至王 道手 之 為水 竹竹 天天 為馬 左无 尺 真

先夫 北土 行 左无 五馬 色 傳 為 方其 壹

為 相天 不分 遠元 左木 甲木 個 壬大 攸 絶絶

竹水 為蜀 凡土 東木 不木分 三曼 表人 道道 有有

天因 不分 長生 之絶 皇十 嶽山 造龍 之平 登 為

為水 竹竹 天天 重肩 登及 言山 臣王 道手 為污 書 圉

TAOIST RESOURCES

Volume Four
Number One

February 1993

Editor

Stephen R. Bokenkamp
East Asian Studies Center
Memorial Hall West 207
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405

Associate Editor

Livia Kohn
Department of Religion
745 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston University
Boston, MA 02215-1401

Advisory Board

Suzanne Cahill, University of California, San Diego
Ute Engelhardt, Munich University
Norman Girardot, Lehigh University
Donald Harper, University of Arizona
Isabelle Robinet, Université de Provence
Harold Roth, Brown University

Editorial Assistant

Hyam Asher Bolande

Subscriptions Manager

Benita Banning

The editor encourages submission of original research, book reviews or essays, announcements of work in progress, dissertation abstracts, and news of the field. Submit three copies of manuscripts typed double-spaced (including footnotes, quotations, and texts) and printed on one side only on 8½ by 11" paper or the European equivalent. Leave 1¼" margins on all sides. If the article is accepted for publication, the author will be requested to submit a copy on computer disk.

Manuscripts should conform, insofar as possible, to the guidelines of the 13th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). Documentation should follow the style recommended in sections 15.36 through 15.53, 16 (Style A), and 17. Asian names should be cited in the proper Asian order; any standard system of romanization for Asian languages is acceptable. When appropriate, provide Chinese characters for the first reference of a term in the text; characters for titles of works and names of authors listed in the footnotes or bibliography should not be included in the text (further information on style guidelines is included in volume 3, number 1).

Taoist Resources is a refereed journal published two times a year. The journal is supported by publication grants from the East Asian Studies Center of Indiana University and the China and Inner Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies. Annual subscription rates are $20 for individuals and $30 for institutions. Requests for permission to reprint and all correspondence regarding subscriptions or advertising should be addressed to *Taoist Resources*, East Asian Studies Center, Indiana University, Memorial West 207, Bloomington IN 47405; (812)855-3765; Internet "EASC@UCS.INDIANA.EDU".

COPYRIGHT © *Taoist Resources*, 1993

ISSN 1061-8805

TAOIST RESOURCES

(January 1993)
Volume 4, Number 1

CONTENTS

From the Editor . . . . Stephen BOKENKAMP

Buddhist Revelation and Taoist Translation
in Early Medieval China . . . . Robert F. CAMPANY 1

Li Po's Ascent of Mount O-mei:
A Taoist Vision of the Mythology of a Sacred Mountain . . . . SHI Mingfei 31

Taoist Scriptures as Mirrored in the *Xiaodao Lun* . . . . Livia KOHN 47

BOOK REVIEWS

Une Apocalypse taoïste du Ve siècle. Le livre des incantations divines des grottes abyssales. By Christine MOLLIER . . . . Livia KOHN 71

Zhongguo daojiao shi. By QING Xitai . . . . YAN Shoucheng 75

Der Perlenbeutel aus den drei Höhlen. Arbeitsmaterialien zum Taoismus der frühen T'ang-Zeit. By Florian C. REITER . . . . Livia KOHN 79

From the Editor

We are proud to announce that, thanks to the efforts of a member of our Advisory Board, Donald Harper, the next three issues of the journal will feature papers presented on the panels "Early Chinese Religion and Religious Taoism: Dedicated to the Memory of Professor Edward H. Schafer and Dr. Anna Seidel." These panels took place at the Western Conference of the Association of Asian Studies held at the University of Arizona in Tucson on October 23 and 24 of 1992. An announcement of the series is currently being prepared and should soon reach you. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers of the conference, and particularly Donald Harper, for their help in making possible what should prove to be a lively and informative collection of articles.

Two of the articles in the current issue, Robert Campany's analysis of Taoist and Buddhist modes of scriptural production and Livia Kohn's study and translation of sections of the Xiaodao Lun, center on Chinese conceptions of scripture. The concurrence of theme on this occasion is fortuitous. For future issues, however, I would like to call for papers on specific themes important to the study of Taoism. Several suggest themselves immediately: ritual, ethics, talismans and divine script, and issues relating to the translation of Taoist texts. As the preparation of thematic issues is still at the planning stage, I would welcome both submissions on these topics and suggestions for other topics which might be of interest to our readers.

Taoist Resources continues to grow in the number of those who submit pieces for publication and in the number of subscribers. I would like to thank all of those who have unselfishly contributed their support. As always, I remain open to your suggestions and criticisms that together we might make Taoist Resources better serve the scholarly community.

Stephen R. BOKENKAMP

Buddhist Revelation and Taoist Translation in Early Medieval China

Robert F. CAMPANY
Indiana University

Introduction

We usually think of the three main canonical categories of Buddhist scriptures—sûtras, vinaya texts, and sâstras—as having come into China by a process of *translation* from South Asian languages, most often done by a multi-ethnic team of translators in a monastic setting.[1] We think of Taoist scriptures as having been composed by single adepts in meditative visionary states—that is, *revealed* or, as the Taoists themselves put it, "transmitted" (*shou*) by celestial deities to the visionary, who wrote down what he heard and sometimes re-presented it to the deities for proofing before spreading it among humans. This standard picture is quite correct as far as it goes. It accurately reflects what appear (from surviving evidence) to have been the predominant views of at least some early medieval[2] elite Chinese Buddhists and Taoists concerning the sources and modes of production of their own traditions' scriptures.[3]

But the standard picture needs to be qualified and made more complex. In the Buddhist case, we find, upon examining the full range of historical evidence, that there existed an alternative understanding of the sources of scriptures and of knowledge concerning their contents: some Buddhists, at least, spoke of scriptures or insight into them as *revealed* to humans by celestial buddhas and bodhisattvas. And in the Taoist case, we find, upon closely studying scriptural accounts of the entire process of revelation, that this process was understood to include an element of *translation*. By pointing out Buddhist notions of revelation and Taoist notions of translation, I hope to provide yet another in a recent series of testings of the pseudo-boundaries between these two supposedly pure entities or "isms" and hence to gain a better understanding of one aspect of the extremely rich and complex Buddho-Taoist interaction in early medieval

1. I would like to thank Stephen Bokenkamp and Stephen Teiser for their helpful comments on a draft of this article. Responsibility for any remaining errors or inadequacies is solely my own.

2. For the purposes of this paper, I include under the loose designation "early medieval" roughly the period from 220 to 660 C.E.

3. Precisely because they are so common, these views hardly need to be documented here. One case is particularly striking, however, in that given the topic of their book and the interests of the authors, one would perhaps have expected some degree of refinement: David K. Jordan and Daniel L. Overmyer, *The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), a fascinating historical and ethnographic study of religious groups centered on the ongoing "dictation" of new scriptures by deities, immortals, and dead culture heroes through automatic writing devices, makes no mention of revelation in Buddhist contexts or of the translation aspects of Taoist revelation.

China.[4] For we have only just begun to awaken from the centuries-old twin illusions of Buddhism as a "pure" entity constituted by "the great translators and the orderly transmission of orthodox teaching from one renowned master to the next"[5] and of Taoism as an inchoate mass of popular "superstitions" or a catch-all category for phenomena not clearly Confucian or Buddhist or, in more recent years, as itself a pure orthodoxy of transmission, parallel to but otherwise utterly distinct from that of Buddhism.

