



# **Gods, Ghosts, and Gangsters: Ritual Violence, Martial Arts, and Masculinity on the Margins of Chinese Society**

*Avron Boretz*

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Demon warrior puppets, sword-wielding Taoist priests, spirit mediums lacerating their bodies with spikes and blades—these are among the most dramatic images in Chinese religion. Usually linked to the propitiation of plague gods and the worship of popular military deities, such ritual practices have an obvious but previously unexamined kinship with the traditional Chinese martial arts.

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