

徽州传统社会丛书
(法)劳格文 王振忠◎主编



吴正芳◎著

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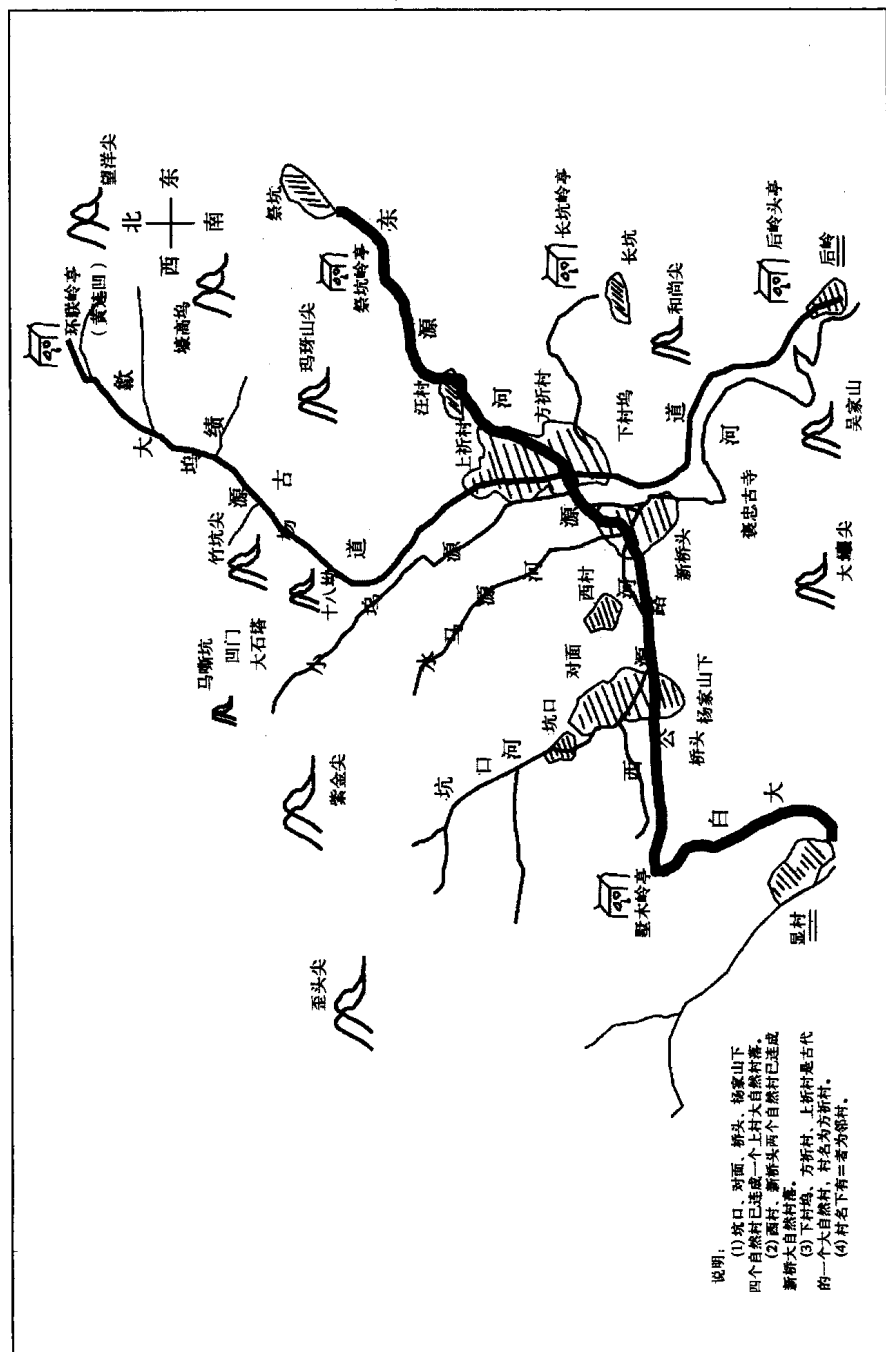
I wish here to express my heartfelt thanks to Hu Wulin, Director of the Local Monograph Office. From the very beginning of our work in Shexian, he has welcomed us, helped us to find authors, and then organized meetings with them for us. Without his constant help, our work in Shexian would have come to naught.

