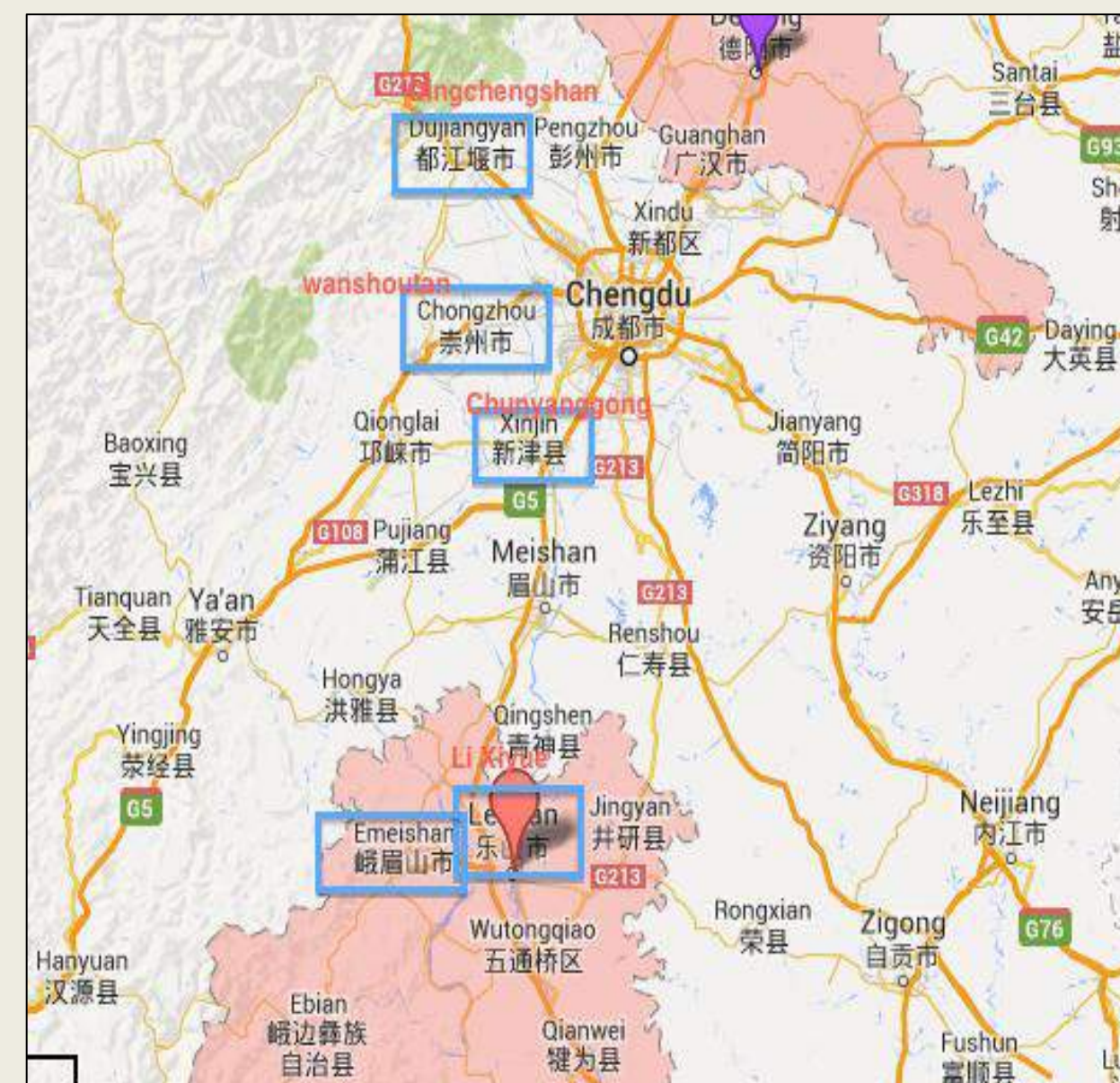


Mapping the Transmission of the Cult of Lü Dongbin to Sichuan in the 19th Century

Why Sichuan?

Sichuan remain largely unexplored, but is a venue of unique coexistence and cooperation of several religious traditions. This makes it a crucial case study of religious diffusion and community networks in China.

Large migration of coastal communities bringing their resources and beliefs to Sichuan



Some site of interest for Lü Dongbin cult

Why Lü Dongbin?

Lü Dongbin is one of the most popular divinities in late imperial China, one of the few to have been canonized by the Emperor during the Qing dynasty (with Wenchang, Mazu and Guandi). Still today he receives active devotion, and in southern China and Taiwan he transmit advice and scriptures through spirit writing.

