Spirit-writing (fuji 扶乩/feiluan 飛鸞) played an important role in Chinese history. Commonly understood as transmitting the messages of deities and spirits, it was used to obtain knowledge about the future, to receive medical prescriptions or to compose religious scriptures. Spirit-writing faced periods of suppression, particularly in mainland China after 1949, but its practitioners have been able to adapt the practice to changing social, political and cultural contexts. It has therefore remained popular until this day not only among Chinese-speaking communities, but also in countries that appropriated aspects of Chinese religious traditions such as Vietnam.

This conference brings together scholars from various disciplines to provide an overview of the historical evolvement of spirit-writing until today, but also to address issues that deserve further attention. Besides the technical variety of spirit-writing and its regional spread and distribution, it is important to get a better grasp of the social groups that are involved with the practice. Women in particular have long been associated with spirit-writing, but their activities and beliefs have seldom been explored in any detail. The conference also aims to identify spirit-writing’s place in China’s religious landscape, in particular with regard to its relation with the established religious traditions. Thus, for example, can we speak of a specific tradition of spirit-writing communities with its own religious repertoire or are other expressions such as popular Confucianism or religionized Confucianism more useful to describe the communities as well as the contents of spirit-written materials? This conference further takes into account the broader transcultural context in which the practice was and is situated. At least since the early 20th century, Chinese practitioners began to engage with other forms of “inspired writing” around the globe to legitimize and enrich their own activities. At the same time, spirit-writing spread to many regions beyond the Chinese mainland, thereby sparking processes of innovation and appropriation.

If you would like to attend, please register by June 17, 2019 on our website http://www.ikgf.uni-erlangen.de/events/

Organizers:
Matthias Schumann (IKGF Erlangen)
Elena Valussi (Loyola University Chicago)
### Day 1, June 25

**Welcome Address:** Michael Lackner (Director IKGF)  
9:00 – 9:10 am

**Introduction:** Elena Valussi (Loyola University Chicago) & Matthias Schumann (IKGF)  
9:10 – 9:30 am

**Overview Paper 1:** Five Questions for a Comprehensive History of the Spirit-written Literature  
Vincent Goossaert (École Pratique des Hautes Études, PSL)  
9:30 – 10:15 am

**Coffee Break**  
10:15 – 10:45 am

**Panel 1:** Spirit-Writing and the Literati Elites in Late Imperial China

- **Between Belief and Disbelief: Ji Yun 紀昀 on Spirit-Writing and the Mantic Practices**  
  Michael Lackner (IKGF Erlangen)  
  10:45 am – 12:15 pm

- **Maternist Deities on Patriarchal Spirit Altars: The Gender Dynamics of Peng Dingqiu’s (1645-1719) Spirit-Writing Circle**  
  Daniel Burton-Rose (Northern Arizona University)  
  10:45 – 12:15 pm

**Lunch Break**  
12:15 – 1:30 pm

**Overview Paper 2:** A Typological Study on the Spectrum of Spirit-writing in Late Imperial China  
Hu Jiechen (Yuelu Academy 岳麓书院)  
1:30 – 2:15 pm

**Coffee Break**  
2:15 – 2:45 pm

**Panel 2:** Networks, Communities and Sites

- **Spirit-Writing Cults in Western Guangdong: Their Position in the 19th-Century Spirit-Writing Cult Movement**  
  Shiga Ichiko 志賀市子 (Ibaraki Christian University 茨城キリスト教大学)  
  2:45 – 4:15 pm

- **The Rise of Spirit-Writing Cults in the Chaozhou Area (1860-1949)**  
  Li Guoping 李國平 (Leipzig University)  
  2:45 – 4:15 pm

**Coffee Break**  
4:15 – 4:45 pm

**Panel 3:** Spirit-Writing in Contemporary Vietnam

- **Spirit writing and Sinophobia in Contemporary Vietnam**  
  Tam Ngo (Max Planck Institute, Göttingen/Radboud University Nijmegen)  
  9:45 – 10:45 am

- **Reveal and Conceal: Spirit-Writing as a Clandestine Practice in Vietnam and its Diaspora**  
  Janet Hoskins (University of Southern California)  
  9:45 – 10:45 am

**Coffee Break**  
10:45 – 11:15 am

**Panel 4:** Spirit-Writing in the Changing Context of Republican China

- **碟仙:《靈乩指迷》與民初扶乩技術的改革**  
  (The Transcendent of the Plate: The Lingji zhimi (A Guide to the Spirit Stylus) and the Reform of Spirit-Writing Techniques during the Early Republic)  
  Fan Chunwu 范純武 (Fugou University 佛光大學)  
  11:15 am – 12:45 pm

**Coffee Break**  
12:45 – 2:00 pm

**Panel 5:** Spirit-Writing and the Individual

- **A Female Lineage for Female Practitioners: Goddesses, their Poems, and Bodily Practices in the Female Alchemy Corpus**  
  Elena Valussi (Loyola University Chicago)  
  2:00 – 3:30 pm

**Coffee Break**  
3:30 – 4:00 pm

**Concluding Discussion**  
4:00 – 5:00 pm