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致 谢

值此出版之际，谨向歙县地方志办公室胡武林主任表达衷心的感谢。自此项工作伊始，承蒙胡先生的接待，并协助寻找作者、组织座谈会，没有他持续的帮助，我们在歙县的工作将难以开展。

“徽州的宗教、社会与经济”项目，也得到了一些基金会的慷慨资助，这使得我们的田野调查得以顺利进展，而这正是该书以及此套新丛书之后续诸部得以面世的基础。另外，香港特别行政区大学教育资助委员会卓越学科领域计划（第五轮）——“中国社会的历史人类学研究”亦鼎力支持，在此谨申谢忱！



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Ethnographic Introduction

John Lagerwey

When I first met Wu Zhengfang in a meeting organized by Hu Wulin and Ke Lingquan of the local monograph office, on October 13, 2007, I simply noted: “Mr. Wu, now retired, has produced two books on folk customs and says it is very complex. For him, the aim of all customs is good fortune, career, and longevity, in a word, harmony.” On April 28 of the following year, with Wang Zhenzhong, we were back for another meeting, and I noted: “This man is fantastic. He knows his village backwards and forwards. He says that, just on the time before breakfast on the first day of the year, he can write 5000 characters.” He gave us the two books he had written and, after examining them, we asked him to start writing a third, according to our specifications. On May 29, 2009, this native son and former township Party Secretary (for six and one-half years, 1983 – 1989) showed us his first draft and then took us on an extraordinary, day-long tour of Baiyangyuan. We discussed his draft in detail and debated with him over its final structure. The result is the present book, forwarded to Wang Zhenzhong by Hu Wulin, director of the Local Monograph Office, on February 4, 2010.

This book, as the patient reader will discover, confirms Mr. Wu’s statement about the complexity and aims of folk customs. Throughout, he regularly points out differences between local lineages in the way they carried out common practices like “doing

the middle of the (first) month". Even within a single patronymic group, there were important differences, as becomes clear from the superb tables and accompanying explanations and maps. To take the Wus themselves, for example, who are far and away the most numerous surname group (2259 out of 4830, or nearly 50%), Wu Zhengfang divides them into four separate groups, one of which came much later than the others and from a different place; it also lives separately. The three other groups all came from nearby Bei'an, but two were cousins who came together in the year 1532, still live together in Fangqi, and share an "ancestor god temple" (*zushen miao*); the third came in 1543 and lives in Upper Village.

Other tables show how the various groups segmented differently and carried on their individual ritual life in distinct ancestral halls. The Upper Village Wus (population 964) had a main hall built ca. 1720 and six segment halls, of unknown dates but Qing. Two segments also shared an "incense house" (*xianghuowu*), said to date to the Ming, where they worshiped the ancestral god and placed their ancestor tablets. The Fangqi Wus are divided into the descendants of Honggong (pop. 949) and Migong (pop. 266): they shared a Ming-era incense house, and Honggong had in addition three segment halls. Between the family home and the segment hall, there was yet another layer, called locally "multitude house" (*zhongwu*), for the worship of sub-segment ancestors and Guanyin. They usually had people living in them, but on the last day of the year, the sub-segment males gathered there to "welcome Heaven and Earth" (*jie tiandi*). Whosever turn it was to receive Guanyin would also place her there. The Honggong and Migong segments went first to their common incense house — it contained places for Grandpa Earth God (*Shegong laoye*), the

Incense Pusa (Xianghuo pusa), and the earth god — to invite their founding ancestor before going to their respective multitude houses. Right next to almost all main lineage halls there was an incense house, with a small altar for an Incense Pusa that no one can identify but who had to be worshiped at year's end; this is also where lineage business was conducted.

