

Terrifying Demons: A Tang-Dynasty Treatment for Demonic Infestation*

Wei Wu

Abstract

Epidemics were a constant threat to the well-being of people in medieval China. In response to the catastrophic threat of disease, medical practitioners adopted a variety of treatments, including ritual therapies. Such methods have a long history in China, as evidenced by the “magical recipes” that have been discovered among the early Mawangdui 馬王堆 medical manuscripts. In the Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–907) dynasties, the Imperial Medical Office (Taiyi shu 太醫署) established an official role with the title “Erudite of Exorcism” (*zhoujin boshi* 咒禁博士). Although it was a relatively minor position, the Erudite of Exorcism served as a master teacher of incantations of interdiction and was responsible for training Students of Exorcism (*zhoujin sheng* 咒禁生). According to historical records, a number of classical medical texts were studied by those medical students. However, owing to a dearth of extant sources, we know very little about what specialist subjects the Students of Exorcism learned and what incantations of interdiction the Erudite of Exorcism transmitted to their students. Fortunately, *The Book of Interdiction* (*Jin jing* 禁經), compiled by Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581–682), includes popular ritual

Wei Wu is a Ph.D. candidate in the East Asian Languages and Civilization program at Arizona State University. Her academic research focuses on medieval Chinese Daoism, with a special emphasis on its literatures and its relations with Buddhism.

* I am deeply grateful to Professors Stephen R. Bokenkamp, Michael Stanley-Baker and Huaiyu Chen, as well as anonymous reviewers for their most helpful comments.

therapies employed during the Sui-Tang period that allow a glimpse into this world. This paper will focus on ritual therapies found in *The Book of Interdiction* that were used to treat malaria-like diseases (*nüebing* 瘧病), one of the most common diseases during the Tang dynasty. By examining such therapies, we may gain a better understanding of how these ritual methods were thought to treat diseases, why they were considered effective by medieval Chinese people, and how they differed from other examples described in earlier manuscripts.

Keywords: incantation, ritual therapy, Erudite of Exorcism, Sun Simiao, malaria-like disease

香港中文大學出版社：具有版權的資料

嚇鬼：唐代對邪祟病的治療

武微

摘要

在中古時期的中國，傳染疾病一直是人們幸福生活的巨大威脅。面對這種毀滅性的威脅，醫者採用了各種療法應對，其中就包括儀式療法。在中國，儀式療法有著悠久的歷史，例證之一就是在馬王堆出土的醫書中包含大量的「祝由方」。在隋朝(581-618)和唐朝(618-907)，太醫署設置了呪禁博士。呪禁博士是一個品級較低的職位，主要職責是培養呪禁生，傳授他們「禁呪」。根據史料記載，太醫署的學生需要研習很多經典醫書。但是由於傳世資料的匱乏，我們很難知道，作為呪禁生，他們會學習哪些專業技能，呪禁博士會傳授什麼樣的「禁呪」給他們。幸運的是，孫思邈(581-682)的《禁經》收錄了許多隋唐時期流行的儀式療法，可以讓我們了解相關情況。本文主要討論的是《禁經》中記載的唐代流行病之一「瘡病」的儀式療法。通過分析這些療法，我們可以更進一步了解，儀式療法是怎樣「治療」疾病的，為什麼中古時期的人們會相信它們的功效，以及隋唐時期的儀式療法與早期的儀式療法有哪些不同。

關鍵詞：呪、儀式療法、呪禁博士、孫思邈、瘡病