Several Qing dynasty temples dedicated to Lü Dongbin still remain in Sichuan



Statue of Lü Dongbin at the Chunyang guan in Xinjin

ID7	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	Name	PERIOD	TimeSpan	TimeSpan	DATE of cons	PAGE	SECTION	NAME	DESCRIPTION	features	x_coor	y_coor
1	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1840	1840	1847		卷二	政教	在城	十卷	104.91	28.88
2	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1844	1844	1857	58	卷之九	政教	在城	二十卷	107.5001	31.22997
3	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1843	1843	1825	4	卷之九	政教	在城	九卷	106.4449	29.5664
4	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1821	1849	?		卷之三	政教	在城	八卷	108.0316	30.2859
5	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1875	1875	1875		卷之三	政教	在城	十卷	108.19	29.44
6	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1876	1876	1884		卷之三	政教	在城	三十卷	104.8484	29.78475
7	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1879	1879	1883		卷之三	政教	在城	三十卷	103.9451	30.99188
8	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1884	1884	?		卷之三	政教	在城	十卷	107.7876	30.66554
9	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1885	1885	1817		卷之三	政教	在城	十三卷	104.6164	28.71483
10	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1887	1887	1887		卷之三	政教	在城	十三卷	105.8876	31.09462
11	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1887	1887	1883		卷之三	政教	在城	十五卷	106.3673	31.03831
12	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1900	1900	1882		卷之三	政教	在城	十一卷	104.076	29.63712
13	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1908	1908	1886		卷之三	政教	在城	五十四卷	105.4626	28.18173
14	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1875	1875	1862		卷之三	政教	在城	二十卷	106.4392	30.54428
15	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1796	1820	?		卷之三	政教	在城	十卷	107.7876	30.66554
16	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1808	1808	?		卷之三	政教	在城	十三卷	104.8892	28.39227
17	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1806	1806	1806		卷之三	政教	在城	四十卷	103.8874	30.80772
18	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1813	1813	1813		卷之三	政教	在城	一卷	103.9451	30.99188
19	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1816	1816	1806		卷之三	政教	在城	四卷	103.8211	30.92563
20	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1806	1820	1812		卷之三	政教	在城	五十四卷	105.8579	29.58076
21	四川	成都	成都府志	清	1812	1812	1816		卷之三	政教	在城	二十卷	102.8339	29.79513

Some of the sites with altar names and date of construction

Causes of the transmission

1. Vast migrations from coastal areas throughout the Qing dynasty – esp. in the 19th century. Movement of beliefs.
2. Jiaqing emperor 1804 edict canonizing Lü Dongbin, ordering the building of temples in his honor in all provinces
3. Intervention of government officials on local religious activities

Effects of the transmission

1. Replacement of altars to local divinities (e.g. Chuanzhu)
2. Restoration of previous religious sites
3. Development of relationship between local actors, migrating communities, government officials

Larger significance

1. Part of a larger study of Lüzu related activities all over China.
2. Case study for a larger interest in the diffusion of guildhalls as part of a network of socio-religious spaces.
3. Reassess Lü Dongbin as a Daoist divinity. These spaces are outside the Daoist temple network
4. Reiterate Importance of local religious history

1585	1+1
1683 (rebuilt)	
1751	1
1804	EDICT
1805	6
1806	1
1809	1
1811	1
1814	1
1816	1
1817	2
1821	1
1825	1
1827	1
1829	1
1834	1
1837	1
1852	1
1859	1
1862	2
1864	1
1875	1
1883	1
1886	1
1887	1
Not dated but with mention of Jiaqing edict	5

Table with dates of stone steles commemorating the building of temples to Lüzu gathered from Sichuan gazetteers – only 2 prior to 1804
Only one is a Daoist temple

Methodology and sources

Data mining of gazetteers, steles, archival texts, local records and surviving sites, recording the building of temples dedicated to Lü Dongbin in Sichuan.

Aim

Creating an interactive map showing the chronological diffusion of temples devoted to Lü Dongbin in Sichuan. This will help to visualize the movement of the cult as well as its causes.

Published materials

Elena Valussi “The transmission of the cult of Lü Dongbin to Sichuan in the nineteenth century, and the transformation of the local religious milieu”, in *Daoism: Religion, History, and Society* 7, 2015



Chunyangdian on Emeishan – now a Buddhist temple



Chunyang guan in Xinjin – now a museum