There used to exist as well, above this lineage ritual pyramid, an organization composed of thirteen lineage halls: five Wu, two Wang, and one each for the Yu, Fang, Cheng, Hu, Wang and Pan lineages. Little is known of this institution, other than that it met whenever there was a trans-lineage problem to be discussed.

The relationship between the Wangs and the Pans is particularly interesting: shortly after settling in Wang Village, in 1465, the Wangs discovered the site was not good for them, ceded the area to the Pans, and moved, ultimately to Newbridge, next to the main Buddhist temple and across from the “general water exit” (*zong shuikou*) of the entire valley. Because the Wangs saw themselves as descended from the eighth son of Wang Hua, they placed Old Eight (Balaoe) in their ancestor god temple (and Wang Hua, called locally Sire Wang Old Emperor, Wanggong laodi, in an incense house next to their main ancestor hall). As they had already done the same in Wang Village, the Pans carried on the tradition, and the Newbridge Wangs went back every year to worship with them in an earth god temple (*shemiao*) that also contained Sire Wang and Grandpa Earth God.

Temples and their festivals

Indeed, as Wu Zhengfang says, each ancestor god temple —

which he thus also refers to as earth god temples — was peculiar^①; if that of the two Wu segments of Fangqi contained their “distant ancestor god” (*bizu zushen pusa*), Wu Taibo, it also contained King Li, brought along from Bei'an. That of the Wangs contained, in addition to Old Eight, King Wen of the Zhou, and the Duke of Zhou. The Wus of Upper Village shared an earth god temple with the Fangs and Wangs, and the earth god temple of West Village contained three distant ancestors of the Yus, starting with Yu of the Xia (sculpted in 1943), while that of the Hus in Shangqi contained the saintly emperor Li (Li Shimin). Clearly, one of the chief features of local religion was the commingling of earth god and ancestor worship in a manner that would seem to be unique.

Distant ancestor gods played a central role in “doing the middle of the (first) month”. The name of this universally celebrated festival notwithstanding, it was in fact usually done sometime in the first half of the first month; the Hus did it on 1/1, the two Wu segments of Fangqi on 1/4, West Village on 1/8, the Wus of Upper Village on 1/14, and the Pans of Wang Village and Wangs of Newbridge on 1/15. According to Hu lineage rules, the only ancestor god they could invite to their multitude house — which stood right next to their main hall and looked like an earth god house (*shewu*) — was “five-share Guanyin” from a local nunnery. Only two of four Hu segments participated. The Wangs went on 1/13, first to the incense hall next to their main lineage hall to fetch Sire Wang, then to the Red Temple, their earth god house, for the tablet of Earth God Old Emperor (*Shegong laodi*). On 1/14 in the

① When I asked Wu Zhengfang whether the *shemiao* was not in fact identical to the *zushenmiao*, he confirmed the “confusion”. However, whereas the gods of the *zushenmiao* are “welcomed” (*jie*) into the lineage hall, earth god temples have only a tablet or a painted image, not a sculpted one.

evening, they "made a racket for the gods" (*naoshen*) until midnight, and then celebrated Sire Wang's birthday the next day. When the men were worshiping, youths and women all stayed away. On 1/17 in the morning, the Wangs sent their gods back and, on the next day, invited a monk from the nearby Temple for the Praise of Loyalty to perform a Jiao in their main hall.

Management of the Fangqi mid-month festival was rotated over five years among four lineage segments; one of the Honggong segments managed it two years running, and the remaining segment halls ran it one year each. Every family in the segment preparing to manage the festival the following year was supposed to raise a mid-month pig and goat. As this was a competition to produce the fattest animals, many raised them for two or even three years. Eighty special offering dishes, paid for from lineage lands, had also to be prepared (in West Village we saw and photographed some mid-nineteenth century plates once used by the Yus for their festival). With the help of an 1875 manuscript, Wu Zhengfang describes in considerable detail the whole complex process of selecting a head, preparing the sacrificial arena (including the contents of the 80 dishes), the hanging of lanterns said by one 92-year old informant to have been bought in Suzhou, and then the festival itself.

