

Special Issue

Traditional Chinese State Ritual System of Sacrifice to Mountain and Water Spirits

Message from the Guest Editor

The Chinese imperial courts gradually formed a ritual system of mountain- and water-directed state sacrifices, mainly consisting of the five sacred peaks (*wuyue* 五岳), five strongholds (*wuzhen* 五镇), four seas (*sihai* 四海), and four waterways (*sidu* 四渎). As a state ritual, this sacrificial system was constructed by the Confucian ritual culture, while in practice it interacted and integrated with religious traditions such as Daoism, popular cults, and Buddhism, especially in its local manifestation and dissemination. They were a set of sacred spaces, which symbolized the sanctioned political legitimacy of the imperium, and functioned as locations for communication with the divine and supernatural and as the media between religion and its secular context or between various ethnic groups. Together they mapped geographical-directional borders and territories modeled on the yin-yang and five-phase theory, and helped shape Chinese people's cosmographical understanding of the world. As the first issue to focus on this theme, we invite papers from across disciplines of religious, historical, geographical, and art studies.

Guest Editor

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Fresh developments in the disciplines that consistently make significant contributions to our understanding of religious personality, authority, devotion, and community – disciplines ranging from psychology, sociology, and anthropology to history, art history, philosophy, literary criticism, and political science – fuel general, as well as scholarly, interest in the world's religions.

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