From the perspective of the comparative history of religions, the material to be discussed here is directly relevant to several general issues,including the ongoing refinement of "revelation" as a category of description and analysis and the relationship between scriptural production and

---

4. Various aspects of this interaction have been probed in recent years. For studies focusing specifically on interactions in the early medieval period, see, interalia: Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, *Dôkyô to bukkyô* 1 (Tokyo: Nihon Gakujutsu Shinkôkai, 1959) and 2 (Tokyo: Toshima Shobô, 1970); Michihata Ryôshû, *Chûgoku bukkyô to shakai to nokôshô* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1980), 159-259; Fukui Kôjun, *Dôkyô no kisokuteki kenkyû* (Tokyo: Shoseki bumbutsuryutsûkai, 1958), 256-325; Erik Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism: A Survey of Scriptural Evidence," *T'oung Pao* 66(1980):84-147; Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures," in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein*, ed. Michel Strickmann, *Melanges chinois et bouddhiques* 21 (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1983), 2:434-86; idem, "Stages of Transcendence: The *Bhûmi* Concept in Taoist Scripture," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 119-47; Michel Strickmann, "The *Consecration Sûtra*: A Buddhist Book of Spells," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990),75-118; Whalen W. Lai, "The Earliest Folk Buddhist Religion in China: *T'i-wei Po-li Ching* and Its Historical Significance," in *Buddhist and Taoist Practice in Medieval Chinese Society, Buddhist and Taoist Studies* 2, ed. David W. Chappell (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 11-35; Roger J. Corless, "T'an-luan: Taoist Sage and Buddhist Bodhisattva," in *Buddhist and Taoist Practice in Medieval Chinese Society, Buddhist and Taoist Studies* 2, ed. David W. Chappell (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 36-45; Christine Mollier, "Messianisme taoïste de la Chine médiévale: Etude du *Dongyuan shenzhou jing*," PhD dissertation, Université de Paris VII, 1986; Miyakawa Hisayuki, "Shindaidôkyô no ichi kôsatsu," *Chûgoku gakushi* 5(1968):79-102; Robert F. Campany, "Taoist Bioethics in the Final Age: Therapy and Salvation in the *Book of Divine Incantations for Penetrating the Abyss*," in Paul F. Camenisch, ed., *Religious Methods and Resources in Bioethics* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, forthcoming); idem, "Religion on the Ground in Early Medieval China: Prolegomena," unpublished paper; idem, "The War on the Ground: Buddho-Taoist and 'Popular' Interactions in Early Medieval China," unpublished paper.

5. I borrow this phrase from Michel Strickmann ("The *Consecration Sûtra*," 75), with whose bold and self-described "perverse" assertion that "Chinese Buddhism remains a largely unknown subject" (75) I am in total agreement. I also, with him, take heart from signs that "certain of the stereotyped attitudes that have for so long relegated religious studies [in the China area, and especially the study of Buddhism] to the badlands of Sinology [read: narrow philology and an exclusive focus on a small set of orthodoxy-obsessed, elite texts as solely representative of the great religious "traditions"] are finally breaking down in the face of new and highly original research" (76). Such signs include the continuing publication of works by Makita Tairyô, Michel Soymié, Anna Seidel (who, tragically for us, is recently deceased), Erik Zürcher, R. A. Stein, Stephen Teiser, Victor Mair, Antonino Forte, Raoul Birnbaum, Jan Nattier, Charles Orzech, Stephen Bokenkamp, and Strickmann himself, as well as the launching of the journals *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* in Paris and *Taoist Resources* in Bloomington, Indiana.

authenticity, on the one hand, and the struggle for political and religious authority on the other. Here, however, I will frame my discussion with special reference to issues surrounding the process of the domestication of an imported religion, interreligious interaction, and collective and individual identity-formation. That is, in discussing the texts to be considered here, I will pay special attention to the ways in which they exemplify the broader problems of how cultures (and individuals) deal with newly imported religions, how religions in the same culture deal with each other, and how religious groups and individuals shape their identity through these processes.

Buddhist Revelation: Some Early Medieval Evidence

1. Miracle Tales

The early miracle tale genre contains several accounts of people—both women and men, both lay and ordained—receiving sûtras orally or in writing while in a visionary state.[6] Here is an example:

> During the Song [period], [there were] two daughters of the Lun clan of Zengcheng in Dongguan, the sisters of [Lun] Shizu. In the ninth year of the *yuanjia* reign period [432 C.E.], the older sister was ten years old and the younger was nine. They, like others in their village, were quite ignorant, and knew nothing of the Dharma or of sûtras. Suddenly on the eighth day of the second month they both disappeared, only to return after three days talking somewhat confusedly about having "seen the Buddha." On the fifteenth day of the ninth month they disappeared again. When they returned a week later they could speak a foreign language and could recite sûtras and even write Sanskrit.[7] They were taken to visit a śramana from the West, and [he and the girls] could indeed understand each other.
>
> The next year, on the fifteenth day of the first month, they suddenly disappeared once

6. The best survey of the miracle tale genre in this period is Donald E. Gjertson, "The Early Chinese Buddhist Miracle Tale: A Preliminary Survey," *JAOS* 101.3 (1981):287-301. See also the introduction to his *Miraculous Retribution: A Study and Translation of T'ang Lin's "Ming-pao chi"*, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series 8 (Berkeley: Centers for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of California, 1989). On the close relationship of this genre to that of hagiography, see Arthur F.Wright, "Biography and Hagiography: Hui-chiao's *Lives of Eminent Monks*," in *Silver Jubilee Volume of the Zinbun-Kagaku-Kenkyusyo, Kyoto University* (Kyoto: Kyoto University, 1954), 383-432, and Koichi Shinohara, "Two Sources of Chinese Buddhist Biographies: Stûpa Inscriptions and Miracle Stories," in *Monks and Magicians: Religious Biographies in Asia*, ed. Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1988),119-228. For further studies see Robert F. Campany, "The Earliest Chinese Tales of the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin" (containing translations of 16 tales and introduction), to appear in a Princeton University Press source book on Chinese religions edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr.; idem, "The Real Presence," (an interpretive study being submitted for publication at this writing); and idem, *Chinese Accounts of the Strange: A Study in Religious Cosmography* (Albany: State University of New York Press, forthcoming), chs. 4-6.

7. An alternative translation of the latter phrase would be: "and could recite sûtras, even ones written in Sanskrit."

more, and workers in the fields said they saw them following the wind and floating up into the sky. Their parents cried out with fear and sacrificed to the gods to beg their favor. Only after a month had passed did the girls return this time. They came back with their heads shaven as nuns, dressed in monastic robes and carrying their cut-off hair. They said that they had seen a Buddhist nun, who had told them, "Because of your karma from previous lives, it is fitting that you become my disciples." With that the nun had raised her hand and rubbed their heads, whereupon their hair had fallen off; and she had given them Dharma-names, the older's being Fayuan (Dharmapratyâya/Dharma-cause), the younger's Facai (Dharma-silk). When about to send them back, she had told them, "You should build a *vihâra*.[8] I will [then] bestow on you the Dharma [as contained in the] sûtras (*jingfa*)."

