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THE USE OF ZHIMA IN *BAOJUAN* PERFORMANCES OF SOUTHERN JIANGSU: WITH THE EXAMPLE OF TELLING SCRIPTURES IN CHANGSHU CITY

Zhima (紙馬, literally “paper horses”) is a type of deities’ images printed on paper, which are used in the rituals of worshipping different deities and often are burned after the worship is finished. In the latter aspect they are different from the icons in the Christian tradition; though *zhima* also usually assume the role of the object of religious devotion of lay believers in China. *Zhima* are known by different names in different places in China, such as *jiama* 甲馬, *chuma* 楮馬, *shenma* 神馬, *shenzhi* 神紙, *mazhi* 馬紙, *mazi* 馬子, *pusazhi* 菩薩紙, etc. Many Chinese scholars argue that the difference of these names in fact reflects the difference in use of these printed images.

The appearance of *zhima* is related to the development of printing technology and paper money (including ritual money burned for the spirits) in China. Most scholars think that *zhima* first appeared during the Tang dynasty (618–907). They became widespread in the Song period (960–1279), as testified by numerous historical sources of that time. Printing shops specializing on printing *zhima* already existed in that period. Thus, according to the usual interpretations of Chinese scholars, *zhima* constitute an early type of Chinese popular prints (*nianhua* 年畫). Still, the early examples of *zhima* seem not to be preserved. *Zhima* usually are very fragile, which has to do with their use as ritual materials. Foreign scholars apparently were the first to systematically collect *zhima*. Presumably the first large collection of these prints was built up by the Russian academician V. M. Alekseev (1881–1951), who collected *zhima* during his trips to China at the beginning of the 20th century (his *zhima* mainly came from Northern China).

Recently *zhima* have received considerable attention of Chinese scholars, as they were recognized a part of intangible cultural heritage (*feiwuzhi wenhua yichan* 非物質文化遺產) in the PRC. Numerous Chinese studies of *zhima* appeared, not to mention even earlier research by Taiwanese scholars, who paid a lot of attention to these images in their ethnographic and anthropological projects¹. Still, most of modern studies of *zhima* concentrate on the artistic and historical aspects of their imagery, not devoting much space to the practical use of these prints, which still survive in many areas of continental China. These ways of use can vary considerably: for example, Professor Tao Siyan 陶思炎, who specially studied *zhima* in Jiangsu province, noted their four different functions: (1) for major annual festivals, (2) for major events and rituals in a person’s private life, (3) as architectural elements of traditional houses, (4) for ritual ceremonies (Daoist

and folk)². This essay concentrates on the study of the use of *zhima* in the ritualized performances of *baojuan* in the southern part of Jiangsu province (popularly known as a part of the Jiangnan 江南 region in the past).

Baojuan 寶卷 (precious scrolls) is a type of Chinese prosimetric literature (with alternation of prosaic and poetic passages) used for ritualized storytelling, mostly with religious subject matter. They appeared around the 13th — 14th centuries as a type of Buddhist proselytizing literature, but in the later period served as sacred books of sects (popular syncretic religions), which developed primarily in Northern China. Since the 19th century, *baojuan* mostly lost connections with the special sectarian organizations, but continued to develop as a part of folk ritual devoted to various deities³. At the end of the 19th — early 20th centuries *baojuan* recitations became especially popular in Jiangnan area (modern southern part of Jiangsu and northern part of Zhejiang provinces). Southern traditions of *baojuan* recitation, locally known under the names of “scroll recitation” (*xuanjuan* 宣卷) or “telling scriptures” (*jiangjing* 講經), survived till nowadays, though only in the rural and suburban areas⁴.

“Telling scriptures” in Changshu 常熟 (in the past — a county city, now in jurisdiction of Suzhou 蘇州 city) is one of the most archaic traditions of *baojuan* recitation in Jiangsu⁵, especially rich in terms of repertoire of recited texts and accompanying rituals⁶. It has already received significant attention of Chinese and foreign scholars, though most of existing research concentrates on the contents and social background and meaning of their performances⁷. Nobody has discussed in detail the special features of the visual component of “telling scriptures” so far, including the use of *zhima* prints. This essay focuses on the latter aspect, mainly using materials of the author’s fieldwork in Changshu and neighboring areas in 2011–2015.

