* in the description of religious unease in the Southern Song texts. Furthermore, the Fang La rebellion and *chicai shimo* in general were compared to earlier religiously-inspired rebellions such as Zhang Jiao in the Han and Sun En in the Jin – all religious unease had the same rebellious nature.

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Mengda and Wenchang:

The Legitimacy of Local Religious Space in the 18th Century Southwestern China

This research is concerned with the interdisciplinary studies of landscape and religious space in the 18th century. Most of the sites and landscapes in southwestern China, where indigenous communities lived, had vanished in the process of institutional reform. Not only did the Qing State transform the actual landscape by creating a new cityscape, it also created a new ideological image of this landscape as a political-cultural product of various strategies of knowledge. Apart from that, I found out during my fieldwork that indigenous conceptions of space and landscape have survived in the epic stories and myths of the indigenous peoples. Taking into account state as well as indigenous perspective, my intention is to explore the process of mutual interaction between the various discourses on the one hand and practices of constructing space and landscape on the other.

The case study that I will present in this conference is Meng Da Shrine and Wenchang Temple on the Golden Bell Mountain of 18th century in Dongchuan where locates in the northeastern Yunnan province, to scrutinize the situation of diverse groups of native and newcomers in Dongchuan during the process of reconstructing local ritual space and representing new landscape in early Qing. I show that landscape in local society can be seen as a metaphor of the state, which confirms similar observations in religious studies of pre-modern China. Meanwhile, as a frontier land where the indigenous and newcomers communities had a chance to encounter, conflict and interact, the landscapes and space were created also by the people who engaged consciously or unconsciously in their everyday existence and their memory of the old days. The diversity of population in the local community coexisted and created the multiple interpretations of their landscape and space, instead of simply accepted the official construction.

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**The Yao Literacy and the Value of Women:
Yao Ritual Manuscripts across Asian Borderlands**

This essay is an investigation into Yao literacy as represented in Yao ritual manuscripts across Asian Borderlands. By viewing Yao ritual manuscripts as text-artifacts that embody a series of inter-discursive events, this essay illustrates a dynamic and dialectical picture of historical encounters between the Yao and Han Chinese in terms of language, scriptural tradition, discourses of personhood, and the value of women. By taking the ‘flower-beliefs’, particularly the ‘Peach Spring Grotto’ (taoyuandong), as a central focus of this scriptural analysis, this essay is able to reveal the religious dimension of Yao women, a dimension which can be hard to find in present day Yao social life.