The girls then returned home. At once they destroyed and expunged [their family's] altar to spirits[9] and built in its place a "cell for [religious] exertion"[10] in which they both nightly recited sûtras. Every night there appeared a five-colored light which flowed around them in a pointed form like a candle flame. From this time on, both girls were extremely elegant in appearance and their speech was orderly and perfect, so much so that even the most stylish sophisticates in the capital could not surpass them. The regional inspectors Wei Lang and Kong Mo, along with many others, came to visit them and [earn merit by] making donations (*gongyang*). When these visitors heard the girls' speech, they were stunned with wonder. And because of these events, the people of the village all learned to uphold the Dharma.[11]

In this extraordinary story, then, two young, illiterate peasant girls, "because of [their] karma from previous lives," are raised up to the heavens (or perhaps spirited to India and back), gradually trained to speak and write Sanskrit, and celestially ordained by an abbess-like figure. It seems to be this abbess who then, in their retreat chamber, orally bestows on them sûtra texts, which they chant in the original language. As is characteristic of its genre, this tale contains self-authenticating or confirmatory features. First, the authenticity of the girls' knowledge of Sanskrit is proven by their ability to converse with a "śramana from the West." Second, the reality of the events described is supported by the respect and wonder of visiting officials; this detail was doubtless intended by the tale's author, the pious layman Wang Yan, to elevate the events above the level of what his readers would have considered mere village lore by providing literate, elite witnesses.[12]

---

8. *Jingshe*, that is, a cell for religious practice.

9. This altar (*guizuo*) would almost certainly have been the family's private altar to one or more deities, not its ancestral altar.

10. *Jinglu*; I have translated literally a term that clearly denotes some sort of small chamber or structure for the practice of pious acts, here probably meditation as well as sûtra recitation.

11. My translation follows the version in *MXJ* 83 (LX 506); this text is based in turn on two slightly different versions which I have also consulted, *FYZL* 5 (304a-b) and *FYZL* 22 (453b).

12. Indeed, Wang Yan seems to have had a special interest in tales of miraculous recitation or transcription of sûtras, as will be attested by further examples below. No biography is devoted to him in the dynastic histories; for a summary of the scanty information we do have, see Li Jianguo, *Tangqian*

I will here merely summarize further examples of similar tales. In one, the official Wang Qiu, unjustly jailed, concentrates on the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin and then dreams one night that he ascends a scripture platform (*gaozuo*) to receive from a monk a copy of a sûtra text containing a list of bodhisattvas' names. In one version of the tale he also sees the fivefold wheel of rebirth in his dream. When he awakens, he finds that his shackles have come loose and takes this to be a sign of his imminent release. Three days later he is indeed pardoned.[13]

The story of the nun Huimu tells of how she learned to recite the *Mahâ-prajñâpâramitâ-sûtra* at an early age. As a girl she had repeated visions of a divine monk-like figure standing in her teacher's sûtra hall. While performing nocturnal sûtra recitations, she had successive dreams of traveling to the Western Pure Land, culminating in a visionary audience with (presumably Amitabha) Buddha himself. The Buddha expounded sûtras for her and was in the process of bestowing four scrolls on her when she was unfortunately awakened by a fellow nun.[14]

Finally,[15] I have translated elsewhere the story of a peasant woman who seems suddenly and temporarily to become a medium for a mysterious "Westerner" passing by. She begins speaking a Western tongue (*huyu*) and pointing at Buddhist banners, then calls for paper and brush and fills

---

zhiguai xiaoshuo shi (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 1984),415.

13. *XiGSY* 23 (RKKO 36), *MXJ* 84 (LX 506-7), *FYZL* 23 (459b-c). LX erroneously gives the surname as Yu. The dream-text is titled *Guangming anlexing pin*, a Pure Land-sounding name which I have yet to identify and may therefore be a title of the author's (or Wang Qiu's!) own creation. In any case, the text seems to be of the sort that was intended strictly for chanting, not for reading.

14. See *MXJ* 89 (LX 509-10) and *FYZL* 15 (400a); compare her somewhat parallel biography in Shi Baozhang's *Biqiuni zhuan* (*Biographies of Nuns*, *T* 2063, 50.938c), translated in Li Jung-hsi, *Biographies of Buddhist Nuns: Pao-chang's "Pi-chiu-ni-chuan"* [sic] (Osaka: Tohokai, n.d.), 60-61. The *Biqiuni zhuan* was written in 517. On early Pure Land doctrine and practice, see Fujita Kôtatsu, *Genshijôdo-shisô no kenkyû* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1970), and more recently Kenneth K. Tanaka, *The Dawn of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist Doctrine* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990); and for the argument that the notion of a Pure Land or Buddha-land (Ch. *jingtu*, *foguo*, *anleguo*, etc.; Skt. Sukhâvatî) may have become dissociated from the cult of Amitâbha Buddha in particular and included many other figures of devotion as early as the second century C.E., see Gregory Schopen, "Sukhâvatî as a Generalized Religious Goal in Sanskrit Mahâyâna Sûtra Literature," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 19 (1977):177-210.

15. There are several other miracle stories, and quite a few hagiographies, involving spontaneous chanting of sûtras and miraculous appearances of sûtra texts, but I have yet to find any others from this period in which the protagonist is the recipient of a revelation-like sûtra-transmission, written or oral. In many return-from-death tales, however, the protagonist returns from the Buddhist hells with special knowledge imparted to him or her by divine beings. For example, in one such tale the protagonist, Liu Sahe, dies, then returns to life to report that while in the other world he received a sermon from one "Guanshidashi"--apparently the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin. From the sermon he learned, among other things, that the [Prajñâ-]pâramitâ sûtras are the most meritorious to chant and venerate, followed closely by the *Śûramgamasamâdhi-sûtra*. He was told the location of five Aśokan *stûpas* (presumably lying hidden under the ground). And he was told that two stone images in Wu were among those commissioned from the spirits by Emperor Aśoka, and that one who reveres them will not fall in to the hells. See *MXJ* 45 (LX 482-84), and cf. *FYZL* 86 (919b-920b).

five pages with foreign writing which none among the bystanders can read (except for a boy who himself also enters into a trance and reads it aloud).[16] Wanting to test the authenticity of what seemed to be a miraculous transmission of an unknown Sanskrit text, a local magistrate sent a messenger to carry the text to Xuxia Monastery and show it to an old Westerner (*jiuhu*) there. The Westerner was greatly surprised, saying the text was a missing piece of a Buddhist sûtra, and that, since the way [to India] was long, he had despaired of ever getting it; although he had been able to recite it orally, this was not sufficient. Since this script was precisely the [missing] text, it was left behind so that it could be copied.[17]

Taken together, these stories present a picture of the nature of sûtras and of their transmission to China that differs strikingly from the dominant clerical picture. First, transmission is not accomplished indirectly, through translation of a humanly imported written document from Sanskrit into Chinese, but directly, through the unmediated bestowal of the written or spoken Sanskrit or Chinese words of a sûtra--and, just as importantly, of the linguistic skills necessary to chant and write those words--by a celestial figure to a Chinese person. This bestowal occurs when the protagonist, in an altered state of consciousness, makes contact with the celestial figure. The contact may take the form of the protagonist's spiritual journey "out" to a distant (sometimes celestial) realm or of the appearance of a celestial figure to the protagonist here "in" this world.

Secondly, the human facilitators of transmission are not learned, multilingual, male monks but include such persons as young females, illiterate as well as literate, and male lay officials, none of whom has any Sanskrit or knowledge of the Chinese sûtra text in question that is not learned directly from a spiritual source.

Thirdly, therefore, these tales reflect a notion of sûtras as something other than humanly produced and transmitted records of the Buddha's words that emanate from a foreign land by cultural diffusion and require human translation from one language into another before becoming intelligible and effective in China. It is true that the foreignness of the sûtras continues to be emphasized here; access to sûtras is still gained by an act of appropriation across a gap of knowledge. But sûtras are here no longer documents that must be transported to China and translated into Chinese. They consist of words that, stored in a celestial site or kept in memory by an extraordinary being, may be accessed orally or in writing within the context of a special (but variously described and conditioned) state of mind, a mode of access not (or not completely) limited by gender, class, literacy, language, or culture.