Telling scriptures in Changshu takes place at the ritual assemblies on the occasions of a baby’s one year birthday, old persons’ anniversaries, prayers for the good health and success in business or studies (for high-school and college students), marriage, temple festivals (or just for worship of particular deities), and funerary (memorial) services for the dead. Most ritual assemblies aimed at the welfare of living people have exorcistic and healing functions. They usually take place in the private houses of the assemblies’ sponsors⁸. Performers of *baojuan* aka local ritualists are called “masters of telling scriptures” (*jiangjing xiansheng* 講經先生), and usually have the status of professionals. They specially study this art and charge believers for the performances. *Baojuan* texts recited in Changshu nowadays usually narrate stories of popular deities; pure entertaining “secular” subjects are not common. “Telling scriptures” in Changshu is usually associated with the Buddhist teaching; though as we shall see many deities of non-Buddhist origin are worshipped during these ritual assemblies. Telling scriptures alternates the recitation of prose parts with singing of verses. While singing verses, the masters of telling scriptures employ a wooden fish (*muyu* 木魚; a percussion instrument), “clap block” (*xingmu* 醒木), and *xingze* 醒仄⁹. No melodic instru-

ments are used. At the moment the performer finishes each even line of verse, the chorus (consisting of old women) sings the last syllable/character in the line (it is this character that is rhymed) together with the performer and chants the name of Buddha Amitābha. Chorus members are also engaged in the preparation of ritual objects, which include ritual money and paper flowers. Though a baojuan text (usually a manuscript) serves a script for recitation, the performer also may add some details to the story, called “inserting flowers” (*cha hua* 插花).

Zhima prints, which are locally known as “Buddhas’ horses” (*fō ma* 佛馬), make a necessary element of telling scriptures in Changshu, as they represent the deities on the temporary altars, constructed by the masters of telling scriptures. Such altars usually are set up on the tables, on which the offerings for the deities are placed, and around which the performer and chorus members sit during the assembly. The main (“vegetarian”) altar (*su tai* 素臺) is decorated with the hanging scroll with the painted images of deities (*sheng xiang* 聖像), in front of which zhima and other ritual paraphernalia are placed (see fig. 1 and 2)¹⁰. The usual arrangement for telling scriptures, aimed at the welfare of living people, includes two sets of zhima, placed on the “vegetarian” and “meat” altars (*hun tai* 葷臺). The contents of these sets vary in different locations and schools of performers. In the tradition, represented by Yu Dingjun (b. 1942), the hereditary “master of telling scriptures” from Shanghu 尚湖 town near Changshu, the “vegetarian” set comprises 18 and the “meat” set — 22 images. In the “vegetarian” set these are (from left to right) the Stove God (Zaojie 竈界, or Zaojia 竈家), the Deity of Prohibitions (Jinji 禁忌), the Releasing God (Jieshen 解神), North Dipper (Beidou 北斗), Three Officials (San guan 三官), the Star of Longevity (Shouxing 壽星), Bodhisattva Guanyin 觀音, Three Realms (San jie 三界), Earth (Di 地), Heaven (Tian 天), Jade Emperor (Yuhuang 玉皇), Buddha *Tathāgata* (Rulai 如來), Queen Mother [of the West] (Wangmu 王姆), Dark Emperor (Xuandi 玄帝), South Dipper (Nan dou 南斗), the Deity of the Current Year (Benming 本命), Blood Light (Xueguang 血光), and the Deity of the Family Hall (Jiatang 家堂). The “meat” set includes the Earth God (Tudi 土地), Deity Liu (Liu shen 劉神), Chief Supervisors (Zongguan 總管), the Fierce General [Liu] (Liu Mengjiang 劉猛將), Five Spouses [of Wutong] (Wu furen 五夫人), [Lady of] the Jade Earrings (Yuhuan 玉環), Grand Dowager (Tailao 太姥), Lord Xiao (Xiao gong 肖公), Guanyin¹¹, Five Miraculous-Ones (Wu linggong 五靈公, or Wutong 五通), King Yan (Yan wang 炎王), King Li (Li wang 李王, or Deity Li [Li shen 李神]), Deity Zhou (Zhou shen 周神, or Zhou the Pious Son [Zhou Xiaozhi 周孝子]), and the Amulet Official (Fuguan 符官).

All these deities are closely connected with the contents of baojuan texts recited at the corresponding altar. The vegetarian altar is associated with the nationwide, sovereign deities, who mainly have Buddhist or Daoist origins. Such texts, as the *Baojuan of the Jade Emperor* (*Yuhuang baojuan* 玉皇寶卷), *Baojuan of the Incense Mountain* (*Xiangshan baojuan*, devoted to Guanyin), *Baojuan of the Prince Siddhārtha* (*Xida taizi baojuan* 悉達太子寶卷, devoted to Buddha Shakyā-

munì), *Baojuan of Three Officials* (*San guan baojuan* 三官寶卷), *Baojuan of the Stove God* (*Zaohuang baojuan* 竈皇寶卷), et al., are recited at this altar. Besides these, the set of “vegetarian” *zhima* also comprises ancient deities responsible for a person’s lifespan and destiny, including the Star of Longevity, North and South Dipper, and Queen Mother of the West, who are related to several main purposes of “telling scriptures” in Changshu, namely magical healing and “extension of longevity” (*yan shou* 延壽). Besides, there is the deity of exorcistic function: the Releasing God (also featured in one of *baojuan* texts)¹².

