

Liumen (Liu School)

also known as “Huaixuan dao (Way of the Locust Tree Studio)”, “Huaixuan men (School of the Locust Tree Studio)”, “Liumen jiao (Teachings of the Liu School)”

Data source: Mapping Religious Diversity in Modern Sichuan

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** Data Source entry, prepared based on data sourced from an external project.*

Entry tags: Sichuan and Hanzhong Valley Region, Confucianism, Chinese Religion, Secularism, Daoism, Polytheistic, Religious Group, Syncretic Religions, Redemptive Societies, Yellow and Yangzi Rivers Region, Sichuan Basin and Hanzhong Valley Region

The Liumen 劉門 tradition evolved from the teachings of the Confucian scholar Liu Yuan 劉沅 (1768–1856; styles: Zhitang 止唐, Neru 訥如; alias: Qingyang 清陽, Huaixuan 槐軒), who combined his Confucian erudition with the practice of Daoist self-cultivation and eventually became one of the most influential personalities in late-imperial Sichuan, commonly known as Chuanxi fuzi 川西夫子 (Master of Western Sichuan). Those works among Liu's numerous writings which are representative of his Confucian erudition have been published by his descendants and students as a posthumous collection under the title Huaixuan quanshu 槐軒全書 (Collected Works from the Locust Tree Studio or Collected Works of Huaixuan). The leadership of the Liumen community, which developed into a quasi-religious movement during the 19th century, was handed down within the Liu family. Many temples in Sichuan were managed by the community, and most of these centers also contained charitable institutions and schools. Possibly due to its Confucian credo, the Liumen movement was not considered a heterodox sect in late Qing and Republican times, and it flourished until the middle of the 20th century. Being one of the most influential scholarly and spiritual traditions of Sichuan at that time, the teachings of Liu Yuan and the Liumen doctrine spread throughout the province and beyond. As an important part of civil society, Liumen was active in education, charity, religion and other realms of social and cultural life. It had many local branches and developed its own Daoist ritual tradition named Fayan tan 法言壇 (Altar of Ritual Words). The establishment and development of the Fayan tan tradition constitutes an important aspect of Liumen's interaction with the Daoist religion. Liu Yuan and some of his disciples edited a whole canon of Daoist ritual texts, which was titled Fayan huizuan 法言會纂 (Compendium of Ritual Words). The rituals recorded in this compilation cover the full range of religious services offered to the society of late imperial China, comprising rites for the expulsion of diseases or vermin, for pacifying the spirits of earth, water, and fire as well as offering ceremonies to various divinities, exorcisms, and funerary rituals. Considerable space is reserved for rites for ancestors and desolate souls. Each chapter includes instructions and texts for a “classified ritual” (keyi 科儀), and these rituals are combined to form the liturgical festivals of the Liumen community. Local Daoist priests who were affiliated with the Liumen community and used the Fayan huizuan canon in their ritual activities eventually constituted an independent liturgical branch of non-monastic Daoism and venerated Liu Yuan and the following Liumen patriarchs as ancestral masters of their lineage. Priests of the Fayan tan tradition are still active today. Liu Yuan and his community thus actively contributed to the development of modern and contemporary Sichuanese Daoism by establishing the foundations of the Fayan tan tradition. The Fayan tan liturgy still plays a significant role in the religious practice of Sichuan that can be observed today, and it continues to reflect the ethical values of the Liumen tradition. While only minor groups of Liumen adherents and priests of the Fayan tan tradition are still active today, the intellectual and cultural heritage of Liumen is currently “reinvented” as “Huaixuan culture” 槐軒文化 or “School of Huaixuan Thought” 槐軒學派 in mainland China to adapt it to the needs of CCP rule, which prohibits any activities of independent popular (religious) communities.



Date Range: 1807 CE - 1950 CE

Region: Sichuan and surrounding areas

Region tags: Asia, China, East Asia, Sichuan, Sichuan Basin, Southwest China

Sichuan and surrounding areas from the Qing dynasty to the present

Status of Participants:

✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

Sources

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General Variables

Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

– Yes

↳ Is the cultural contact competitive:

– Yes

Notes: Liumen "took over" (managed) Daoist and Buddhist temples in many cases. Furthermore, the Liumen-derived Fayan tan ritual tradition competed with other (Daoist) ritual specialists.

↳ Is the cultural contact accommodating/pluralistic:

– Yes

Notes: Liumen's overall approach to traditional Chinese religions was inclusive. The community also supported Daoist temples that continued to be run by Daoist monastics. The same applied to Buddhist sanctuaries.

↳ Is the cultural contact neutral:

– No

↳ Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

– No

↳ Is there violent conflict (with groups outside the sample region):

– No

Does the religious group have a general process/system for assigning religious affiliation:

– Yes

↳ Assigned at birth (membership is default for this society):

– No

↳ Assigned by personal choice:

– Yes

↳ Assigned by class:

– No

↳ Assigned at a specific age:

– No

↳ Assigned by gender:

– No

↳ Assigned by participation in a particular ritual:

– Yes

Notes: There was a distinct admission 入門 ceremony. New adherents were accepted on personal recommendation and a donation, which had to be in accordance with the income of the respective person. Newcomers were admitted to the community through a ceremony and henceforth had to obey a set of precepts. If they met these conditions, advanced teachings and the method of self-cultivation would be transmitted to them. It is not known when the Liumen community adopted this kind of admission (rumen 入門) ceremony. The following description is based on Liu Hengyi's 劉恆藝 (1930-2022, Liu Yuan's great-grandson) recollection of the relevant procedures in the 1940s. Candidates were recommended by two Liumen disciples and had to state in writing the names and occupations of themselves, their father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. New adherents were initiated at regular intervals (once or twice a month). Before the teacher (patriarch) would teach them the first step of meditative self-cultivation (chugong 初功), experienced elders of the community explained the precepts to them, and they vowed never to divulge the meditation method to outsiders. Prior to their first lesson, the new disciples then performed the rite of "three kneelings and nine kowtows" (sangui jiukou 三跪九叩) in front of images or name tablets representing Laozi, Confucius, and Liu Yuan, one by one. Finally, facing the teacher, they kowtowed once again and were ready to be instructed.

↳ Assigned by some other factor:

– No

Does the religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members:

– Yes

Notes: While proselytizing was not mandatory, Liumen's activities in charity, education, publishing, and ritual life must have drawn large numbers of new adherents.

↳ Is proselytizing mandated for religious professionals:

– No

↳ Is proselytizing mandated for all adherents:

– No

↳ Is missionary work mandated for religious professionals:

– No

↳ Is missionary work mandated for all adherents:

– No

↳ Is proselytization coercive:

– No

Does the religion have official political support

– No

Notes: While the Confucian erudition of the Liu family was officially recognized by the Qing court, and many adherents belonged to local elites, there was no official state support for the community.