The picture thus gleaned from the early miracle tales conforms remarkably well with that evident in other types of sources, to one of which I now turn.

2. Bibliographic Notices of Indigenous Scriptures

From at least the late fourth century, Buddhist clerics, in an attempt to bring some order to

16. It is unclear whether the woman herself can read the text she has written. There is an obvious parallel here with the "two-tiered system" (Stephen Teiser's phrase) of spirit-medium and interpreter employed in many forms of Chinese shamanism.

17. *MXJ* 36 (LX 477); *FYZL* 18 (417a-b). See the complete translation and discussion in my "Notes on the Devotional Uses and Symbolic Functions of Sûtra Texts as Depicted in Early Chinese Buddhist Miracle Tales and Hagiographies," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 14.1 (1991), 44-46.

the rapid profusion of scriptures written in Chinese, began to compile bibliographic listings and to distinguish between texts for which Indian origin and named translators were known and those deemed to be indigenously composed and thus at best "suspicious" (*yi*) and at worst "spurious" (*wei*). Following upon Makita Tairyô's pioneering work on some of these "indigenous scriptures," a recently published essay by Kyoko Tokuno has provided valuable insight into the variety of grounds on which these monastic compilers judged the authenticity of scriptures from the late fourth to the early eighth centuries.[18] My comments in this section are based largely on her work as well as on the primary texts she cites.

In the earliest completely extant bibliographic catalogue, the *Chusanzang jiji* [A Compilation of Notices on the Translation of the Tripitaka], *T* 2145, compiled ca. 515), the monk Sengyou gave explicit criteria of scriptural authenticity based on internal and external features. His external criteria, difficult to apply but clear in principle, had to do with proof of provenance. Authentic texts were those that were reliably documented as having been imported from outside of China; suspicious and spurious texts were those for which Sengyou had no knowledge of their importation by an identifiable person from the "Outer Regions" or of the irreception from, or translation by, "Western visitors."[19] However, Sengyou also used an additional, implicit criterion of spuriousness, for the section of non canonical texts in his catalogue lists eight texts whose authorship by a native Chinese was known.[20] In two of these cases he provides a detailed account of the production of the scriptures. One of these is clearly a case of Buddhist revelation; the other probably was as well, at least from its author's and admirers' points of view, but Sengyou only says that that text was "fabricated" (*zaozuo*).[21] The case of revelation deserves

18. See Makita Tairyô, *Gikyô kenkyû* (Kyoto: Jinbun kagaku kenkyûjo, 1976), and Kyoko Tokuno, "The Evaluation of Indigenous Scriptures in Chinese Buddhist Bibliographical Catalogues," in a volume containing many other important studies of particular indigenous Buddhist scriptures, *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 31-74.

19. A clear impression of the actual state of affairs in Chinese Buddhism at this time and (hence) of the tenuousness of traditional, orthodoxy-obsessed historiography can be had from this striking fact: scriptures that Sengyou conceded to be anonymous, and thus (by his criteria) of dubious authenticity, account for an estimated 72% of the titles he lists. See Tokuno, 37.

20. Cf. *T* 55.39a-40c.

21. This is the case of Miaoguang, a monk from Yingzhou who is said to have claimed sainthood, attracted much attention from nuns and laywomen, and "fabricated" a scripture entitled *Saporuotuo juanshu zhuangyan jing* (*Book of the Adornments of the Family of Sarvajñatâ* [*Omniscience*]) in 510, which he had copied onto a screen covered with dazzling vermilion gauze, thus attracting many adherents who made offerings to him. The court, sensing potential political danger in the large crowds, ordered a monastic inquisition in which Sengyou himself was involved; under threat of execution, Miaoguang admitted that the work was fraudulent. The screen and all other copies of the text were destroyed. See *T* 55.40b-c and the discussion in Tokuno, 38-39, and Strickmann, "The *Consecration Sûtra*," 100-2. Strickmann rightly points out that, whereas in other periods (both earlier and later) such textual innovation was in fact encouraged by the court--for revealed texts were taken as signs of divine favor on the ruling family--in this particular period, under the pious Emperor Wu of the Liang, who after all claimed to be abodhisattva and was exercising tight control of the sangha, it was seen as unwelcome and seditious. Erik Zürcher also

close scrutiny.

A. The case of Nizi

At its center was a young girl named Nizi, daughter of a Royal Academy scholar under the Qi dynasty (482-502). Tokuno summarizes Sengyou's account, but I partially translate it here because of the importance of the descriptive language used:

> At the age when she shed her milk teeth, she would sometimes shut her eyes and sit still. Then she would recite forth these sûtras [the 21 titles listed by Sengyou]. Some said she ascended to the heavens (*shangtian*); others claimed [the texts] were divine transmissions (*shenshou*). She spoke with such clarity and intelligence that it was as if she had learned [these scriptures] in a former life (*suxi*). By prior arrangement, someone would copy down what she said; then after awhile she would conclude the session. Weeks and months went by in this manner. Talk of this marvel spread widely among both clergy and laity in the capital.

Sengyou goes on to say that, although her parents pressured her to marry, she vowed to remain in poverty and celibacy and thus became a nun, taking the dharma-name Sengfa and residing in Blue Garden Temple. Sengyou adds that he personally attempted to get copies of these scriptures from her family, but he could only obtain one title; the rest they kept in secrecy. But the texts nevertheless came to be copied and circulated as genuine scriptures. That is why Sengyou has set down their origins in such detail, so that later generations would not take them as authentic. He concludes his entry by comparing Nizi's case to that of the woman at the well who suddenly wrote and spoke in Sanskrit, translated above, *which he seems to accept as at least a potentially genuine case of revelation* (or at least as one that cannot be ruled out based on the evidence); "it is not as if such events never occurred in former times," he says. But Nizi's texts differ in that the circumstances of their production were much closer to his own time; "so I list them as 'suspicious."[22]

Around 80 years later we find another cataloguer, Fei Changfang, in his *Lidai sanbao ji* [Record of the Three Treasures throughout Successive Generations], *T* 2034, compiled in 594),

---

discusses the Miaoguang casein "Perspectives in the Study of Chinese Bism," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1982):167.

22. See *T* 55.40b and Tokuno, 37-38. Sengyou and the next cataloguer to be discussed, Fei Changfang, both give the reign-years in which and ages at which Nizi "produced" (*chu*) each of the 21 texts listed; her ages range from 9 (*sui*) to 16, and the years run from 499 (near the close of the Qi dynasty) to 506 (early in the Liang dynasty). Also given for one of her later "productions" is what I take to be the name of the convent--or perhaps the section of the imperial palace--where she resided during one of her trance-dictations, the Floriate Radiance Hall at Tainei (or "in the Inner Tower" *tainei huaguangdian*). This detail is significant because it shows that either the sangha or the court at least temporarily sanctioned her performances. None of her "revealed sûtras" seems to have survived. Judging by their titles, some were perhaps additions to, condensations of, or commentaries on well known sûtras such as the *Lotus* and *Vimalakirti*. This possibility is strengthened by Fei Changfang's comparison of her case with that of Tandi, on which more below.

evaluating the scriptures produced by Nizi as authentic although well aware of Sengyou's classification of them as suspicious. However, for Fei, "divine transmission" (*shenshou*) is either a nonexistent phenomenon or, if it does occur, it is not a way in which authentic sûtras are produced. What he *does* admit as authentic are sûtras "learned in a former life" (*suxi*) and spontaneously recalled and chanted in this life. He judges Nizi's case to be of this latter type:

> The clerics and laity of Yangzhou all called [her activity] "divine transmission." I have searched [for precedents] in the sûtras and śâstras, and they are clear on this sort of matter. [Judging by them], hers was a case of production [of scriptures] by virtue of having learned them in a former life, and had nothing to do with "divine transmission." Furthermore, turning to non-Buddhist sources, we find that Confucius said, "Those whose knowledge is congenital are sages, while those whose knowledge is acquired by learning rank second."[23]

Fei then quotes at length from Huijiao's *Lives of Eminent Monks* an account of a third century monk named Tandi, a native of Sogdia. At his conception, Tandi's mother saw in a dream a monk who addressed her as "mother" and left with her a yak-tail whisk and an engraved iron book press. When she awoke from the dream, she found these actual objects by her side. When Tandi was five years old she showed the objects to him, and he immediately recognized them, but when asked where he had put them he could not remember. At ten he left home to be ordained and soon, "having studied without a teacher, attained realization naturally by himself," after which he recollected events of his past life as a famous dharma master, all of which were corroborated by a man who was his disciple in that life. "Later," Fei writes, "he entered the Tiger Mound Mountain Monastery (Huqiushan si) in Wu [today's Jiangsu] and lectured (*jiang*) seven times each on the *Book of Rites*, the *Book of Changes*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*; then [he lectured] fifteen times each on the *Lotus*, *Larger Perfection of Wisdom*, and *Vimalakirti Sûtras*. He was also skilled at [explaining] the commentaries (*shuwen*) on them. [These lectures] were collected into six scrolls and widely circulated."[24] Fei concludes by analogy with the case of Tandi that Nizi's recitations were of sûtras learned in a former life; to speak of them as "divine transmissions" is "out of extreme stupidity and blindness to obscure the path of knowledge and wisdom."

The situation, then, would seem to be as follows. One cataloguer, while vaguely allowing in principle that authentic sûtras may be "divinely transmitted" and while uncertain whether to take Nizi's sûtras as "divine transmissions" or as "learned in a former life," in any event rejects them as inauthentic because of their known Chinese authorship and lack of a translator. The other cataloguer seems to reject "divine transmission" as a genuine Buddhist mode of scripture-production but fervently argues that there collection of works "learned in a former life" is a legitimate mode of scripture production; and on these grounds he accepts Nizi's sûtras as

---

23. 49.97a; cf. Tokuno's summary, 45. I am not at this point certain that the "master" mentioned by Fei is Confucius.

24. *T* 49.97a-b. Tandi's *GSZ* biography, which Fei quotes quite accurately, appears in ch.7 at *T* 50.370c-371a.

authentic scriptures. These two authors were separated by less than a century. As Tokuno has shown, their goals in compiling their catalogues differed: Sengyou, concerned with purity of filiation, wanted to weed out all questionable texts not demonstrably imported and translated, hence tended toward exclusion; Fei, concerned with countering the Taoist plagiarism of Buddhist texts and keeping up with the proliferation of revealed Taoist scriptures, wanted to minimize the number of scriptures of questionable pedigree but also to preserve a large number of texts as genuine, and hence tended toward inclusion.[25] For our purposes, not only do their reports of the details of Nizi's case afford a valuable window onto indigenous Chinese Buddhist modes of "revelation" of one sort or another--both the production and the reception aspects--but their disagreement over the canonical status of her texts sheds light on the variation in the modes of production allowed as authentic by the gatekeepers of the Buddhist corpus. One must therefore object to Tokuno's blanket conclusion that "for the Chinese cataloguers, a scripture's authenticity was synonymous with its foreign provenance" (59); her own evidence belies it. What we see is in fact a much more complex picture, in which some of the elite bibliographers of the tradition are admitting as genuine categories of scripture-production that others reject as fraudulent. During these centuries, members of the most learned stratum of the Buddhist community differed among themselves over the status of texts produced by "revelation" of one or another sort, and authenticity was not, in fact, uniformly synonymous with foreign provenance.

B. The case of the *Scripture of Avalokiteśvara from the Era of Prince Gao* (*Gaowang Guanshiyin jing*)

In the above-named indigenous sûtra, we have a valuable case of a "revealed" Buddhist scripture in which not only does the text itself survive in reasonably good condition, but so do records of what various authors thought about its provenance and authenticity.[26] My concern here will be not with the sûtra itself but with the accounts of its origin.

The earliest mentions of the text and its production occur in two dynastic histories written in the mid-sixth century, in biographies of Lu Jingyu, a learned Confucian and author of commentaries on several ancient classics, who hailed from the fervently Buddhist Lu clan of Fanyang. After mentioning Lu's Buddhist piety and his authorship of prefaces to several scriptural translations by an Indian monk, the author of one account, Wei Shou, continues:

---

25. See Tokuno, 46.

26. The text has been printed in the apocrypha volume of the Taishô edition of the Chinese canon (*T* 2898,85.1425b-1426a) and has also been found in manuscript form in Turfan and (in fragmentary state) at Dunhuang (Pelliot ms. 3920). Makita, whose discussion of the text's origins (pp. 272-88) I have found extremely helpful, attaches a transcription of the Turfan version (which now resides in a Japanese temple); see *Gikyô kenkyû*, 288-89. In all extant versions, the scripture is quite short and consists of a list of names of buddhas and bodhisattvas, the affirmation that the recitation of the text will save one from all manner of harm, and a series of gâthâs in praise of Guanshiyin or Avalokiteśvara; these features are consistent with what one would expect in a Chinese sûtra centrally concerned with Avalokiteśvara and clearly emerging from his very prevalent cult during this period, for more on which see my translations and article mentioned above.

> When Lu was defeated, he was imprisoned at Jinyang. With a perfect mind he recited sûtras until his shackles fell loose of themselves. At this same time there was someone else [in the same prison cell?] who had been found guilty of a crime and was due for execution. He dreamt that a monk taught him to recite a sûtra (*meng shamen jiao jiangjing*). When he awoke, he did as he had been told in the dream and began reciting [the sûtra] one thousand times. At the moment when he was to be executed, the blade broke into pieces. The commander, on hearing of this, pardoned him. This sûtra then was put into circulation. It was called the (*Scripture of*) *Avalokiteśvara from the Era of Prince Gao*.[27]

The polemicist Falin's *Essays on the Discernment of Right*, written around 627, gives roughly the same story, omitting the name of the protagonist but adding the significant remark that "he saw in a dream a holy monk who orally transmitted to him his sûtra,"[28] the word *his* suggesting that this dream-monk was in fact none other than Avalokiteśvara in monkish disguise, a form in which he frequently appears in tale literature.

Meanwhile, however, the layman Hou Bo's *Citations of Marvels* (written between 581 and 604), a text in the miracle tale genre, had embellished the story slightly and had identified its protagonist as a more ordinary personage, one Sun Jingde. While serving as a guard on the northern frontier,the story goes, Sun made a metal image of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara to which he was quite devoted and which he planned to take home with him when his year of duty was up. He was later arrested for petty theft, jailed, and sentenced to death. On the eve of his execution he tearfully confessed his wrongdoing and made a "great vow" on behalf of all living beings.

> Soon thereafter he entered a dream-like state. He saw a monk, who taught him to recite (*jiaosong*) a *Sûtra of Avalokiteśvara, the Savior of Living Beings* (*Guanshiyin jiusheng jing*). This sûtra contained the names of buddhas. He was told to recite it one thousand times and he would be delivered from suffering and distress.[29] Suddenly he awakened, got up, and followed the instructions [he'd been given] with utter diligence.[30] As dawn approached he had completed one hundred recitations. An officer arrived, bound him, and led him toward the marketplace, but he continued to recite as he walked. At the moment when the execution was about to be carried out he completed the thousandth recitation. When the executioner swung his blade downwards, it shattered into three pieces without breaking Sun's skin in the slightest. The blade was exchanged for another; it also broke. In all, three such attempts were made, and the blade broke each time. The official overseers of the execution were all astonished, and they all submitted reports on what had happened. Gao Huan [496-547], the Counsellor-in-Chief, memorialized the throne concerning this case, and so [Sun] avoided death.