For those lineages that did their distant ancestor-related festival in the first month, the sequence was the high point of New Year's festivities. After cleaning out their halls on the last day of the year, the men of the lineage prepared the sacrificial altar for Welcoming Heaven and Earth and then the gods. While the first welcoming ceremony was done differently by each lineage, that of the Pans was the most complex: after putting up their ancestor portraits and eating the "meal of togetherness" (*tuanyuan fan*),

one man from each family went to the main hall. Shortly before the midnight welcoming, firecrackers were set off and the hall gates shut. Half an hour later, firecrackers were set off again — the other Baiyangyuan lineages had to wait for this signal before starting to welcome Heaven and Earth^① — and the gates opened, with all males standing with lanterns in the outer court of the hall. Paper money having been burned outside the gate, two large red candles were lit and, facing outwards, all bowed before turning round to sit down eight to a table, take three sips of alcohol, and partake of dates (*zao*: “May all quickly make a profit!”). Each now went to his segment hall, where they repeated the ceremony, without the drinking, and had a midnight snack of *hongshaorou*. Then all went with lanterns to their “ancestor temple” (*zumiao*) to “exit the gods”. Talking and laughter were forbidden while they lit candles, incense, and paper money, presented alcohol, kowtowed, and shut the temple gate, sealing it with three red strips that together formed the character for “rice”. All then went home to welcome Heaven and Earth.

Most lineages brought the gods of the “mid-month” ritual from their temples to their halls on 1/1 — all except the Chengs, who did it before the welcoming of Heaven and Earth, around 8 p. m. on 12/30. Why this was the case no one knows, but “no one would have changed it”. At dawn on 1/1, all other halls sent men with a large gong (or two) through every street and alley of the village. They thus made the rounds three times, the first time to wake everyone up and remind them to eat vegetarian and the second and third times to summon all to Welcome the Pusa. After the first

① Wu Zhengfang told us orally that he does not know why this was so, but that it is an example of the kind of decision made by the “thirteen halls”.

round, all got up, and the women and children washed and dressed because the wives had to prepare breakfast. Their first act on exiting the bedroom was to light three sticks of incense and kowtow to the ancestor portraits. Morning tea was sweetened with dates or honey so that the year to come would be sweet. Children came in to bow to the portraits, then to the family elders and receive from them their red packets. The men of the two Wu lineage segments then went to the main Buddhist temple to invite Four-Share Guanyin and her two lads to come to the multitude house in charge of the ritual that year. From there they went home for a meal of vegetarian long-life noodles before going to the temple to welcome the ancestor gods. This, says Wu Zhengfang, was very *longzhong*, with each of the five main gods being carried out in a sedan chair. Upon reaching the temple, the lineage head removed the red slips sealing its gates, and a prestigious elder went in to clean the Pusa, who were then clad in armor before setting out, Taibo in the lead and Guangong bringing up the rear. As the parade neared the hall, the carriers had to run, then race in a circle and burst into the hall. This was called *fajiao*, propulsing the sedan chair. All who participated in this ritual had to be dressed in new clothes and could not sleep with their wives the night before. Typically, the gods were thus carried in on 1/1 and sent back to their temples on 1/18, thus bringing the entire New Year festival to its close. The return parade of the Fangqi Wus was identical to the welcoming parade, except that Guangong went first and Taibo brought up the rear, and that they rushed, circled, and burst into the temple. That night, all involved shared a banquet.

A complex tale explains why the Fangqi Wus failed to participate in the third and successful attempt to steal a famous

statue of Guanyin from a temple in Zhejiang.^① As a result, they were excluded from the rotation of this “Five-Share Guanyin” among the multitude houses of Wang, Shangqi, Newbridge, West, and Upper villages. Put out, Wu Langshan, a local doctor and son of a *juren* who organized the reconstruction of the Fangqi earth god temple in 1922, led in the sculpting of a Four-Share Guanyin for the Wus. Both Guanyins circulated from hall to hall (or multitude house), with Four-Share Guanyin returning to its Buddhist home temple only on 12/30, and then being invited out anew on New Year’s Day. Five-Share Guanyin was also the focus of a reconsecration ceremony (*kaiguang*) every fifth year.