Is there a conception of apostasy in the religious group:

– No

Size and Structure

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (estimated population, numerical):

– Field doesn't know

Notes: The Liumen tradition was very influential during late Qing and Republican times, with many branch-communities in Sichuan and likely also in other provinces. While the scholarly works and other writings by Liu Yuan and his erudite grandson Liu Xianxin were widely distributed in China and beyond, we know little about concrete numbers of Liumen adherents. For two reasons: First, membership in the Liumen community did not exclude the adherence to other systems of belief; i.e., a Liumen adherent could at the same time be a believer of Buddhism and/or Daoism. Second, there were membership lists of the community in Chengdu, but these precious documents were lost (destroyed) during the "Cultural Revolution" (1966-1976).

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (% of sample region population, numerical):

– Field doesn't know

Scripture

Does the religious group have scriptures:

Scripture is a generic term used to designate revered texts that are considered particularly authoritative and sacred relative to other texts. Strictly speaking, it refers to written texts, but there are also "oral scriptures" (e.g. the Vedas of India).

– Yes

Notes: The Liu family is the originator of two collections of scholarly texts: Huaixuan quanshu 槐軒全書 (Collected Works of Liu Yuan), and Tuishi shu 推十書 (Collected Works of Liu Xianxin), both focusing on the Confucian classics, literature, history, and other fields of classical erudition. However, Liu Yuan, Liu Xianxin, other members of the Liu family, and Liumen adherents also edited and commented on religious scriptures and morality books, which were also distributed by Liumen-run publishers. Examples are the Daoist ritual canon Fayan huizuan 法言會纂, Collected Scriptures for Recitation and Litanies of Repentance (Jingchan jicheng 經懺集成), various editions of the Taishang ganying pian 太上感應篇 and other morality books etc.



Are they written:

– Yes

↳ Are they oral:

– No

↳ Is there a story (or a set of stories) associated with the origin of scripture:

– Yes

Notes: Most of the Scriptures for Recitation and Litanies of Repentance 經懺集成 (Daoist and Buddhist texts used by the Liumen community) have "prefaces" by divinities, which were received through spirit-writing.

↳ Revealed by a high god:

– Yes

Notes: This applies only to the (relatively few) religious scriptures recited by Liumen adherents, which are said to be "corrected versions" (of earlier existing scriptures) revealed by divine beings like Laozi, Wenchang, or Lü Dongbin.

↳ Revealed by other supernatural being:

– No

↳ Inspired by high god:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Inspired by other supernatural being:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Originated from divine or semi-divine human beings:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Originated from non-divine human being:

– Yes

Notes: Liu Yuan and other Liumen patriarchs wrote commentaries on Confucian classics, studies, poems, tracts etc. which were regarded as scholarly works and not as religious scriptures. However, Liumen adherents were encouraged to study them, if their educational level allowed to.

Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

– Yes

Notes: The core community in Chengdu managed two original Buddhist temples: Yanqing si 延慶寺 and Shengshou si 聖壽寺, and they also supported other sanctuaries like the Daoist Qingyang gong 青羊宮 and Wuhou ci 武侯祠. Many temples in Sichuan were managed by the Liumen community, however, not necessarily as their exclusive property.

↳ In the average settlement, what percentage of area is taken up by all religious monuments:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Size of largest single religious monument, square meters:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Height of largest single religious monument, meters:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Size of average monument, square meters:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Height of average monument, meters:

– Field doesn't know

↳ In the largest settlement, what percentage of area is taken up by all religious monuments:

– Field doesn't know

Are there different types of religious monumental architecture:

– Yes

Notes: Many temples of all sizes in Sichuan were managed by the Liumen community, however, not necessarily as their exclusive property.

↳ Tombs:

– No

Notes: While elite families like the Lius had sizeable tombs, which were also part of their ancestor worship, I would not describe them as "religious" structures in the narrower sense.

↳ Cemeteries:

– Yes

Notes: The Liumen community managed charity cemeteries for the poor, but I don't think

these were different from other burial sites.

↳ Temples:

– Yes

↳ Altars:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Devotional markers:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Mass gathering point [plazas, courtyard, square. Places permanently demarcated using visible objects or structures]:

– No

↳ Other type of religious monumental architecture:

– Yes [specify]: Small ancestral temples honoring Liu Yuan and his eight sons (Rulin ci 儒林祠) were built separately or inside bigger temple compounds.

Is iconography present:

– Yes

↳ Where is iconography present [select all that apply]:

– At home

– Only religious public space

↳ Are there distinct features in the religious group's iconography:

– Yes

Notes: Temples managed by the Liumen community maintained their original Daoist and/or Buddhist statuary. Besides, statues of Liu Yuan (and sometimes of his eight sons, too) were erected after Liu's death.

↳ Eyes (stylized or not):

– No

↳ Supernatural beings (zoomorphic):

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings (geomorphic):

– Field doesn't know

↳ Supernatural beings (anthropomorphic):

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings (abstract symbol):

– I don't know

↳ Portrayals of afterlife:

– Yes

↳ Aspects of doctrine (e.g. cross, trinity, Mithraic symbols):

– Yes

Notes: The trigrams and hexagrams of the Book of Changes (Yijing 易經) and the Taiji 太極 Yin-Yang symbol were depicted in Daoist temples managed/rebuilt by the Liumen community.

↳ Humans:

– Yes

↳ Other features of iconography:

– Yes

Notes: All features of traditional Chinese religious iconography were present in Liumen-managed temples.

Are there specific sites dedicated to sacred practice or considered sacred:

– Yes

Notes: Since the Liumen tradition held Laozi 老子, who was considered the supreme teacher of Confucius 孔子, in high esteem, sites where Laozi reportedly appeared, were of special importance; e.g., the Qingyang gong 青羊宮 in Chengdu and the Laozi Temple 老子廟 on Mt. Tianshe 天社山 in Xinjin. Furthermore, Liumen accepted and popularized the sacredness of all temples they managed, regardless of their Daoist or Buddhist affiliation.

↳ Are sacred site oriented to environmental features:

"Environmental features" refers to features in the landscape, mountains, rivers, cardinal directions etc...

– Yes

Notes: When the Liumen community rebuilt temples, they payed close attention to their

geomantic features (fengshui 風水).

Are pilgrimages present:

– No

Beliefs

Burial and Afterlife

Is a spirit-body distinction present:

Answer “no” only if personhood (or consciousness) is extinguished with death of the physical body.