---

27. *Beishi* (Sibu beiyao ed.) 30.15b; I have not at this writing compared the parallel *Weishu* version.

28. *BZL* 7 (52.537b-c): *mengjianshengseng koushou qijing*.

29. An alternative translation would be: the sûtra specified that one should recite it one thousand times for deliverance from suffering and distress.

30. Literally, with not a single error or lapse: *liao wucancuo*.

> This sûtra was then copied down and circulated. It is the text known today as the *Scripture of Avalokiteśvara from the Era of Prince Gao* (*Gaowang Guanshiyin jing*).
>
> When Sun was released and had returned home, he prepared a grand [vegetarian] merit feast to fulfill his vow. Taking out the image he had prepared while on militia duty, he saw three blade-shaped dents in its head. Those in the area who saw it rejoiced in this response (*tonggan*).[31]

Now let us observe what two leading early medieval Buddhist clerics and bibliographers made of this revealed sûtra and of the circumstances under which it was received and written.

The monk Daoxuan (596-667) was one of the outstanding Buddhist literary and historical figures of the early Tang era. He wrote a major hagiographical collection, several collections of polemical and historical essays, and was recognized as the founder of the "disciplinary school" (*lüzong*) in China, having written several major commentaries on the vinayas and other works on matters of monastic discipline. He also compiled an official bibliography of Buddhist works.[32] Quite significant for our purposes, therefore, is the fact that he narrates the story of Sun Jingde at length in at least four different works, each time with obvious approval.[33] Even more significant is the fact that one of these notices comes in the context of his catalogue of scriptures (compiled in 664), under the heading of "Scriptures which have Produced Favorable Responses to Requests and Veneration through the Ages"--a category which is clearly separate from both authentic, translated scriptures and suspicious and spurious titles, but on which Daoxuan casts no aspersions of fraud or heterodoxy.[34] Daoxuan's treatment of this particular sûtra must be understood in light of his dominant criterion of authenticity: unlike many other scripture cataloguers, Daoxuan was most likely to label texts suspicious or spurious not because of their indigenous origin but because of what he regarded as their popularizing contents. Texts which catered to the interests of non-elite Buddhists by adapting doctrine to fit the capacities of common people were, in his eyes, suspect. "The orthodox dharma is recondite; the ordinary and unsophisticated have yet to reach it. [These spurious scriptures] adapt to the vulgar in order to convert the inferior, altering the true teachings."[35] His overriding concern with the correctness

31. *JYJ* 8 (LX 541-42); cf. *SBGTL* 52.420a-b, on which the LX version is based, and *FYZL* 14 (53.389c) and 17 (411b-c). In translating I have followed the LX version.

32. The *Répertoire du canon bouddhique sino-japonais*, ed. Paul Demiéville, Hubert Durt, and Anna Seidel, 2nd ed. (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1976) lists some 20 works by Daoxuan. Meager bits of information concerning his life and activities may be found in Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 192 and 301, and in Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 32-33.

33. (1)*XuGSZ* 29 (50.692c-693a); (2) *SBGTL* 2 (52.420a-b); (3) *Shijiafangzhi* (*T* 2088) 3 (51.972b); (4) *Da Tang neidian lu* (*T* 2149) 10(55.339a-b).

34. It should be noted that the case of Sun Jingde and the *Gaowang Guanshiyin jing* seems to be the only one in this section in which a scripture is newly revealed; the others all involve instances in which recitation of an already known (and typically quite famous) translated scripture generates some miraculous result.

35. *T* 55.219b.10, quoting Tokuno's translation, 49.

of sûtras' contents more than their place and mode of origin must be understood, as Tokuno points out, in the context of his conviction that he stood in the "latter days of Dharma" (*mofa*) and was therefore especially sensitive to signs of the degeneration of Buddhist teaching. His attitude must also be understood, however, in light of his own visionary contact with celestial beings who imparted new and otherwise inaccessible doctrinal and historical information to him--a topic to which I shall return below. I suspect, in other words, that one reason Daoxuan was favorably disposed toward a text produced by "divine transmission" was that he had himself received information by such means.[36]

Contrast with this the monk Zhisheng's categorization of the sûtra revealed to Sun Jingde, in his *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* (comp. 730), as spurious because of its known Chinese origins. He repeats the story of its revelation in detail, and even allows that such an event may actually have occurred. But he does not regard a text produced by this means as a genuine Buddhist sûtra. Thus he notes: "Although it was 'transmitted by an unseen being,' it was not based on a translation that was passed down," and since evidence of such importation and translation are Zhisheng's criteria of authenticity, he rejects the *Gaowang Guanshiyin jing* as a false sûtra.[37]

Here, then, we have a division among cataloguers writing well within a century of each other over the status of a sûtra text produced by "divine transmission" similar to Nizi's. In this case, however, there is a clearer account of the visionary context in which the scripture was revealed, and so there is no speculation about its having been "learned in a former life." Here, one cataloguer seems to accept both the text and its method of production as genuine, while the other clearly rejects the text because of the manner in which it was produced. Like the case of Nizi, that of Sun Jingde and the *Gaowang Guanshiyin jing* provides us with a valuable window onto the process of "revelation" by which some indigenous Chinese scriptures were claimed to have been produced. As in that case, here too we find elite scripture cataloguers differing over the status of this Chinese sûtra and over "divine transmission" as an authentic mode of textual production.

3. Maitreya as Celestial Revealer and Informant

As Paul Demiéville pointed out many years ago, there is ample documentation to show that Maitreya, waiting in his Tusita heaven--which is located in the upper reaches of the same realm of desire(*yujie/kâmadhâtu*) that we inhabit--to be born as the next Buddha, was thought of by many learned monks as a sort of patron saint of commentators, a source of revealed knowledge. Through a state of utmost concentration (*dhyâna* or *samâdhi*) one might either journey upwards to the Tusita heaven or make contact with Maitreya here on earth, the result in either case being new insight into an obscure sûtra passage or an entire commentary dictated by the future Buddha

36. I note here in passing another instance of revelation briefly recorded in Daoxuan's corpus. In *SBGTL* 1 (52:405b) is recorded an incident in which two monks suddenly heard the sound of the *Vajracchedikâ sûtra* being chanted in the middle of the night but saw no one; "they clearly knew that it was a case of divine transmission" (*mingzhi shenshou yi*).

37. *T* 2154, 55.674c-675a; the Chinese is *ci sui mingshoubu yin chuanyi*.

himself.[38]

The renowned Chinese cleric Daoan (d. 385), for example, is said to have turned to Maitreya for clarification of scriptural passages which he despaired of understanding on his own.[39] How he did this is not specified, but we know from his hagiography that he and his disciples paid homage before a Maitreya image, and on one occasion not long before his death this act drew forth a celestial "response"—a visitation from a personage it is tempting to conclude was none other than Maitreya himself—that was taken as an omen of Daoan's impending death and rebirth in Tusita:

> Frequently An with his disciples Fayu and others pronounced vows in front of [the image of] Maitreya expressing their vow . . . to be born in Tusita. Later . . . suddenly there was a strange monk whose appearance was very common and unprepossessing who came to the monastery to ask for temporary lodging. . . . At the time the Karmadâna [assistant to the abbot of a monastery] was on watch in the hall, and at night he saw this monk go out and come in through the [extremely narrow] space between the window slit. He hastily informed An. An, amazed, arose, paid salutation, and inquired the purpose of his arrival. The strange monk replied, "I have come for your sake!" "I myself," An said, "regard my sins as grievous. How can I be brought over to liberation?" He replied, "But you can very well be brought over! Yet, for the nonce, bathe the Holy Monk and your expressed desire will inevitably bear fruit!" And he showed him in detail the method of bathing. When An inquired politely where he would go in his coming life the monk then with his hand seemed to push aside the heaven to the northwest. Immediately they saw the clouds part and beheld perfectly the wonderful surpassing rewards of Tusita. . . . This was truly a holy response (*shengying*).[40]

Other Chinese monks are recorded as having made contact with Maitreya to receive otherwise inaccessible information. Zhiyan, for instance, tormented with the fear that former disciplinary infractions would prevent him from gaining enlightenment, traveled during the fifth century to India and asked an arhat there about his fate. This arhat entered into *samâdhi* and ascended to the palace of Tusita, where he consulted with Maitreya, who reassured him that Zhiyan had kept the discipline.[41] Huilan learned from a Kashmirian monk a method for traveling to Tusita in

---

38. See Paul Demiéville, "Le *Yogâcârabhûmi* de Sangharaksa,"*Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extrême-Orient* 44 (1954):376-87.

