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IN SEARCH OF LORD TAOZHU'S CARP: WRITINGS ON AQUACULTURE IN PRE-MODERN CHINA

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Aquaculture has a long history in China. Early Chinese poems describe fishing or draw on fish imagery as a symbol of plenitude, marital bliss, fecundity, and fertility. Anecdotal evidence for fishponds occurs in texts and material culture. The earliest text that preserves fragmentary evidence of fish farming is the so-called Taozhu Gong Yang yu jing "Taozhu Gong's Classic on Fish Farming", preserved in a sixth-century CE source and quoted multiple times over the centuries. In this talk we will discuss this manual, its influence on the culture surrounding carp, as well as the ways in which it influenced later writings.