Answering yes does not necessarily imply the existence of Cartesian mind/body dualism, merely that some element of personhood (or consciousness) survives the death of the body.

– Yes

↳ Spirit-mind is conceived of as having qualitatively different powers or properties than other body parts:

– Yes

Notes: “In human life the body is transient, but the spirit is imperishable.” 人生形骸有盡而神明無盡。(Liu Yuan)

↳ Spirit-mind is conceived of as non-material, ontologically distinct from body:

– Yes

Notes: However, the Chinese concept of “soul” has physical/chthonic aspects that need to be secured in the grave after death, and ethereal aspects that will enter an afterlife in paradise (after the soul has been purified and guided by Daoist ritual means). The latter will become an ancestor who receives sacrifices and will watch over his/her living heirs.

↳ Other spirit-body relationship:

– No

Belief in afterlife:

– Yes

↳ Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Afterlife in specified realm of space beyond this world:

– Yes

Notes: There are graphic descriptions of the netherworld as well as paradise. These spheres are beyond the world, yet not really separate from the realm of humans, since both partake of the same "pneuma" or "energy" (qi 氣). The foundation of Liu Yuan's world view is a deep conviction that the realms of Heaven and Earth, deities and humans, the living and the dead are not separate from each other but subject to one and the same principle (li 理), i.e., the Dao 道.

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "above" space:
– No

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "below" space:
– No

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined horizontal space:
– No

↳ Afterlife located in "other" space:
– No

Reincarnation in this world:

– Yes

Notes: In Chinese religions, this was at least a possibility. While the Liumen tradition did not specifically adhere to this (Buddhist) principle, they did believe that individual persons could become incarnations of deities and saints.

↳ In a human form:
– Yes

↳ In animal/plant form:
– Yes

↳ In form of an inanimate object(s):
– Field doesn't know

↳ In non-individual form (i.e. some form of corporate rebirth, tribe, lineage. etc.):
– No

↳ Reincarnation linked to notion of life-transcending causality (e.g. karma):

– Yes

↳ Other form of reincarnation in this world:

– Field doesn't know

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

– No

Notes: As far as I know, the treatment of an adherent's corpse would not be different from the treatment given any other person's corpse in traditional Chinese society.

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

– Yes

Notes: Large amounts of candles and incense will be burned, and food offerings will be given to the departed as well as unattended spirits ("hungry ghosts").

↳ Human sacrifices present:

– No

↳ Animal co-sacrifices present:

– No

Notes: While blood from the comb of a living cock is used in some rituals of the Liumen-derived Fayan tan lineage, there are no specific animal sacrifices. Yet, in some communities the cock mentioned above may be killed during ritual.

Are grave goods present:

– I don't know

Are formal burials present:

– Yes

Notes: Burials were traditionally accompanied by a distinct liturgy performed by Daoist priests of the Liumen-derived Fayan tan tradition.

↳ As cenotaphs:

– No

↳ In cemetery:

– No

Notes: In traditional China, public cemeteries were not the rule. The deceased would be buried in individual or family tombs located on privately owned ground. Liumen managed charity

graveyards for the deceased of poor families without the means to buy a proper burial place.

↳ Family tomb-crypt:

– No

↳ Domestic (individuals interred beneath house, or in areas used for normal domestic activities):

– Yes

Notes: Adherents in rural areas may well be buried amidst their fields. This was quite common in traditional China.

↳ Other formal burial type:

– No

Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

– Yes

Notes: According to the Liumen teachings, there is no real difference between the realms of unseen (you 幽) and visible (xian 顯) beings; as Liu Yuan put it: “The Dao is like a path; it is only this one principle (li) that heaven, earth, humans, and spiritual beings follow together; hence it is named Dao.” 道猶路也; 止此一理, 天地人神所共由, 故曰道。

↳ A supreme high god is present:

– No

Notes: The notion of one single high god is absent from traditional Chinese religion.

↳ Previously human spirits are present:

– Yes

Notes: Deceased forebears are often present as ancestral masters (zushi 祖師).

↳ Human spirits can be seen:

– No

Notes: But they can be depicted as statues or images.

↳ Human spirits can be physically felt:

– Yes

↳ Previously human spirits have knowledge of this world:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits' knowledge restricted to particular domain of human affairs:

– No

↳ Human spirits' knowledge restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region:

– No

↳ Human spirits' knowledge unrestricted within the sample region:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits' knowledge unrestricted outside of sample region:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits can see you everywhere normally visible (in public):

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):

– I don't know

↳ Human spirit's can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives):

– Yes

↳ Human spirits know your basic character (personal essence):

– Yes

↳ Human spirits know what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):

– Yes

↳ Human spirits have other form(s) of knowledge regarding this world:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits can reward:

– I don't know

Notes: Human spirits may monitor the living, but reward and punishment seem to be inflicted according to the non-personal principle of retribution or response (ganying 感應).

↳ Human spirits can punish:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits have memory of life:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits exhibit positive emotion:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits exhibit negative emotion:

– Yes

↳ Human spirits possess hunger:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits possess/exhibit some other feature:

– I don't know

↳ Human spirits communicate with the living:

– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life:

– Yes

Notes: Would be possible for adepts with ritual training and of high achievements in self-cultivation.

↳ In dreams:

– Yes

↳ In trance possession:

– I don't know

↳ Through divination processes:

– Yes

↳ Only through specialists:

– No

↳ Only through monarch:

– No

↳ Communicate with living through other means:

– Yes [specify]: Spirit-writing (fuji 扶乩, koubi 叩筆) was a widespread practice in the Liumen community.

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

– Yes

Notes: Daoist abstract divinities, e.g., the Three Officers (sanguan 三官) of Heaven, Earth, and Water, or stellar deities like the Dipper (dou 斗) constellations were incorporated into ritual and temple cult of the Liumen community. However, many of these were conceived of as divinized humans who filled the respective divine "position" postmortem.

↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:

– Yes

Notes: Possibly, e.g., by a Fayan tan priest during the performance of liturgy.

↳ These supernatural beings can be physically felt:

– I don't know

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge of this world:

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge restricted to particular domain of human affairs:

– No

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge restricted to (a)

specific area(s) within the sample region:

– No

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge unrestricted within the sample region:

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge unrestricted outside of sample region:

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see you everywhere normally visible (in public):

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives):

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings knows your basic character (personal essence):

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings know what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have other knowledge of this world:

– I don't know

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings can reward:

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings can punish:

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

– I don't know

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit positive emotion:

– I don't know

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion:

– I don't know

↳ These supernatural beings possess hunger:

– No

Notes: They receive offerings, though, which may include vegetarian food, but only those wielding strong exorcistic power, will receive meat offerings. However, I would not understand these offerings as a response to "hunger".