The meat altar is arranged for the deities, who require meat offerings. Many of them are local deities, specific for southern Jiangsu or even worshipped only in Changshu. Central among them are Wutong and their retinue, including their spouses (*Wu furen*), parents Grand Dowager and Lord Xiao, mother-in-law Sacred Dowager of the Jade Earrings (*Yuhuan shenglao* 玉環聖姥), as well as the Fiery Buddha-King (*Huoyanwang Fo* 火炎王佛). All these deities act in the *Baojuan of Grand Dowager*, which is the main text recited at the “meat” altar¹³. Wutong are the local deities of wealth (and exorcistic function) of demonic origin, which have been popular in the whole Jiangnan, with the center on Shangfang 上方 Mountain near Suzhou (see fig. 3)¹⁴. The papercut image of the pagoda on this mountain is the main decoration of the “meat” altar and also serves the amulet left in the house after telling scriptures is finished. Other meat-eating deities on *zhima* include Jin the Chief Supervisors (*Jin Zongguan* 金總管), Fierce General Liu, King Li, Deity Zhou, and Deity Liu (usually identified as the mediumistic deity of the Shanghu 尚湖 lake near the old county city of Changshu — Liu Dagen 劉大根). All these are also featured in *baojuan* texts, recited at the “meat” altar¹⁵. The list of these deities varies according to the exact location of a telling scriptures spot, as different deities are worshipped in different villages¹⁶.

Zhima plays very important role in the ritual setting of telling scriptures in Changshu. The leading performer, together with his chorus and sponsors of the ritual assembly, first bow in front of them, while conducting the ritual of the “deities’ invitation” (lit. “inviting the Buddhas” *qing fo* 請佛)¹⁷. It is an enumeration of the names of major deities, worshipped during this assembly. These names are included in the special ritual manual, which masters of telling scriptures know by heart. Many of them (though not all) are represented in the sets of *zhima* placed on the “vegetarian” and “meat” altars. The offerings of tea and wine are also performed in front of *zhima* on the “vegetarian” and “meat” altars respectively. After the recitation of *baojuan* texts is finished, and the “memorial” (*shutou* 疏頭) of the assembly (with the prayers for well-being of the sponsors) is submitted to the deities, deities are “sent-off” by the performer, and *zhima* are burned outside of the performance spot, usually in the yard of the private house (together with numerous ritual money for the deities, prepared by the participants of the ritual assembly). Burning of *zhima* represents the departure of deities to their usual abode.

One needs to note that different sets of *zhima* are used for different types (occasions) of telling scriptures in Changshu. For example, for the recitation of

the *Baojuan of Constellations* (*Xingsu baojuan* 星宿寶卷), which has exorcistic meaning (averting malicious stars) the following set of 12 zhima is used: 28 constellations (Ershiba su 二十八宿, represented by one print), Releasing Deity, Deity of the Current Year, North Dipper, Star of Longevity, Star Lord (Xingzhu 星主), Mother of Dippers (Doumu 斗姆), Queen Mother [of the West], South Dipper, Longevity Deity (Changsheng 長生), Deity of Prohibition, and 12 Celestial Palaces (Shier gongchen 十二宮辰). In several local traditions, this set is also supplemented with the additional row of 10 zhima, representing 7 constellations of the Green Dragon of the East (Dongfang Canglong 東方蒼龍), 7 constellations of the White Tiger of the West (Xifang Baihu 西方白虎), 7 constellations of the Vermillion Bird of the South (Nanfang Zhuque 南方朱雀), 7 constellations of the Dark Warrior of the North (Beifang Xuanwu 北方玄武), Celestial Executioner (Tianxing 天刑), Celestial Prison (Tianlao 天牢), Six Deities of Malicious Stars (Xiongxing 凶星), Deity Transmitting Amulets (Zhifu 直符), Gouchen 勾陳, and Tengshe 騰蛇 (Raising Snake)¹⁸. During funerary “telling scriptures” (one of the most common occasions for these performances nowadays) the following set is used: Earth God (Tudi 土地), Taiyi 太乙, [Lord of] Fengdu 豐都 Mountain, [Emperor] of the Eastern Peak 東嶽, Buddha Mituo (彌陀, Sansk. Amitābha), Bodhisattva Guanyin, Bodhisattva Dizang (地藏, Sansk. Ksitigarbha), and City God (Chenghuang) in the upper row; and the Stove God, Sacred Tiger (Shenhu 神虎), Mulian 目蓮, Three Realms (San jie 三界), Mother of Dippers (Doumu 斗姆), Deities Welcoming [to the Western Land] (Jieyin 接引), Three Departments (San si 三司), and the Deity of the Family Hall (Jiatang 家堂) in the lower row. There is also the additional row of zhima which represents the Ten Kings of hell, who judge the souls of the dead in the underworld.