39. See *Chusanzang jiji* (cited above), 55.59a, and the discussion of this passage in Demiéville, 377, and also in the excellent article by Jan Nattier, "The Meanings of the Maitreya Myth," in *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, ed. Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 29-30.

40. *GSZ* 5 (50.353b-c); translation mostly following that in Arthur E. Link, "Biography of Shih Tao-an," *T'oung Pao* 2nd ser. 46 (1958):36-37, with minor changes. On Daoan's devotion to Maitreya see also Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 2 vols., 2ded. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), 1:194-95, and Tsukamoto Zenryû, *A History of Chinese Buddhism*, 2 vols., trans. Leon Hurvitz (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1985), 2:753-56. Daoan's disciple Huiyuan is famous, among other things, for a similar cult of Amitâbha Buddha practiced with his disciples on Mt.Lu.

41. See *Chusanzang jiji*, 55.112c, and Demiéville, 378.

samâdhi, and spread that method in Sichuan after his return to China in the early fifth century. Also in Kashmir, Chinese pilgrims recorded a legend concerning a famous image of Maitreya in a temple there: its sculptor had ascended to Tusita three times to observe his celestial model.[42]

We also read of the Kashmirian monk who was later to translate the *Yogâcârabhûmi* into Chinese, Buddhabhadra, that he once suddenly appeared to his disciple who was practicing *dhyâna* in a closed chamber. When his shocked disciple asked where he had come from, Buddhabhadra replied, "I just went up momentarily to Tusita to pay homage to Maitreya," then he disappeared.[43] Indeed there is a well-known legend to the effect that the *Yogâcârabhûmi* was itself a revealed text, dictated to the monk Asaṅga by Maitreya, who had descended to earth for the occasion; and Asaṅga is said to have learned from his celestial teacher a method for ascending to Tusita for insight into all the Mahâyâna sûtras, and to have received there other whole texts by revelation.[44]

Once more, therefore, we see in such concepts and legends the idea that the words of a sûtra or śâstra, or insight into its meaning, can be directly imparted to humans who make contact either "here" (in this world) or "there" (in the heavens, in this case the Tusita heaven) with a celestial being through meditative states. Here, too, one notes that a scripture or a treatise is thought of not (or not merely) as a humanly-produced document culturally imported and in need of translation, but (also) as a body of words deposited in a celestial location or state and accessible immediately through meditative vision. Since he was, after all, the next Buddha, and since his celestial palace was located within this realm of desire (though in its upper reaches), it is natural that Maitreya became a specialist, among the many members of the Mahâyâna pantheon, in imparting texts, textual insight, and other recondite information to those who mastered the techniques for making contact with him.[45]

4. Daoxuan's *Record of Spiritual Responses*

Having come this far, it no longer seems strange that the learned early Tang cleric Daoxuan is credited with a first-person account of his conversations with a series of celestial beings who appeared to him over a short period of time (apparently during a single day or night) and resolved many of his questions about vague points of Buddhist history and monastic discipline. Although apparently lost early on in China, this text, the *Record of Spiritual Responses*, was fortunately preserved in Japan.[46] As the text is long and at certain points difficult, I will here

---

42. See Demiéville, 378-79.

43. *GSZ* 2 (50.334c); cf. Demiéville, 377-78.

44. See Demiéville, 381 and 387.

45. For a sixteenth century Chinese example, in which Maitreya is the revealer of a *baojuan*, see Daniel L. Overmyer, "Messenger, Savior, and Revolutionary: Maitreya in Chinese Popular Religious Literature of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, 116-19.

46. Its full title is *Daoxuan lüshi gantonglu* (*The Vinaya Master Daoxuan's Record of Spiritual Responses*), *T* 2107 (52:435a-442b). There is a chance, of course, that the work is apocryphal, especially since it is not listed in Chinese Buddhist catalogues; but Zürcher (*Buddhist Conquest*, 2:421 n.148) notes that it is listed as having been carried to Japan as early as the beginning of the ninth century (his characterization of the

give only a preliminary résumé of its contents.

The *Record* opens with a citation from Gan Bao's *Soushen ji* (In Search of Spirits) concerning a man who "made contact with lower beings of the unseen realm, and as a result saw their forms in his house."[47] Daoxuan then mentions Nizi's recitations of sûtras, concluding: "Thus we know from experience that such events can occur, and that one's natal karma can produce such blessings" (435b).

Having thus established both secular and Buddhist precedent for direct contact with spiritual beings, he begins his own account:

> Recently, at the end of the second month of this year, I made several contacts with celestial persons (*shugan tianren*). There was one Ruo Zengmian, who said to me: "The works you have written--such as the *Further Lives of Eminent Monks* (*Xu gaosengzhuan*) and the *Further Propagation of Illumination* (*Guang hongmingji*)--have been of some help in the cause of religious conversion. The spirits of the unseen world have taken great delight in them; there is none who is not pleased. . . ."

The text that follows is somewhat disjointed, as we might expect from a record of revelations made by a crowd of successively arriving celestial spirits all eager to talk to their human interlocutor. (In this literary feature it resembles Taoist texts such as the *Taiping jing* [in which there are long sections of question-and-answer] and the Shangqing text *Zhengao*; both will be discussed briefly below.) For example, the spirit Ruo Zengmian, after complimenting Daoxuan on his writings, immediately goes on to amplify the sections of Daoxuan's vinaya writings dealing with monastic attire, in order to correct certain misconceptions.

After this rather short discourse, Daoxuan asks the identity of the spirit who has come up behind Ruo. This being introduces himself as Wang Fan, a former official under the Wu state. After telling a story from his lifetime involving a Wu ruler's attempt to destroy a relic (*sheli*), he explains that the radiant beings with him are celestial guardians who enter the bodies of pious Buddhists to protect and strengthen them from within and who also guard the Buddha's dharma

---

contents of the text is off the mark, however). That Daoxuan himself wrote this text is entirely consistent with what we saw above of his views on "divine transmission" and all manner of "spiritual responses." Even if Daoxuan himself did not write this text, that a work of its nature could have been for so long attributed to him without challenge is itself a significant fact for our purposes. And whoever did write it clearly knew a great deal about obscure points of Buddhist history, temples, and monastic regulations.