↳ These supernatural beings possess/exhibit some other feature:

– I don't know

↳ Mixed human-divine beings are present:

– Yes

Notes: Divine "offices" or "positions" may be filled by meritorious humans postmortem, e.g., the divinity Wenchang 文昌 whose position is said to be filled by Liu Yuan after his death.

↳ These mixed human-divine beings can be seen:

– I don't know

↳ These mixed human-divine beings can be physically felt:

– I don't know

↳ Mixed human-divine beings have knowledge of this world:

– Yes

- ↳ Mixed human-divine beings have knowledge restricted to particular domain of human affairs:
 - No
- ↳ Mixed human-divine beings have knowledge restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region:
 - No
- ↳ Mixed human-divine beings have knowledge unrestricted within the sample region:
 - Yes
- ↳ Mixed human-divine beings have knowledge unrestricted outside of sample region:
 - Yes
- ↳ Mixed human-divine beings can see you everywhere normally visible (in public):
 - Yes
- ↳ Mixed human-divine beings can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):
 - Yes
- ↳ Mixed human-divine beings can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives):
 - Yes
- ↳ Mixed human-divine beings know your basic character (personal essence):
 - Yes
- ↳ Mixed human-divine beings know what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):
 - Yes
- ↳ Mixed human-divine beings have other knowledge of the human world:
 - I don't know

- ↳ These mixed human-divine beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:
 - Yes
 - ↳ These mixed human-divine beings can reward:
 - Yes
 - ↳ These mixed human-divine beings can punish:
 - Yes
- ↳ These mixed human-divine beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world:
 - I don't know
- ↳ These mixed human-divine beings exhibit positive emotion:
 - I don't know
- ↳ These mixed human-divine beings exhibit negative emotion:
 - I don't know
- ↳ These mixed human-divine beings possess hunger:
 - I don't know
- ↳ These mixed human-divine beings possess/exhibit some other feature:
 - I don't know
- ↳ Mixed human-divine beings communicate with the living:
 - Yes
 - ↳ In waking, everyday life:
 - I don't know
 - ↳ In dreams:
 - Yes
 - ↳ In trance possession:
 - I don't know

↳ Through divination practices:

– Yes

↳ Only through religious specialists:

– No

↳ Only through monarch:

– No

↳ Other form of communication with living:

– Yes [specify]: Spirit-writing was a common form of communication.

↳ Does the religious group possess a variety of supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: These include abstract principles like Heaven (tian 天), abstract divinities embodying stellar constellations of natural forces, chthonic forces, deified sages and heroes, and the ancestral masters (zushi 祖師), i.e., deified patriarchs.

↳ Organized by kinship based on a family model:

– Yes

Notes: In part, e.g., the family of the stellar divinity Wenchang 文昌.

↳ Organized hierarchically:

– Yes

Notes: With abstract "high" divinities (however, often perceived of as divine "offices" filled by meritorious humans) at the top, and chthonic, ghost-like beings at the bottom.

↳ Power of beings is domain specific:

– Yes

Notes: E.g., there are specific divinities of the terrestrial, agricultural, heavenly and other realms.

↳ Other organization for pantheon:

– No

Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present:

This refers to surveillance by supernatural beings of humans' behaviour and/or thought particularly as it relates to social norms or potential norm violations.

– Yes

Notes: The use of “ledgers of merit and demerit” (gongguo ge 功過格) was advocated by Liu Yuan and became quite widespread among Liumen adherents. This type of morality book, listing good and bad deeds with corresponding numbers of merit or demerit points, had been very popular among Confucian literati in late imperial China. The version mostly esteemed by Liumen disciples was the Wenchang dijun gongguo ge 文昌帝君功過格 (Imperial Lord Wenchang's Ledger of Merit and Demerit), which was published by Liu Yuan under the title of Yizhi lu 易知錄 (Record of Easily Understood Facts). This form of moral self-supervision was, of course, intended to improve oneself, but it also entails “supernatural” monitoring, be it understood as an abstract principle of retribution or as a direct intervention by deities.

↳ There is supernatural monitoring of prosocial norm adherence in particular:

Prosocial norms are norms that enhance cooperation among members of the group, including obviously “moral” or “ethical” norms, but also extending to norms concerning honouring contracts and oaths, providing hospitality, coming to mutual aid in emergencies, etc.

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about taboos:

– Yes

↳ Food:

– Yes

Notes: As in many forms of traditional Chinese religion, the consumption of beef and the meat of dogs was prohibited. Furthermore, adherents must adhere to a vegetarian diet during liturgical festivals.

↳ Sacred space(s):

– Yes

↳ Sacred object(s):

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about other:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of coreligionists:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of members of other religions:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of members of other polities:

– Yes

Notes: Any form of "unrightful" killing would be condemned, even of non-human creatures. "Rightful" (and therefore excused) killing may be, for example, committed by a soldier on the battlefield or as an act of self-defense. However, notions like "holy war" or the crusade against "heathen" are absent from traditional Chinese religion and were certainly not embraced by the Lumen community.

↳ Supernatural beings care about sex:

– Yes

↳ Adultery:

– Yes

↳ Incest:

– Yes

↳ Other sexual practices:

– Yes [specify]: All forms of "excessive" sexuality are condemned.

↳ Supernatural beings care about lying:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about honouring oaths:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about laziness:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about sorcery:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about non-lethal fighting:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about shirking risk:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about disrespecting elders:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about gossiping:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about property crimes:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about proper ritual observance:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about performance of rituals:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about conversion of non-religionists:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about economic fairness:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about personal hygiene:

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings care about other:

– I don't know

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– Yes

↳ Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

– I don't know

- ↳ Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:
 - I don't know

- ↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in the afterlife:
 - Yes
 - ↳ Supernatural punishments in the afterlife are highly emphasized by the religious group:
 - No
 - ↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of mild sensory displeasure:
 - No
 - ↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of extreme sensory displeasure:
 - No
 - ↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of reincarnation as an inferior life form:
 - Yes
 - Notes: This is possible.
 - ↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of reincarnation in an inferior realm:
 - Yes
 - Notes: This is possible.
 - ↳ Other [specify]
 - I don't know

- ↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:
 - Yes
 - ↳ Supernatural punishments in this life are highly emphasized by the religious group:
 - Yes
 - ↳ Punishment in this life consists of bad luck:
 - Yes

- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of political failure:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of defeat in battle:
 - I don't know
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of crop failure or bad weather:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of disaster on journeys.
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of mild sensory displeasure:
 - No
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of extreme sensory displeasure:
 - No
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of sickness or illness:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of impaired reproduction:
 - Yes
- ↳ Punishment in this life consists of bad luck visited on descendants:
 - Yes
- ↳ Other [specify]
 - I don't know

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

– Yes

- ↳ Is the cause/purpose of supernatural rewards known:
 - I don't know

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in the afterlife:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural rewards in the afterlife are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– No

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of mild sensory pleasure:

– No

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of extreme sensory pleasure:

– No

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of eternal happiness:

– Yes

Notes: This is possible.