One can see that “telling scriptures” nowadays widely uses zhima. But when was the connections between them established? It is hard to find out, when zhima became associated with baojuan recitation exactly. Though we know that baojuan performances made use of visual devices¹⁹, these texts rarely make precise references to zhima. Still, one can assume that zhima already were used during this recitation in the 16th — 17th centuries, when baojuan (usually texts with sectarian affiliation) became widespread in northern areas of China. The earliest mention of zhima in connection with baojuan recitation that I have discovered so far appears in the *Baojuan of Bodhisattva Dizang Governing the Underworld* (*Dizang wang pusa zhizhang youming baojuan* 地藏王菩薩執掌幽冥寶卷), dated 1679²⁰. Chapter 16 of this baojuan “Dizang’s birthday celebration” (地藏慶誕) mentions zhima in the brief description of celebration of Dizang’s birthday on the 30th day of the seventh lunar month, which is the nationwide religious festival (it is considered to be the day of the salvation of deceased persons). According to this *Dizang Baojuan*, recitation of sacred texts (Buddhist sutras as well as baojuan) also took place on that day²¹. The verse says:

At first the organizers wrote the letter to the abbot of Buddhist monastery,
Then they wrote the invitation to the elders of the town [where they lived].

On the 30th day of the seventh month they celebrated the birthday of the Venerable Mother²².

They collected money to prepare the paper-cut stores and houses to greet the deities.

一封書先下與寺中長老。
寫柬帖又乞請一鎮賢人。
到七月三十日老母聖壽。
攢金銀扎庫樓響賽神靈。

Then the Buddhist ritual of the souls' salvation is described:

While the Buddhist monks recited the true scriptures,

All people of the town kneeled and confessed their sins.

In the evening the ritual of feeding multitude of souls was performed²³,

With the penitence text of the Wu Emperor of the Liang they reached salvation²⁴.

衆僧人開口念真經朗誦。
一鎮人都跪下懺悔惡因。
到晚來放施食諸魂等候。
要逢念梁武懺盡得超生。

Zhima appear in the final stage of ritual performance:

They distributed zhima, burned the ritual money, recited the memorial [for the deities], thanked the spirits, and rewarded the monks. Their wish was realised, as they cleansed the sins of the lonely souls, and they departed to their houses after making a deep final bow.

發了紙馬，燒了金銀，宣了疏合文，酬了諸神，謝了僧人，滿了心意，懺了孤魂，各人散去，深深打一躬。²⁵

Ritual actions mentioned in this passage are strikingly similar to those during modern baojuan recitations in Changshu: arranging zhima, burning of ritual money, submission (burning) of the memorial to the deities, etc.²⁶ One can assume that zhima were already associated with baojuan recitation at that time. This was a quite natural phenomenon, as zhima are still widely used in the folk rituals there, not necessarily related to baojuan²⁷. It is possible to suppose that zhima were borrowed by the performers of baojuan from the widespread Buddhist and Daoist rituals, which influenced the ritual setting of these performances. The similarities in the ritual setting of this old northern tradition of baojuan recitation with those in Changshu and neighboring areas can be explained by the fact that the latter originated from the first. Chinese scholars have promulgated the theory of the northern origins of baojuan recitation in the Yangzi delta (Jiangnan)²⁸.

As for the particular traditions of baojuan recitation in Changshu and neighboring areas, we can suppose that they used zhima already at the end of the 19th — early 20th centuries. At that time scroll recitation became very popular in the Yangzi delta (including urban centers). We can see zhima on pictures, showing scroll recitation in the houses of Shanghai sing-song girls in the illustrated edition of the *Stories of Flowers on the Sea* (*Haishang hua liezhuan* 海上花列傳,

usually translated as *Sing-song Girls of Shanghai* into English), written by Han Bangqing 韓邦慶 (1856–1894) ca. 1892, and in the illustrated periodical *Tuhua ribao* 圖畫日報 (early 20th century)²⁹. These pictures show zhima arranged on the temporary altars, specially constructed for scroll recitation, similar to those in modern “telling scriptures” of Changshu: zhima were placed on the tables in the guest rooms of private houses, around which the team of performers sat and chanted the texts (see fig. 4 and 5). We can see that zhima were quite big and detailed. Apparently these Shanghai images reflected the common practice of performances in the neighboring areas.