The main Buddhist temple of Baiyangyuan was called Baozhongsi, or Temple for the Praise of Loyalty. Located just outside Newbridge on its “arriving dragon” (*lailong*), Mother Hill (Kunshan),^② across from the Hill of the Drum (Muyushan) just inside the general water exit of all Baiyangyuan, the Temple for the Praise of Loyalty used to have two-meter tall Sanbao in its main hall and was inhabited by some 80 monks. In 1949, there were still four monks, and the son of the last monk still does Buddhist rites locally. Curiously, this temple seems to have been managed by the Yus of West Village: a 1922 manuscript which carefully lists gifts to the temple, refers to the founding of the temple in 1138, the construction of a Guanyin Hall in 1535, and the building of a Guanyin temple in 1556. Down through 1754, many of the gifts

① As in Hakka parts of Fujian, stealing the statue of a god is not considered theft. In Fujian I was told that gods saw such “theft” as evidence of the ardor of the worshipers who did the stealing, while Wu Zhengfang explained orally that it was like keeping a “borrowed” book; “This is not really theft.”

② The Wangs built their ancestor god temple at the foot of Father Mountain (Qianshan), on the northeast bank of the Yangyuan River, and their main hall at the foot of the same Mother Mountain as the Buddhist temple, but just inside the village.

have to do with the Guanyin Hall, and all gifts but one are from the Yus. A 1917 - 1918 reconsecration ceremony in the Guanyin Hall seems to confirm the Yus were completely in charge of the temple.

Guanyin was also the focus of an annual Jiao done yearly by the Wus and Fangs of Upper Village. Because the Guanyin of Qiankou was said to be very powerful, the various lineage segments took turns going to Qiankou to fetch a paper image of her. Having set out on the afternoon of 6/17, they would return the following day as far as Nanyuankou, carrying the image under an umbrella. On 6/19 at dawn, they would rush to a pavilion at a local water exit, where the group in charge that year would be waiting with other paper Pusa. As soon as Guanyin arrived, she was placed in a paper sedan chair on the back of a unicorn and carried by eight youths to a temporary ritual arena set up in front of the lineage hall of the segment in charge that year. On 6/21, all village males joined in a parade that circled the entire village, with Guanyin being carried by the segment in charge. When the parade returned to the ritual arena, water brought back from Qiankou was spewed into the fields and prayers for timely rain were made. On 6/25, the youths of the segment in charge carried the paper Guanyin back to the local water exit for burning, while the monk did a final recitation. The monk who performed the various rituals was paid not with money but with select offerings taken from the offering bowls.

Of the three most famous festivals of southern She County, one took place in Newbridge on 9/13 (the others occurred in Changqi, in the seventh month, for Old Eight, and on 8/1 for King Li in Bei'an). Done to celebrate King Zhou, it was organized by rotation among the eight Wang lineage segments. As elsewhere, the most arduous preparations concerned the 80 special offering dishes, which were similar to those of the Wus but included more