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of reincarnation as a superior life form:

– Yes

Notes: This is possible.

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of reincarnation in a superior realm:

– Yes

Notes: This is possible.

↳ Other [specify]

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in this lifetime:

– Yes

Notes: These answers are all possibilities, but not necessarily true in every single case.

↳ Supernatural rewards in this life are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: Liu Yuan repeatedly cites the famous morality tract Taishang ganying pian 太上感應篇 (Folios of the Most High on Retribution): "If your mind arises from goodness, even if you have not yet performed good deeds, auspicious spirits are already following you. If your mind arises from evil, even if you have not yet committed evil deeds, baleful

spirits are already following you."

- ↳ Reward in this life consists of good luck:
 - Yes
- ↳ Reward in this life consists of political success or power:
 - Yes
- ↳ Reward in this life consists of success in battle:
 - I don't know
- ↳ Reward in this life consists of peace or social stability:
 - Yes
- ↳ Reward in this life consists of healthy crops or good weather:
 - Yes
- ↳ Reward in this life consists of success on journeys:
 - Yes
- ↳ Reward in this life consists of mild sensory pleasure:
 - No
- ↳ Reward in this life consists of extreme sensory pleasure:
 - No
- ↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced health:
 - Yes
- ↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced reproductive success:
 - Yes
- ↳ Reward in this life consists of fortune visited on descendants:
 - Yes
- ↳ Other [specify]

– Yes

Notes: It is firmly believed that moral behavior and good deeds are the only way to improve one's fate.

Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present:

– No

Is an eschatology present:

– No

Norms and Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the religious group:

– Yes

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious group:

– Yes

↳ What is the nature of this distinction:

– Present (but not emphasized)

↳ Are specifically moral norms prescribed by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Specifically moral norms are implicitly linked to vague metaphysical concepts:

– Yes

↳ Specifically moral norms are explicitly linked to vague metaphysical entities:

– No

↳ Specifically moral norms are linked to impersonal cosmic order (e.g. karma):

– Yes

↳ Specifically moral norms are linked in some way to an anthropomorphic being:

– No

↳ Specifically moral norms are linked explicitly to commands of anthropomorphic being:

– No

↳ Specifically moral norms are have no special connection to metaphysical:

– Yes

↳ Moral norms apply to:

– All individuals (any time period)

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: Rules and Precepts of the Liumen Community Five rules (wu tiao 五條) admonishing people to: 1 孝善為首 Put filial piety and goodness first. 2 尊師重道 Respect the masters and esteem the Way. 3 謹言慎行 Be respectful and cautious in words and actions. 4 堅恒勤篤 Be determined, persevering, diligent, and earnest. 5 毋許訶洩 Never divulge [the method of self-cultivation]. Fifteen precepts (shiwu jie 十五戒) prohibiting: 1 邪淫 sexual misconduct 2 妄語 false, absurd or reckless speech 3 貪利 avarice 4 殺生 [wanton] killing of living creatures 5 浪飲 excessive drinking 6 自恃 arrogance 7 妄想 absurd and misleading thoughts 8 怨悔 resentment and discontent 9 反復 fickleness 10 冒瀆 disrespect and profanity 11 訕笑 backbiting and ridicule 12 戲謔 mockery 13 偷惰 laziness 14 曠功 idleness and neglect of duties 15 破戒 violation of precepts 吸洋煙 opium smoking (newly added precept)

↳ Honesty / trustworthiness / integrity:

– Yes

↳ Courage (in battle):

– I don't know

↳ Courage (generic):

– Yes

↳ Compassion / empathy / kindness / benevolence:

– Yes

↳ Mercy / forgiveness / tolerance:

– Yes

- ↳ Generosity / charity:
 - Yes

- ↳ Selflessness / selfless giving:
 - Yes

- ↳ Righteousness / moral rectitude:
 - Yes

- ↳ Ritual purity / ritual adherence / abstention from sources of impurity:
 - Yes

- ↳ Respectfulness / courtesy:
 - Yes

- ↳ Familial obedience / filial piety:
 - Yes

- ↳ Fidelity / loyalty:
 - Yes

- ↳ Cooperation:
 - Yes

- ↳ Independence / creativity / freedom:
 - No

- ↳ Moderation / frugality:
 - Yes

- ↳ Forbearance / fortitude / patience:
 - Yes

- ↳ Diligence / self-discipline / excellence:
 - Yes

↳ Assertiveness / decisiveness / confidence / initiative:
– Yes

↳ Strength (physical):
– No

↳ Power / status / nobility:
– No

↳ Humility / modesty:
– Yes

↳ Contentment / serenity / equanimity:
– Yes

↳ Joyfulness / enthusiasm / cheerfulness:
– No

↳ Optimism / hope:
– Yes

↳ Gratitude / thankfulness:
– Yes

↳ Reverence / awe / wonder:
– Yes

↳ Faith / belief / trust / devotion:
– Yes

↳ Wisdom / understanding:
– Yes

↳ Discernment / intelligence:
– Yes

↳ Beauty / attractiveness:

– No

↳ Cleanliness (physical) / orderliness:

– Yes

↳ Other important virtues advocated by the religious group:

– I don't know

Practices

Membership Costs and Practices

Does membership in this religious group require celibacy (full sexual abstinence):

– No

Does membership in this religious group require constraints on sexual activity (partial sexual abstinence):

– Yes

Notes: Ethical rules of the Liumen community condemn excessive sexual activity, sexual misconduct, and sexually abusive behavior (e.g., against minors or servants). Furthermore, members are expected to refrain from sexual intercourse during liturgical festivals and other spiritually important times.

↳ Monogamy (males):

– No

Notes: Taking concubines was widespread in traditional China, and the Liu family was no exception. However, the Liu family and the Liumen tradition encouraged monogamy, since excessive sexual activity was considered immoral and a waste of life energy. Yet, in case a man had no (male) offspring, he could take a concubine.

↳ Monogamy (females):

– Yes

↳ Other sexual constraints (males):

– No

↳ Other sexual constraints (females):

– No

Does membership in this religious group require castration:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require fasting:

– Yes

Notes: During the ritual periods, adherents of the Liumen community observed a vegetarian diet, even those who were not able to participate in the liturgy in person.