Another possible source of zhima in application to baojuan recitation in Changshu are Daoist services that also often use zhima. Nowadays, the ordained Daoists in the urban cities (such as Suzhou and Shanghai) do not possess zhima; but the latter are still commonly seen in the services by the “lay-residing” Daoists (*huoju Daoshi* 火居道士) in the rural areas, including Changshu³⁰. However, one can suppose that situation with zhima in urban centers was different in the past, as we know from historical records that zhima were once popular among the Daoist priests in Shanghai (till the prohibitions of printing and selling zhima were issued by the Republican government at the end of the 1920s — beginning of the 1930s). In Changshu, the Daoists use different sets of zhima for the services with different purposes. For example, the usual Daoist service of consecrating a new house (called “gratitude for the Heaven and Earth”, *xiehong* 謝鴻)³¹ use the following zhima: in the upper row (from left to right): Dark altar (Xuantan 玄壇), Lu Ban 魯班, Four Generals (Si jiang 四將), Patriarch Shen (Shen zu 申祖), Master of Fire (Huoshi 火師), Deity of Prohibitions (Jinji 禁忌), Earth 地, Heaven 天, Master Pu’an 普安 (普庵), Earth King (Tuwang 土王 or Tuhuang 土皇), Celestial Master (Tianshi 天師), Miraculous Official (Linguan 靈官), Zhang Ban 張班, and the Earth Master (Dishi 地師); and in the lower row: Stove God, Earth God (Tudi 土地), Six spirits [of the household] (Liu shen 六神), Tengshe, Dark Warrior (Xuanwu 玄武), White Tiger (Baihu 白虎), Five Gods of Earth of Five Directions (Wu fang wu tu 五方五土)³², Blue Dragon (Qinglong 青龍), Vermillion Bird (Zhuque 朱雀), Gouchen, House Deity (Jiazhai 家宅), City God (Chenghuang), and the God of Family Hall (Jiatang 家堂) (see fig. 6 and 7). While comprising well-known deities of the nationwide scope, this set includes several specific Daoist deities (such as Zhang the Celestial Master and Miraculous Official) and represents the pantheon completely different from that used by the masters of telling scriptures on the same occasion.

The difference between the “Daoist” and “Buddhist” sets of zhima in Changshu corresponds to the parallel and complimentary function of the Daoist and Buddhist rituals in this location. The Daoists and “masters of telling scriptures” often conduct their rituals on the same occasion and in the same household, but the contents of the services and timing differ. For example, both a “telling scripture” team and the Daoist team can be invited for the consecration of the new house; in this case, two teams perform simultaneously, but in the different rooms of a house³³. Cooperation between the Daoists and “masters of telling scriptures” is even more conspicuous

in the case of funerary (and memorial) services, when both types of specialists are invited to pray for the salvation (better rebirth) of the soul of the dead. However, in the case of funerals two teams usually perform in different time periods (taking the lead of funerary rituals in turn)³⁴. There are even cases, when a member of a “telling scripture” team is trained as a Daoist ritual specialist, whose duty is to conduct simplified Daoist ritual on the aforementioned occasions, which substitutes for the costly complex ritual requiring participation of several Daoist priests (*daochang* 道場)³⁵. This parallel use of telling scriptures and Daoist services makes a case of the Buddho-Daoist symbiosis and competition, which is characteristic of Chinese religious landscape since the early medieval period³⁶. As the masters of telling scriptures in Changshu apparently always had to perform along with their Daoist rivals, since long ago they borrowed many elements of ritual setting as well as some individual rituals (notably those of exorcistic meaning) from the Daoist tradition³⁷. Nevertheless, the masters of telling scriptures usually insist on their self-identification of the Buddhist ritual maters (“Buddhist disciples” — *Fo dizi* 佛弟子). The use of zhima also constitutes a feature, common for both types of ritual services. Still, we cannot assert any direct influence of the Daoist practice on this aspect of telling scriptures, because of considerable difference in the pantheons represented on zhima. It is better to suggest the parallel development and constant competition, and the latter may have contributed to the complex and conservative ways of use of zhima in modern “telling scriptures” in Changshu. Besides Daoist and “telling scriptures” services, zhima are also still burned by the local lay believers in Changshu during private rituals, which do not require participation of ritual specialists, such as worshipping the Stove God before the Chinese New Year (Spring Festival) or praying to the God of Wealth (Caishen 財神) after the New Year.

The folk artists, who are engaged in the production of zhima in Changshu, also differentiate between the sets of zhima for “telling scriptures” and Daoist services, as they follow the requirements of their clients. There are still several traditional workshops specializing in making zhima in Changshu, which make this whole area very special in comparison with the neighboring locations³⁸. In Changshu one still can find woodblocks, from which zhima are printed (see fig. 8). Usually woodblocks provide only imprints of black outlines of the deities’ figures; while the color is added later with the use of special stencils (known as the “oil paper” you zhi 油紙; one for each color) (see fig. 9). As the result one has a colorful image of the deity with individual features (see fig. 10). For example, Guan Di 關帝 (Guan Yu 關羽) on Changshu *zhima* has the red face and his usual military attributes, Fierce General Liu wears special helmet and military attire, while Jin the Chief Supervisors and Deity Zhou have different hats of civil officials.

