Study Guide

1. Some people mentioned by name
Zhu Yuanzhang (b. 1328), r. as the Hongwu emperor 1368-1398. Posthumous title Taizu.
Zhu Di, r. as the Yongle emperor 1402-1424.
Song Lian (1310-1381), advisor to Ming Taizu
Han Lin’er (d. January 1367), the Prince of Light, leader of the Red Turbans
Guo Zixing (d. 1355), Han Lin’er’s general and Taizu’s patron
Monk Yinglong (1359-1392)
Zhu Xi (1130-1200) Major Song-era Neo-Confucian
Wang Guangyang, Hu Weiyong, Tao Kai – officials under Taizu, see A Tale of Two Melons

Great Sacrifices (supposedly by emperor in person)
   Round altar (south of capital) to Heaven – winter solstice
   Square altar (north) to Earth – summer solstice
   Eastern altar to Morning Sun – spring equinox
   Western altar to Evening Moon – autumn equinox
   Great Ancestral temple – south-east of the palace – every 3 months + 1st and 12th month.
   Great Altars to Soil and Grain – south-west of the palace – 2nd and 8th months
Middle Sacrifices (presided over by royal family and officials – mostly in the 2nd and 8th months)
   Great Year Star (a sort of shadow Jupiter) & Four-Seasonal Month Generals (regulate astronomical time)
   Wind-Cloud-Thunder-Rain (Heaven & Earth give life through them)
   Sacred Marchmounts, Guardian Peaks, Oceans and Great Rivers (territorial lords who under Heaven’s command govern weather, earthquakes, landslides, and so on). The Eastern Marchmount was the chief delegate of Heaven to the human world.
   Walls and Moats (gods of all the administrative seats of the empire)
   Flags and Banners (the military profession’s religion)
   First Farmer (Shennong, inventor of agriculture. Imperial plowing ritual in sacred field to grow grain is used in the Great Sacrifices.)
   Celestial and terrestrial spirits (catch-all for lots of minor deities)
   Historical emperors and kings of the various dynasties
   First Teacher, Confucius (and his recognized disciples)
Minor Sacrifices
   Five Domestic Sacrifices: to Door, Stove, Impluvium, Gate, Well.
   Controller of Horses
   Great Altar for Abandoned Ghosts

3. Official Religion across the Empire
Each princely fief had a Great Ancestral Temple; Altars to Soil and Grain, Wind-Cloud-Thunder-Rain, local mountains and rivers, the Spirit of Walls and Moats, Flags and Banners, Five Domestic Sacrifices, and Abandoned Ghosts.

Each county and prefecture had a temple to the God of Walls and Moats (City God), and altars to Flags and Banners (if it was a garrison), Soil and Grain, Wind-Cloud-Thunder-Rain, whatever Marchmounts, Peaks, Oceans, or Rivers fell within that jurisdiction, and Abandoned Ghosts. Each had local cults approved by the center, or at least not forbidden by the center. Later in Ming paired Shrines to Local Worthies and to Eminent Officials were nearly everywhere, and there were lots of shrines to local heros and officials, including some built while the officials were still alive.

And of course there were lots of Buddhist and Daoist temples everywhere, of all sizes.

4. Some deities and spirits mentioned by name:
Heaven (Tian), aka Shangdi, aka Jade Emperor
Earth
Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future
Guanyin or Avalokitesvara (Kennon, Kwonnon, Kwanse’um) avatar Princess Miaoshan
not to be confused with Guan Yu or Guan Di, a martial god
Laozi (mythical, died by author of Dao De Jing)
King of Hell, King Yama – and ten judges or kings of ten Hell-courts
Zhong Kui, the Demon-queller
Marshal Wen
Zhenwu (the Pure Warrior) aka Xuanwu (the Dark Warrior)

5. Some related interesting and reliable things to read
The sutra of the Golden Light, of which the Museum holds an illustrated frontispiece, is at
http://huntingtonarchive.osu.edu/resources/downloads/sutras/08technicalMayayana
A guided tour through the ten courts of Hell: http://weber.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/chin/yuhlih.
Another tour of Hell is at http://people.reed.edu/~brashiek/scrolls.html
Zvi Ben Dor Benite, “‘The Marrano Emperor:’ The Mysterious, Intimate Bond between Zhu Yuanzhang and His Muslims,” in Long Live the Emperor…, edited by Sarah Schneewind
Adam Yuet Chao, Miraculous Response: Doing Popular Religion in Contemporary China
Xiaofei Kang, The Cult of the Fox: Power, Gender, and Popular Religion in Late Imperial and Modern China
Paul Katz, Demon Hordes and Burning Boats: The Cult of Marshal Wen in Late Imperial Chekiang
Mu-chou Poo, In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion
Sarah Schneewind, A Tale of Two Melons; Emperor and Subject in Ming China