Does membership in this religious group require forgone food opportunities (taboos on desired foods):

– Yes

Notes: The consumption of beef and the meat of dogs (widespread in certain areas of China) was forbidden.

Does membership in this religious group require permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require painful physical positions or transitory painful wounds:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of adults:

"Adults" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition of a human who is 18-years-old or older and who is legally responsible for his/her actions, then please specify that difference in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of children:

"Children" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition, please specify that different in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Does membership in this religious group require self-sacrifice (suicide):

– No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of property/valuable items:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of time (e.g., attendance at meetings or services, regular prayer, etc.):

– Yes

Notes: In pre-communist times, the Liumen community annually organized nine major liturgical festivals (jiuhui 九會), which correspond to important dates within the religious calendar of China. The community was also active in other ritual events (fahui 法會), organized a lot of charitable activities, and set up a number of private schools.

Does membership in this religious group require physical risk taking:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require accepting ethical precepts:

– Yes

Notes: Rules and Precepts of the Liumen Community Five rules (wu tiao 五條) admonishing people to: 1 孝善為首 Put filial piety and goodness first. 2 尊師重道 Respect the masters and esteem the Way. 3 謹言慎行 Be respectful and cautious in words and actions. 4 堅恒勤篤 Be determined, persevering, diligent, and earnest. 5 毋許訐洩 Never divulge [the method of self-cultivation]. Fifteen precepts (shiwu jie 十五戒) prohibiting: 1 邪淫 sexual misconduct 2 妄語 false, absurd or reckless speech 3 貪利 avarice 4 殺生 [wanton] killing of living creatures 5 浪飲 excessive drinking 6 自恃 arrogance 7 妄想 absurd and misleading thoughts 8 怨悔 resentment and discontent 9 反復 fickleness 10 冒瀆 disrespect and profanity 11 訕笑 backbiting and ridicule 12 戲謔 mockery 13 偷惰 laziness 14 曠功 idleness and neglect of duties 15 破戒 violation of precepts 吸洋煙 opium smoking (newly added precept)

Does membership in this religious group require marginalization by out-group members:

– No

Does membership in this religious group require participation in small-scale rituals (private, household):

– Yes

Notes: Maintenance of a private house altar or the chanting of scriptures were options for Liumen adherents, not exactly requirements.



What is the average interval of time between performances (in hours):

Performances here refers to small-scale rituals.

– Field doesn't know

Does membership in this religious group require participation in large-scale rituals:

i.e. involving two or more households; includes large-scale “ceremonies” and “festivals.”

– Yes

Notes: In pre-communist times, the Liumen community annually organized nine liturgical festivals (jiuhui 九會), which correspond to important dates within the religious calendar of China. These major ritual events focused on the deliverance of ancestors (jianxian 薦先) and the salvation of desolate souls

(jiyou 濟幽). Among these, only the Middle Prime Festival 中元會 has been revived in the 1980s and is still performed on a regular basis. Rural sub-branches of Liumen may still adhere to other festivals. However, we should note that the Daoist Fayan tan priests, who perform the rituals, are currently working as ritual experts in rural areas, independently of the Liumen community which ceased to exist as an organized body after 1949.

↳ On average, for large-scale rituals how many participants gather in one location:

– I don't know

Notes: In 2009, I attended the three-day Middle Prime Festival (Zhongyuan hui 中元會) organized by the Liu family and Liumen disciples. From September 1 to 3, 2009, corresponding to the 13th to 15th days of the 7th month according to the traditional calendar, the Zhongyuan hui was held in a Buddhist temple located in Xindu 新都 District near Chengdu. The rural Mulan si 木蘭寺 (Monastery of Mulan), named after a legendary heroine who joined the army in place of her aged father, was a local Liumen community temple in pre-communist times. In 2008 and 2009, the annual festival was temporarily held in the Mulan si, because the more remote Daoist temple, where the liturgy is normally conducted, had been severely damaged by the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. There were about sixty lay participants and nine Fayan tan priests. In pre-communist times, when the liturgical calendar of the Liumen community was still adhered to, the number of participants was much higher.

↳ What is the average interval of time between performances (in hours):

Performances here refers to large-scale rituals.

– Field doesn't know

Notes: Liturgical Festivals last three or four days, with several rituals of varying duration performed on each day. Rituals are performed according to a fixed schedule, which is displayed in written form. Therefore, intervals between single rituals can be several minutes, one or two hours (including mealtime), or a whole night's rest.

↳ Are there orthodoxy checks:

Orthodoxy checks are mechanisms used to ensure that rituals are interpreted in a standardized way, e.g. through the supervisory prominence of a professionalized priesthood or other system of governance, appeal to texts detailing the proper interpretation, etc.

– Yes

↳ Are there orthopraxy checks:

Orthopraxy checks are mechanisms used to ensure that rituals are performed in a standardized way, e.g. through the supervisory prominence of a professionalized priesthood or other system of governance, appeal to texts detailing the proper procedure, etc.

– Yes

↳ Does participation entail synchronic practices:

– Yes

Notes: While only Fayan tan priests conduct the rituals, the other community members stand

or kneel behind them, offer incense and kowtow, all in accordance with proper ritual conduct.

↳ Is there use of intoxicants:

– No

Are extra-ritual in-group markers present:

E.g. special changes to appearance such as circumcision, tattoos, scarification, etc.

– No

Does the group employ fictive kinship terminology:

– Yes

Notes: The term “disciple(s)” (menren 門人) already appears frequently in Liu Yuan’s own writings, referring to the community of his students or individual members of it. When disciples of Liu Yuan signed their epilogues to Liu’s miscellaneous writings, they referred to themselves as “pupil” (shouye 受業). Liu Yuan addressed close disciples as “friend” (youren 友人) in his writings, a term which was also used by Liumen adherents to refer to their co-disciples as an alternative to “fellow-disciple” (tongmen 同門). In contemporary times, the term shixiong 世兄 (“old friend” or “noble brother”) is used by adherents to address other members of the community, but I am not sure whether this is traditional. Terms like daye 大爺 (grandpa) or jiejie 姐姐 (elder sister) etc. as a polite form of addressing elder people is common in Chinese culture and not limited to Liumen or similar communities.