Nevertheless, modernization also influenced this aspect of telling scriptures. Nowadays, many masters of telling scriptures of younger generation prefer to use simplified prints rather than traditional *zhima*. These are made without the use of traditional woodblocks (painted only with stencils), or printed with the use of computer graphics. This tendency obviously endangers the further

continuation of traditional religious art of zhima printing, as it is possible that specialized zhima workshops will lose their usual clientele and disappear soon. In this perspective collection and study of traditional zhima in Changshu is an urgent task of scholars.

Zhima constitute an important part of folk culture in Changshu. Notably, they are widely used in “telling scriptures” performances, which primarily survived in this area and have many local characteristics. Though it is hard to trace the origins of the connection between “telling scriptures” and zhima in Changshu, we can assert that this connection is quite old and can be traced to historical sources and images, concerning baojuan performances in the past. The cultural value of Changshu zhima lies in the fact that they represent pantheons of local religious traditions, and have strong local specifics. We can also observe the complex use of zhima in Changshu, as they are used in different ways by the Daoists and masters of telling scriptures. Besides, local printing shops preserved the traditional forms and styles of zhima prints, which can offer some clues for the historical study of the material aspect of this art.

Abbreviations:

ZCBJ: Wu Wei 吳偉, ed., *Zhongguo Changshu baojuan* 中國常熟寶卷 (Suzhou: Guwuxuan, 2015).

Notes

- ¹ See e. g., Yang Yusheng 楊鬱生, *Yunnan jima* 雲南甲馬 (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 2002); Wang Shucun 王樹村, *Zhongguo minjian zhima yishu shihua* 中國民間紙馬藝術史話 (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi chubanshe, 2008); Wang Shucun 王樹村, *Minjian zhima* 民間紙馬 (Beijing: Zhongguo qinggongye chubanshe, 2009); Feng Jicai 馮驥才, ed., *Neiqiu zhima* 內丘紙馬, in the series of *Zhongguo muban nianhua jicheng* 中國木板年畫集成 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009); Tao Siyan 陶思炎, *Jiangsu zhima* 江蘇紙馬 (Nanjing: Dongnan daxue chubanshe, 2011), Qu Yanling 曲艷玲, *Shensheng kongjian: Yunnan zhima zaoxing yishu yanjiu* 神聖空間：雲南紙馬造型藝術研究 (Kunming: Yunnan daxue chubanshe, 2013).
- ² Tao Siyan, *Jiangsu zhima*, pp. 103–104.
- ³ For an introduction to *baojuan*, see Sawada Mizuho 澤田瑞穗, *Zōho hōkan no kenkyū* 增補寶卷の研究 (Tokyo: Dōkyō kankōkai, 1975); Daniel L. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes: An Introduction to Chinese Scriptures from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Li Shiyu 李世瑜, *Baojuan lunji* 寶卷論集 (Taipei: Lantai chubanshe, 2007); Che Xilun 車錫倫, *Zhongguo baojuan yanjiu* 中國寶卷研究 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2009). There are also research works on baojuan in Russian: *Baotsiuan' o Pu-mine*, ed., translated into Russian and annotated by El'vira S. Stulova (Moscow: Nauka, 1979); Rostislav Berezkin, *Dragocennye sviatki (Baotsiuan') v duhovnoi kul'ture Kitaia: na primere Baotsiuan' o Treh Voplosheniyah Muliania* (Saint-Petersburg: Saint-Petersburg Center for Oriental Studies, 2012).
- ⁴ See e. g., Che Xilun, *Zhongguo baojuan yanjiu*, pp. 207–239, 279–419; Lu Yongfeng 陸永峰 and Che Xilun 車錫倫, *Jingjiang baojuan yanjiu* 靖江寶卷研究 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2008); Shi Lin 史琳, *Suzhou Shengpu xuanjuan* 蘇州勝浦宣卷 (Suzhou: Guwuxian chubanshe, 2010); Lu Yongfeng and Che Xilun, *Wu fangyan qu baojuan yanjiu* 吳方言區寶卷研究 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2012);

