

The Goddess *Hòh Sīn-gū*

(Culture in the Greater Pearl River Delta Region)

Resistance to marriage is a significant theme found often in the legends of Taoist female deities (such as *Ma-jou*). Based on an analysis of the Goddess *Hòh Sīn-gū* (Transcendent Maiden *Hòh*) culture in Zengcheng, Guangdong, paternal great-aunt worship in the Greater Pearl River Delta are both examples of Taoist cultures centering on unmarried females.

Before the Ming-Qing period, not only was this practice considered normative, but such women were even promoted as deities or family ancestresses. Furthermore, while the lineage system became socially dominant in the Ming-Qing period, the anti-marriage females found in early local or family legends had been transformed into a specific kind of lineage ancestress—the “great-aunt.” Lineage groups appropriated the ancestral worship dedicated to such figures to construct community identity and renew it over time. By focusing on the perceived potential pollution or damaging impact of unmarried women, previous studies have generally interpreted female marriage resistance as opposition to the Chinese patri-lineal viri-local social structure. However, investigation into the unmarried female culture in the Greater Pearl River Delta region reveals that as well as being seen as potentially threatening to the patri-lineal social order, the practice of female marriage resistance was also often viewed as supportive of this same social order. Depending on the specific community’s choices and procedures, unmarried women represented either polluting or deified symbolic powers and were seen to either threaten or support the established social order and were positioned socially either at the periphery or the center.

何仙姑咒之一
Goddess *Hòh Sīn-gū*’s Incantation

拜請女醫何仙姑，

Baai chéng néuih yī Hòh sīn gū

天上差來鎮廟門。

Tīn seuhng chā lòih jan miuh mūhn

頭上花冠及花界，

Tàuh seuhng fā gūn kahp fā gaai

腳踏七星三教輪。

Geuk daahp chāt sīng sāam gaau lèuhn

左手執劍斬妖精，

Jó sáu jāp gim jáam yíu jīng

右手敕水救萬民。

Yauh sáu chēk séui gau maahn mahn

吾喝一聲雷公震，吾喝二聲

ng̃ hot yāt sēng lèuih gūng jan ng̃ hot yih sēng ya

打破三途九洲岳，入在血

Dá po sāam tòuh gáu jāu ngohk yahp joih hyut wí

破厄救苦吾在前，解厄扶

Po āk gau fú ng̃ joih chíhn gáai āk fūh chá

救在世界陰陽惡，

Gau joih sai gaai yām yèuhng ok

急召死者渡脫身。

Gāp jiuh séi jé douh tyut sán

弟子一心專拜請，

Daih jí yāt sām jyūn baai chéng

何氏仙姑領兵來祝壽。

Hòh sīh sīn gū líhng bīng lòih jūk sauh

神兵火急如律令！

何仙姑咒之二

Goddess Hòh Sīn-gū's Incantation (2)

頭戴錦髻金珠冠，
Tàuh daai gám gai gām jyū gūn
手執葫蘆法無邊。
Sáu jāp wùh lòuh faat mōuh bīn
腳踏七星劍光響，
Geuk daahp chāt sīng gim gwōng héung
身座鵬鳥下瑤臺。
Sān joh pàahng níuh hah yìuh tòih
書符咒水行罡法，
Syū fūh jau séui hàahng gōng faat
撒豆成兵到壇前。
Saat dauh sìhng bīng dou tàahn chihn
鬼驚邪走精怪滅，
Gwái gēng chèh jáu jīng gwaai miht
斬斷凶煞不正神。
Jáam dyuhn hūng saat bāt jing sàhn
官軍壁將聽號令，
Gūn gwān bīk jēung tīng houh lihng
大法慈悲救萬民。
Daaih faat chih bēi gau maahn mahn
弟子一心專拜請，
Daih jí yāt sām jyūn baai chéng
何氏仙姑降臨來。
Hòh sih sīn gū gong làhm lòih
神兵火急如律令！

