

## Living Redactions: The Salvationist Roots of Daoist Practice in Central Hunan\*

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### Abstract

This article examines the nature of “secret instructions” (*mizhi* 秘旨 / 密旨) or “secret transmissions” (*michuan* 秘傳 / 密傳) at the heart of many local Daoist lineages. It shows that *mizhi* texts are not rigid codifications of core liturgical knowledge preciously maintained down the generations of a lineage, but are instead active processes of redaction—“living redactions.” *Mizhi* texts are intertextual; they are like fabrics woven and rewoven from various strands of cosmological theory and liturgical know-how drawn from sometimes surprising sources. This article pulls on the threads of a particular *mizhi* text used by a local Zhengyi Daoist lineage currently practicing thunder rites in north-central Hunan. It discovers

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that their Daoist *mizhi* text is substantially rooted in a seventeenth-century text likely related to Xiantiandao 先天道 (Way of the Anterior Heaven), a salvationist movement devoted to the unity of the Three Teachings—Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. That seventeenth-century text was later widely used in spirit-writing altars as it circulated around south and east China. We shall see how certain cosmological theories and inner-chemical methods articulated by this text made their way into the esoteric liturgical teachings of a Daoist lineage in rural Hunan by means of a creative redaction of the lineage's *mizhi* by one of its nineteenth-century masters. And we shall see how the *mizhi* text he created continues to be redacted today.

**Keywords:** Hunan, secret instructions, salvationist movements, Xiantiandao (Way of the Anterior Heaven), spirit-writing, inner alchemy, thunder rites

## 活著的文本，持續的編訂： 湖南湘中道教的救度宗教之根源

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### 摘要

本文旨在研究地方道教宗派所流傳的「秘旨」(密旨)或「秘傳」(密傳)文本的性質。本研究指出一份關於秘旨的文本不是對其宗派世代沿襲之核心儀式知識的一成不變的嚴苛定律，而是不斷編輯、持續修訂的過程。秘旨文本具有很強的互文性，就像紡織品一樣，一份秘旨文本常由各種宇宙學理論和儀式知識在不同時段內層層編織而成。而有時這些理論和知識卻擁有意想不到的來源。本文以湖南湘中地區一個施行雷法的地方正一道教宗派的秘旨抄本為例，梳理其多條文本脈絡。本研究發現該秘旨文本很大程度上來源於一份十七世紀的文本，而此文本與當時的一個致力於宣揚儒、釋、道三教的救度宗教——先天道——有千絲萬縷的聯繫。這個十七世紀的宗教文本在後世通過扶乩降筆的靈文書寫活動傳播到中國各地。本研究顯示，該文本的某些宇宙學理論和內丹教義在十九世紀流傳到湘中，被當地的道教宗派所吸收，由該宗派的法師以創造性的編訂方式將其融入到其宗派的秘旨中。直到今天，那位法師所創造的秘旨文本仍在繼續被編訂與重塑。

關鍵詞：湖南省、秘旨/密旨、救度宗教、先天道、扶乩、內丹、雷法