- Zhong Xiao'an 鐘小安, *Shaoxing xuanjuan yanjiu* 紹興宣卷研究 (Beijing: Shehui kexue chubanshe, 2014).
- 5 “Telling scriptures” also survived in Zhangjiagang 張家港, the new city established partly on the territory of former Changshu county, see Rostislav Berezkin, “Scripture telling (*jiangjing*) in the Zhangjiagang area and the history of Chinese storytelling”. *Asia Major* 24, part 1, June 2011: 1–42.
 - 6 For the collection of texts, recently printed by folk scholars, see Wu Wei 吳偉, ed., *Zhongguo Changshu baojuan* 中國常熟寶卷 (Suzhou: Guwuxuan, 2015; below abbreviated as ZCBJ), 4 vols.; for the texts collected on the territory of Zhangjiagang, see *Zhongguo Heyang baojuan ji* 中國河陽寶卷集 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua, 2007), 2 vols.; *Zhongguo Shashang baojuan ji* 中國沙上寶卷集 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi, 2011), 2 vols.
 - 7 See e. g., Qiu Huiying 丘慧瑩, “Jiangsu Changshu Baimao diqu xuanjuan huodong diaocha baogao” 江蘇常熟白茆地區宣卷活動調查報告, *Minsu quyi* 民俗曲藝 169 (2010): 183–247; Yu Dingjun 余鼎君, “Jiangsu Changshu de jiangjing xuanjuan” 江蘇常熟的講經宣卷, *Mazu yu minjian xinyang: yanjiu tongxun* 媽祖與民間信仰研究通訊 2. Taibei: Boyang, 2012: 49–114; Rostislav Berezkin, “On the Survival of the Traditional Ritualized Performance Art in Modern China: A Case of Telling Scriptures by Yu Dingjun in Shanghai Town Area of Changshu City in Jiangsu Province”, *Minsu quyi* 民俗曲藝 181 (2013): 167–222; Id., “On the Performance and Ritual Aspects of the *Xiangshan Baojuan*: A Case Study of the Religious Assemblies in the Changshu Area”, *Chinese Studies* (漢學研究) 33.3 (cumulative 82, September 2015): 307–344; Id., “Precious Scroll of the Ten Kings in the Suzhou Area of China: with Changshu Funerary Storytelling as an Example”, *Archiv Orientalni*, 84 (2016): 381–412.
 - 8 This essay primarily deals with this type of private assemblies held for the needs of the living people, locally known as “returning the vow of the Incense Mountain” (*Xiangshan wan yuan* 香山完願), after the main text performed: *Baojuan of the Incense Mountain* (*Xiangshan baojuan* 香山寶卷), see Berezkin, “On the Performance and Ritual Aspects of the *Xiangshan Baojuan*”.
 - 9 A small bell that is struck rather than having a clapper. It is similar to the “guiding gong” (*yingqing* 引磬) in the Buddhist monastic traditions.
 - 10 For the sake of volume, I do not provide the detailed description of this altar in this essay.
 - 11 The fact that the Guanyin’s icon is placed on the meat altar is strange. This should be explained by the fact that she is one of protagonists of the *Baojuan of Grand Dowager* (*Tailao Baojuan* 太姥寶卷, or *Taimu baojuan* 太姆寶卷), the main text recited at the meat altar, many of which are included in the “meat set” of zhima.
 - 12 ZCBJ, 1. 265–282.
 - 13 For the printed text, see ZCBJ, 1. 595–608.
 - 14 On them, see e. g. Ursula-Angelica Cedzich, “The Cult of the Wu-t’ung/Wu-hsien in History and Fiction: the Religious Roots of the Journey to the South”, in *Ritual and Scripture in Chinese Popular Religion: Five Studies*, ed. David Johnson (Berkeley: Chinese Popular Culture Project, 1995), 137–218; Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Cai Limin 蔡利民, ed., *Suzhou minsu caifeng lu* 蘇州民俗采風錄 (Suzhou: Guwuxuan chubanshe, 2014), pp. 241–262.
 - 15 See Rostislav Berezkin, “The Connection Between the Cults of Local Deities and Baojuan (Precious Scrolls) in Changshu county of Jiangsu,” *Monumenta Serica* 61 (2013): 73–106.
 - 16 According to Yu Dingjun, in the time of his father performed telling scriptures (before the 1950s), the “meat set” of zhima had 4 more images, though they repeated those in

the “vegetarian” set. Many modern masters of telling scriptures around Changshu use the “simplified set” of 16 “meat” zhima.