↳ Fictive kinship terminology universal:

– I don't know

↳ Fictive kinship terminology widespread:

– Yes

↳ Fictive kinship terminology employed but uncommon:

– No

Society and Institutions

Levels of Social Complexity

The society to which the religious group belongs is best characterized as (please choose one):

– A state

Welfare

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized famine relief:

– I don't know

Is famine relief available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– I don't know

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized poverty relief:

– Yes

Notes: The Liu family established two major charities in Chengdu, both of which operated from Liumen community temples. Apart from these, Liumen adherents based in Chengdu and its environs as well as many other localities in Sichuan founded their own charitable institutions. The work of the two major Liumen charities in Chengdu was financed through regular donations from Liu family members and Liumen adherents, which were collected monthly for specific purposes, contributions received during liturgical festivals, other individual donations, and, to a lesser extent, income from property. The work of these charitable institutions comprised welfare services in the narrower sense as well as activities of a more religious or spiritual nature. They provided interest-free loans (wuxi jiedai 無息借貸) and supported the aged (yanglao 養老), the poor (xupin 恤貧), and needy families lacking the means to rear their infants (yuying 育嬰) with monthly benefactions. On fixed dates, free medical treatment (shiyi 施醫) and gratis medicine (shiyao 施藥) were provided for the needy in either of the two community temples. Liumen adherents who practiced traditional Chinese medicine volunteered on these days. The cherishing of written characters (xizi 惜字) is a merit-generating practice unique to the literati class of late imperial China. Members of the Liumen charities collected and bought lettered waste paper, which was burned in special pagoda-shaped furnaces (ziku 字庫) at both community temples once a month. The ashes were collected and scattered in rivers. The Liumen community's notion of charitable work also included care for the deceased. The Liumen charities dispensed free coffins (shiguan 施棺) and established public cemeteries (shi yidi 施義地) for the poor in two localities named Xiao tianzhu 小天竺 and Taiping si 太平寺. Another activity was the dispensing of rice coupons, money, and cotton-padded clothes to the needy at the close of the year (nianzhong fasong 年終發送). The releasing of living creatures (fangsheng 放生), typically fish or turtles, on the Buddha's birthday in the fourth lunar month was another practice for the generation of religious merit. The Liumen charities had three locations, so-called fangsheng chi 放生池, set apart for this purpose, two of which were situated in the outskirts, at Shahe pu 沙河堡 and Sandong qiao 三洞橋. The third fangsheng chi was a pond inside the second community temple in the city - Shengshou si 聖壽寺. Finally, the Liumen charities organized the ritual salvation of desolate souls (jiyou 濟幽). During all liturgical festivals of the Liumen community, certain rituals aimed at the spiritual liberation of desolate or orphaned souls, i.e., the souls of those who died a violent death or without offspring and who thus do not receive ancestral offerings and are suffering in the underworld. Large quantities of sacrificial paper money and liturgical documents facilitating their salvation were burned for the desolate souls. The Liumen concept of charity included care for the spiritual well-being of the deceased in general and pitiful netherworld dwellers in particular. Today, this principle is still embodied in the liturgy of the Fayan tan lineage whose origins lie in the early Liumen community.

Is poverty relief available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm:

– Yes

Is institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Education

Does the religious group provide formal education to its adherents:

– Yes

Notes: The Liumen tradition is essentially a family tradition. Naturally, Liu Yuan's teachings were handed down to his descendants and thus became a treasured body of erudition, comprising Liu's numerous writings, ethical values, and the oral tradition of self-cultivation. Yet, from its very beginnings, the Liumen tradition was never hermetic, since Liu Yuan's ancestors, Liu himself, and his descendants were not only committed to Confucian learning, but also engaged in education, which means that they taught students of different ages and at various stages of training. The curriculum comprised the four groups of traditional Chinese literature – jing 經 (classics), shi 史 (history), zi 子 (philosophy), ji 集 (belles-lettres). Special emphasis was placed on the basic writings of the Confucian tradition, particularly the Four Books (Sishu 四書). In which way, then, did the Liumen education differ from that provided by any other Confucian school or academy? Beginning with Liu Yuan's own teaching activities, especially after the family had moved to Chengdu in 1807, Liu's distinctive interpretation of the classics and, most importantly, the oral tradition of meditative self-cultivation complemented the standard curriculum. Reflecting Liu's personal style of teaching and his individual approach to education, which he considered to be much more than a means of preparing students for a career in the civil service, these innovations gave rise to the fact that Liu Yuan and his successors were not merely regarded as Confucian teachers, but eventually emerged as patriarchs of an independent tradition. Naturally, not all male descendants of Liu Yuan became patriarchs. There were members of the Liu family who only engaged in teaching, entered other professions, or pursued an official career, as was the case with the elder brother and several descendants of Liu Yuan. As to the people who approached the Liu family for instruction, it is impossible to draw a clear line between students in the conventional sense and adherents who sought spiritual guidance. Of course, the vast majority of disciples who studied under Liu Yuan and his erudite descendants were young scholars, candidates in the civil service examinations, and other members of the local elite. However, access to this scholarly circle was not really restricted. Therefore, the Liumen community, particularly in the Republican era, included people from all walks of life – from clerics and merchants to local warlords and active members of secret societies. Yet there was a line of learned disciples that survived Liu Yuan and continued to exist well into Republican times. This line of transmission was described in some detail by the writer and literary historian Lu Qian 盧前 (1905–1951; style: Jiye 冀野) who was obviously quite familiar with Liu Yuan's oeuvre. In his *Huaixuan xue lue* 槐軒學略 (Brief Account of Huaixuan Learning), following a short description of Liu's life and teachings, Lu lists Liu Yuan's most important disciples and also provides information on their family backgrounds, writings, and students. Indeed, many of these gentlemen also became teachers, thus handing Liu Yuan's teachings down to their own students at private schools and academies (shuyuan 書院). Some of them authored their own scholarly works while others had Liu's writings reprinted. Among Liu Yuan's close disciples were several who later became charismatic masters with a large following and developed local branches of the Liumen tradition. One of these was Li Sidong 李思棟 (1814–1884; style: Songshan 松山) whose discourses were published in 1886 by his students under the title of *Huaiyun yulu* 槐雲語錄 (Recorded Sayings from the