zongzi and chicken dishes (King Zhou was said to like chicken blood). Already on 9/11 the ritual arena was prepared in the lineage hall, and an opera stage set up. On the morning of the next day, the 80 bowls and the whole pig and goat were sent to the hall for display, and that afternoon all Wang youths went to fetch the gods — King Wen of Zhou, Old Eight, and the Duke of Zhou — with special chairs carried on their backs. That night, lanterns were lit and, at 11 p. m. , red candles. After joint worship by all males, the three gods were carried by torchlight back to their temple. On 9/13, at dawn, every village family, but also the faithful from 10 *li* around, came with a rooster to the temple. The slaying of the sacrificial victims, which went on until noon, was done by lineage males in front of the temple. That afternoon, all village males over the age of 10 came to fetch the Pusa from the temple. The gods, dressed in new clothes and with new shoes on their feet, each astride a wooden lion, were placed in separate palanquins and carried to the hall (the gods brought up the rear of the parade). Eight opera players dressed as the eight immortals stood on the water exit bridge to welcome the gods, who were then carried to the Wang hall for a solemn sacrifice. As the sacrifice came to an end, a butcher chopped off the head of the pig and weighing of the meat began for sale to butcher shops in the area. That night, the lineage head invited all *lisheng* to a nine-course banquet, and the segment in charge sent two glutinous rice *zongzi* and a bowl of pig tripe soup to each family (*hu*) of the segments not in charge that year. Opera now began, with four plays per set: the first had to be auspicious and “civil”, the second “military”, the third focused on singing skills and civil, and the last a “big military opera”. Each set ended with a “togetherness” (*tuanyuan*) rite in which couples from families of three generations living together

bowed to the spectators. Often thereafter there was a series of humorous skits. For three days running there were two opera sets per day, sometimes, as in 1936, with *duitaxi*, two opera troupes competing for spectators. Throughout this time, there was a thriving market in agricultural products, with numerous artisans and food stands as well. Finally, on 9/16 in the afternoon all males, dressed in new clothes and carrying incense, brought the three gods back in a massive parade to their temple.

As noted above, the Temple for the Praise of Loyalty occupied a strategically important place in Baiyangyuan, just across from and facing the general water exit. That it occupied this site, according to Wu Zhengfang, is to be explained by the fact "locals really believe in Buddhism". The Green Dragon Hill to the left of the water exit is long and has its head in the clouds, while the White Tiger's Drum Hill undulates and the Yangyuan River meanders. When viewed from in front of the temple, it is like a monk reading scriptures while beating on the wooden drum, and the river is like a playing carp. The inner water exit is at the foot of Drum Hill, where rose a camphor tree requiring four pairs of arms to encircle it, and whose leafy crown seemed to embrace the whole valley. Wu Zhengfang recalls fondly going to play there when a child, and jumping in the water (as he remembers giving a wide birth to the terrifying Red Temple of hell).^① At the foot of the tree there was a dam that diverted the river water to the temple's stone wheel mill, making music together with the temple bell. One of many

① When its predecessor temple was destroyed in 1546, only the statue of Sire Wang-Old Emperor was saved, so in 1548, four villages together built the King Wang Temple. Because he had committed suicide by leaping into the water when the emperor suggested he was disloyal, even after he had already killed his nine sons, Sire Wang was considered locally to be Yanwang, the king of hell.

local tales tells of a saintly “little monk” who, during a huge storm, fought off a venomous serpent with a tamed scorpion and so saved all. A stone mill was built on the site of the battle, called Dragon Roil Hill, and when milling was done there at night, a hand would reach out to ask for its share of the wheat flour, said to be the land tax used by the monk to feed the scorpion. When this happened, the flour was always more refined and whiter, and the noodles made from it better, so people liked to come to this mill to grind their wheat.

If the Yus of West Village clearly had a special relationship with the Temple for the Praise of Loyalty, the monks of this temple not only did an annual Jiao for the Newbridge Wangs on 1/18, they collected rice throughout Baiyangyuan in exchange for talismans sent out to every house on 5/5. The nuns of Longsheng'an did the same. The shaving of the nuns' heads in 1947 was the occasion for a huge festival.

Seasonal festivals and other customs

From the remaining detailed accounts of seasonal festivals, as well as of house-building, marriage, burial, birth, and birthday rituals, I will select random elements that are of particular interest. For house-building, Wu Zhengfang has a 1692 - 1697 account book to rely on. It records no fewer than 72 banquets given over the course of the six-year construction period. Six different events were of sufficiently critical importance to the quality of life in the future house that they had to be done at lucky times. These included the day on which work was started, the erection of pillars and the central beam, and the final “pacifying the earth and sacrificing to the gate god”. This last involved “dragging the pig to welcome the dragon”, the aim of which was to divert the energies flowing in the