- ¹⁷ See ZCBJ, 3. 2199–2204.
- ¹⁸ The last two are the names of constellations, worshipped by the Chinese as deities.
- ¹⁹ See “Illiustratsii v kitaiskoi prostonarodnoi literature zhanra baotsziuan’ i religioznaia zhi-vopis’ Kitaia 14–19 vv.” (Illustrations of Chinese popular literature *baojuan* and Chinese religious painting of 14th–20th centuries), *Journal of Saint-Petersburg State University*, Series 9: Philology, Oriental Studies, Journalism; vol. 2, part 1, June 2008, pp. 106–110.
- ²⁰ On this text, see Rostislav Berezkin, “The Development of the Mulian Story in *Baojuan* Texts (14th-19th centuries) in Connection with the Evolution of the Genre”, Ph. D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2010, pp. 111–154.
- ²¹ From the literature of that period we know that Buddhist monks often performed *baojuan* at that time.
- ²² In this text *Dizang* is presented in the female form, apparently under the influence of the cult of Unborn Venerable Mother (Wusheng laomu 無生老母), the central deity-progenitor in sectarian teachings of the 16th–17th centuries.
- ²³ This is a Buddhist ritual of universal salvation for all unattended souls.
- ²⁴ I. e. better rebirth. The penitence text of the Wu Emperor of the Liang is a ritual text compiled in China ca. mid. 6th cent.
- ²⁵ *Dizang wang pusa zhizhang youming baojuan* 地藏王菩薩執掌幽冥寶卷, rpt. in Pu Wenqi 濮文起, ed., *Minjian baojuan* 民間寶卷; *Zhongguo zongjiao lishi wenxian jicheng* 中國宗教歷史文獻集成 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2005), vol. 111, pp. 564–565.
- ²⁶ See Berezkin, “The Development of the Mulian Story in *Baojuan* Texts (14th–19th centuries) in Connection with the Evolution of the Genre”, p. 199.
- ²⁷ See, e. g., Feng Jicai 馮驥才, ed., *Neiqiu Zhima* 內丘紙馬, pp. 25–29.
- ²⁸ See Che Xilun, *Zhongguo baojuan yanjiu*, pp. 132–134.
- ²⁹ See, e. g., *Tuhua ribao* 圖畫日報, 1910, no. 264 (rpt. by Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999), vol. 6, p. 163.
- ³⁰ These are local peasants, who serve hereditary ritual specialists in their communities, see e. g., Li Xuechang 李學昌, ed., *20 shiji Changshu nongcun shehui bianqian* 20世紀常熟農村社會變遷 (Shanghai: Shanghai chubanshe, 1998), pp. 343–349.
- ³¹ Various spellings are possible for this term.
- ³² They are represented by zhima of five colors: white, black, yellow, green, and red.
- ³³ This was the case on the occasion of “consecrating the house”, which I witnessed on October 9, 2012 in a rural house in Shanghu district (Changshu) see Berezkin, “On the Survival of the Traditional Ritualized Performance Art in Modern China”, pp. 178–179.
- ³⁴ For details, see Berezkin, “Precious Scroll of the Ten Kings in the Suzhou Area of China”, pp. 381–412.
- ³⁵ Qiu Huiying, “Jiangsu Changshu Baimao diqu xuanjuan huodong diaocha baogao”, pp. 194–95, esp. n. 29. The session of telling scriptures costs less than the Daoist service.
- ³⁶ See Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scriptural, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008).
- ³⁷ Yu Dingjun, “Jiangsu Changshu de jiangjing xuanjuan”, pp. 85–86.
- ³⁸ On *zhima* stores in the vicinity of Wuxi 無錫 city, see Tao Siyan, *Jiangsu zhima*, pp. 57–79.

**Иллюстрации к статье: Rostislav Berezkin
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IN CHANGSHU CITY” («ОТНОСИТЕЛЬНО
ПРИМЕНЕНИЯ ЧЖИМА В ИСПОЛНЕНИИ
БАОЦЗЮАНЬ В ЮЖНОЙ ЧАСТИ ЦЗЯНСУ:
НА ПРИМЕРЕ “РАССКАЗА ПО КАНОНУ”
В РАЙОНЕ ГОРОДА ЧАНШУ»)**



1. Vegetarian altar arranged for “telling scriptures” in the Xinhua village of Shanghu town, Changshu, 09.10.2012



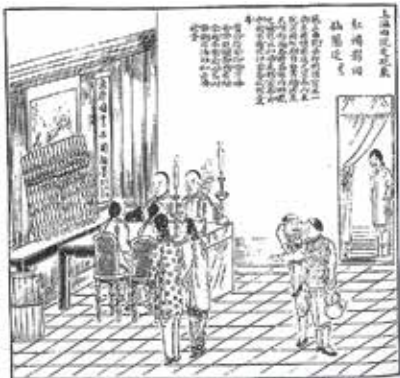
2. “Telling scriptures” at the vegetarian altar; Xinhua village of Shanghu town, Changshu, 09.10.2012



3. Meat altar arranged for “telling scriptures” in the Xinhua village of Shanghu town, Changshu, 09.10.2012



4. Baojuan recitation in the sing-song girls (courtesans) quarters of Shanghai, illustration from the lithographic edition *The Stories of Flowers on the Sea* by Han Bangqing, 1894



5. Baojuan recitation in the sing-song girls (courtesans) quarters of Shanghai, illustration from the Shanghai illustrated newspaper *Tuhua ribao*, 1910



6. Zhima at the Daoist altar used for the consecration of new house; Tianzhuang town in vicinity of Changshu, 16.10.2013



7. Daoist service of the consecration of new house; Tianzhuang town in vicinity of Changshu, 16.10.2013



8. Woodblocks for printing zhima in Changshu, picture courtesy of Zhu Mingchuan



9. Process of printing zhima in Changshu, picture courtesy of Zhu Mingchuan



10. Traditional zhima, used for “telling scriptures” services in Changshu