Locust Tree Cloud Study). After the traditional civil service examination system (keju 科舉) had been abolished in 1905, the Liumen education could no longer serve the needs of those who wished to pursue a career in the imperial administration. The desperate attempts of the ailing Qing court to modernize the state involved the implementation of Western-style education, and knowledge of the Confucian classics ceased to be the key to an official career. Nevertheless, the Liumen patriarchs continued to uphold traditional learning, and it is probably no coincidence that they published the first edition of Huaixuan quanshu in 1905 – with imperial approval. In the Republican era following the Revolution of 1911, in response to radically changing political and social conditions, the religious and “idealistic” traits of the Liumen community seemingly became stronger and partly supplanted its original scholarly orientation. However, we should keep in mind that, according to Liu Yuan, the teachings of the Confucian classics are not merely a means of training future scholar-officials, but have to be practically applied in everyday life in order to strive for the realization of their lofty ideals. Thus, the strengthening of practical and religious aspects in the later Liumen tradition was in accord with Liu Yuan’s doctrine. Distinctions between philosophy and religion or between academic and spiritual teachers, which keep today’s scholars so busy, were absolutely foreign to Liu. Yet, the Liumen community’s commitment to education endured into the Republican era, and several erudite descendants of Liu Yuan were among the most eminent scholars of Chengdu in the first half of the 20th century. Continuing the tradition of earlier educational establishments of the Liu family, the Academy of Ascending Friendship (Shangyou shushu 尚友書塾) was founded in 1916 by Liu Yuan’s grandsons. Situated in the Liumen community’s temple Yanqing si 延慶寺, this school was modeled on Qing dynasty academies (shuyuan) and focused on the teaching of traditional literature and the Confucian classics. The curriculum also included the commentaries and other works by Liu Yuan as well as the practice of meditative self-cultivation. Run by the then Liumen patriarch, three grandsons of Liu Yuan shared the teaching load with four salaried teachers. Offering a structured elementary education (youxue 幼學) in three classes and graduate studies (shaoxue 少學) of unlimited duration, the Shangyou Academy, which also provided room and board for students from distant places, was favored by traditionally minded families and had over 300 students at certain times. As to the teaching methods of the Shangyou Academy, special emphasis was placed on guided self-study in order to develop the students’ ability to think independently. The Shangyou Academy was quite progressive in many respects. Although its focus was on the study of traditional writings, the students were encouraged to read new literature in the vernacular (baihua 白話), and the Academy issued its own periodical. Another aspect of the Shangyou Academy’s progressive spirit was the abolition of corporal punishment. Several alumni were well-known personalities in the literary and cultural circles of Chengdu. However, the Shangyou Academy with its liberal approach to learning could not find its place in the standardized education system of the modern Chinese state and finally closed after 1949.

↳ Is formal education restricted to religious professionals:

– No

↳ Is such education open to both males and females:

– No

Is formal education available to the group’s adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Is extra-religious education open to both males and females:

– Yes

Bureaucracy

Do the group's adherents interact with a formal bureaucracy within their group:

– No

Notes: While the Liumen community did develop a kind of loose organization, it was very different from popular sects. Numerous temples in Sichuan were managed by Liumen adherents, and most of these centers also contained charitable institutions and/or schools. This did, of course, entail a fair amount of organizational work in every local Liumen community. It also included hierarchical structures with the Liumen patriarchs in Chengdu at the top. Liumen did therefore develop organizational structures, but I am reluctant to call these "bureaucracy". While the writings of the Liumen tradition, Liu Yuan's numerous works in particular, are readily accessible to researchers, information on the practical activities and the organization of the Liumen community remains scarce and fragmentary. The reason for that is twofold: On the one hand, the activities of the Liumen community, representing the spirit of late imperial "feudalism" and Republican warlord rule in the eyes of the Communist leaders, continued until 1949 and are thus still too close to the present day to be discussed openly. On the other hand, it is obvious that, compared to the coastal regions of China, the Sichuanese authorities still maintain a quite "conservative" Communist approach toward (popular) religion and spiritual traditions.

Do the group's adherents interact with other institutional bureaucracies:

– Yes

Notes: A community as influential as Liumen had necessarily to interact with state bureaucracies, religious institutions, professional associations etc.

Public Works

Does the religious group in question provide public food storage:

– No

Is public food storage provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Does the religious group in question provide water management (irrigation, flood control):

– No

Notes: This was possibly the case in rural sub-branches, but does not apply to the main community in the city of Chengdu.

Is water management provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Does the religious group in question provide transportation infrastructure:

– No

Notes: However, repairing roads and bridges (or the financing of it) was among the "good deeds" advocated by the Liumen tradition. This surely happened in certain rural areas, but on an individual basis and not as a regular contribution to infrastructure.

Is transportation infrastructure provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Taxation

Does the religious group in question levy taxes or tithes:

– No

Notes: For example, the work of the two major Liumen charities in Chengdu was financed through regular donations from Liu family members and Liumen adherents, which were collected monthly for specific purposes, contributions received during liturgical festivals, other individual donations, and, to a lesser extent, income from property. Since this happened on a largely voluntary basis, I would not apply the terms "tax" or "tithe" to these contributions, even if they were regularly recurring payments.

Are taxes levied on the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Enforcement

Does the religious group in question provide an institutionalized police force:

– No

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized police force provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– I don't know

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

– No

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized judicial system provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Does the religious group in question enforce institutionalized punishment:

– No

Are the group's adherents subject to institutionalized punishment enforced by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Liumen adherents were subject to national law and state regulations just as any other citizen of Sichuan, i.e., the law systems of the Qing dynasty and (after 1911) the Republic of China.

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include execution:

– Yes

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include exile:

– Yes

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include corporal punishments:

– Yes

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include ostracism:

– I don't know

↳ Do the institutionalized punishments include seizure of property:

– Yes

Does the religious group in question have a formal legal code:

– No

Are the group's adherents subject to a formal legal code provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Liumen adherents were subject to national law and state regulations just as any other citizen of Sichuan, i.e., the law systems of the Qing dynasty and (after 1911) the Republic of China.

Warfare

Does religious group in question possess an institutionalized military:

– No

Do the group's adherents participate in an institutionalized military provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– I don't know

Are the group's adherents protected by or subject to an institutionalized military provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: There were military leaders and soldiers among the Liumen adherents, but their occupation had no direct relation to the Liumen tradition.

Written Language

Does the religious group in question possess its own distinct written language:

– No

Notes: Literary Chinese used in Liu Yuan's and other patriarchs' writings, as well as in the liturgy of the Fayan tan priests, was the common written language of educated people in traditional China and not unique to the Liumen community.

Is a non-religion-specific written language available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Is a non-religion-specific written language used by the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Calendar

Does the religious group in question possess a formal calendar:

– Yes

Notes: Apart from the regular traditional Chinese calendar and a multitude of religious festivals, the Liumen community had a specific calendar comprised of major ritual events (see attached table).

Is a formal calendar provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– No

Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

– No

Notes: This only pertains to Liumen communities in rural areas, where many adherents were farmers, but is not directly related to the Liumen tradition.

Is food provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes



Please characterize the forms/levels of food production [choose all that apply]:

– Fishing

– Patorialism

– Small-scale agriculture / horticultural gardens or orchards

– Large-scale agriculture (e.g., monocropping, organized irrigation systems)