47. Daoxuan--or at least the Taishô version of the text--gives the title as *Soushen lu* and the author as Yu Bao. The protagonist of the cited story is Su Shao. I have not yet located this story in today's 20-juan *Soushen ji* text; however, item 8 of *juan* 17, which is made up of several stories all apparently concerning a deity in Hedong, mentions a man named Yuan Shao and another with the surname Su. This latter is witness to visits to the deity's temple by a number of celestial officers (*tianshi*). He listens to their conversation, then discusses the five classics--and particularly the *Book of Rites*--with the learned temple god, for whom he is no match. After all of this he finally gets what he went to the temple for, namely, a method for curing his ailing mother. This story narrates the same sort of exchange with spirits that Daoxuan will describe in his own text; but it does not match the one he cites. It is quite possible, of course, that Daoxuan had seen a tale in a *Soushen ji* manuscript that is now lost.

questions from Daoxuan. At several points one celestial being interrupts another, challenges what another has said, or offers a different interpretation. Usually it is Daoxuan who asks the questions and the spirits who answer; at other times, particularly in the discussion of vinaya matters, the text records a two-way conversation in which spirits sometimes ask Daoxuan questions about practices or terms *they* do not understand.

Most of Daoxuan's questions concern Buddhist "marks" on the Chinese landscape: the origins of ancient monasteries, images, and stûpas. Many of these sites are said to date all the way back to the previous Buddha, Kâśyapa; the Buddha Śâkyamuni is described as visiting some of them. It was in many cases these same sites, already covered with layers of sedimentary sacrality (as it were) since hoary antiquity, that the emperor Aśoka, who in legend covered the world with 84,000 stûpas constructed in a single day, had thus ritually and architecturally re-marked.[51] We have to deal here with a text in the fascinating but seldom studied Chinese Buddhist genre of sacred topography and archaeology, a genre clearly created for domesticative and acculturative purposes. Instead of seeing the Chinese landscape as a strange and novel environment for the imported religion, works of this genre re-imagine the land as in fact having a Buddhist proto-history so ancient that it has been forgotten save for occasionally excavated traces in the ground--remnants of Aśokan stûpas, for instance, that confirm the ancient presence of Buddhism on Chinese soil.[52] In the *Record*, Daoxuan is not only engaging in such a re-imagination of the Chinese landscape; he is also lending it the weight of divine revelation.

A few of Daoxuan's questions are not tied to specific points on the landscape but concern what might be termed Buddhism's proto-history in China. For example: if King Mu of Zhou and other ancient rulers encountered stûpas and other Buddhist monuments, why are these not recorded in the historical literature (439a13)? There are conflicting statements regarding when the Buddha lived; which is correct (439b1)?[53]

Daoxuan also receives instruction on the fate of the dead and the reason for the many different theories about their destination. Among other items of information he receives is the fact that 250 guardian spirits per precept inhabit the body of the monk from ordination onwards; for each major infraction of a precept, one of these spirits departs (439b29ff.). Also mentioned is a story of an apparent scriptural revelation in the countryside, in which a man, in order to convert benighted peasants, lies on his back and writes the words of the *Vajracchedikâ sûtra* in the air with a brush; celestial spirits stretch out paper for the words to be written on, and the people of the area are then given this copy, along with a divinely constructed canopy to shelter

51. An example of one of these topographic questions and the spirits' answer (from 437a21ff.) is translated and discussed in Raoul Birnbaum, "The Manifestation of a Monastery: Shen-ying's Experiences on Mount Wu-t'ai in T'ang Context," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106 (1986):125.

52. One of the few discussions of this topos may be found in Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 1:243-44 and 277ff. Also relevant are Bernard Faure, "Space and Place in Chinese Religious Traditions," *History of Religions* 26.4 (May 1987):337-56, and, for the Japanese case, Allan G. Grapard, "Institution, Ritual, and Ideology," *History of Religions* 27.3(Feb. 1988):246-69. I hope to pursue further research and writing on this topic as part of a project on local cults in the early medieval period.

53. Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, ch. 5, discusses a number of theories of Buddhist proto-history--another domesticative device designed to explain away the apparent strangeness of the imported religion.

it and them from inclement weather (439c10ff.).

Next on Daoxuan's agenda are detailed matters of disciplinary code,including monastic garb, special seats, altars, circumambulation practices,and various special terms. Here Daoxuan answers as many questions as he asks.

Finally, the General of the celestial guard who was mentioned early in the text arrives in person. He speaks politely of his long-held desire to meet Daoxuan in person, and confirms that it was he who sent these messengers in advance to converse with Daoxuan before he himself was able to come. Then, busy celestial functionary that he is, he reminds Daoxuan that he has only a short time to stay and comes directly to his point, which is one of reassurance. Although reminding Daoxuan that "the Buddha's Dharma is in decline," this General says that conditions are much better in China than in India, and that celestial guardians hover in unseen clouds to protect and encourage the faithful;[54] and when Daoxuan asks, "But is not Mâra the ruler of the realm of desire? And do not the beings of the lower heavens therefore belong under his dominion?" the General offers more words of comfort: "If the Mâras attempt to perpetrate evil, the Four Heavenly [Kings] and Indra (*sitian dishi*) will not allow it. As long as beings in the lower two heavens [i.e. humans (?)] act with pure merit, there is nothing that the Mâras and she-Mâras can do to them."[55] Then, after another round of questions with this spirit (including such matters as why the celestial guardians permit non-virtuous, blood-eating [local?] gods and persons who kill beings for a living to continue their practices, and whether or not the legend that Daoan [d.385] was recently sighted riding a red donkey is true), the text abruptly ends.

In the *Record of Spiritual Responses* we have to deal, then, with what can only be described as a Buddhist revelation text. The text records esoteric information gained by its author during direct contact with spiritual beings. Its resemblance in literary form to Taoist texts is striking, and will become even more evident upon a more detailed study than is possible here.

I have traced a single thread: the early medieval Chinese Buddhist idea that the words of scriptures and insight into them could be orally or textually transmitted directly by celestial or spiritual beings to persons in special states of consciousness. We have seen this idea at work in several types of texts, ranging from miracle tales and hagiographies through bibliographic

---

54. "Here, although the precepts are often broken, at least the majority of people have a sense of shame; although people may feel inwardly inclined toward violation [of the precepts], they at least outwardly display caution and guardedness. Therefore the officers of the various heavens forget a person's hundred errors when they see him do even one meritorious deed. And when they see a transgression committed, they all shed tears and redouble their efforts to guard the person in question so as to prevent any further attack by demons (*maras*)" (442a6ff).

55. The passage is rather cryptic, but the gist seems to be that, in these latter days of Dharma, Chinese Buddhists have a double recourse: first, celestial guardians protect them from uncontrolled onslaughts by mâras;and second, and given this divine protection, as long as people behave virtuously the mâras cannot harm them. The General cites a recent case as an example, an attack on the Great Temple of Bodhi (*Puti dasi*). A temple of this name is mentioned in the *Luoyang qielan ji* (see Yi-t'ung Wang, trans., *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-yang* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984], xiv [n.], 153, and 187 [n.]) as having been located in Luoyang, but so far I have found no record of an attack on it during the early Tang.

treatises to an auto-compiled record of celestial guardians' revelations to a high-ranking and venerated monk. I have been able to show that, although such revealed texts were denied by many learned clerics to be genuine or authoritative, they were not uniformly rejected; since even some elite monks accepted "divine transmission" as an authentic mode of scripture production, it cannot be written off as belonging merely to the lower tier of the Buddhist religion or banished to the barrens of "popular superstition." I have also shown that the recipients of such textual transmission span virtually the entire social spectrum, from illiterate peasant women and ordinary soldiers--in which cases we seem to be dealing with a *medium* as human recipient--to monks who were counted among the most literate men of their age--in which cases we see the human recipient taking a much more *interactive* role with respect to the spiritual transmitters.

The disputes over the authenticity of directly transmitted texts ultimately point us toward two fundamentally divergent understandings of what the Buddhist religion essentially was--two self-reflexive ideal types of Buddhism, in the Weberian sense of extrapolated models that need not be found intact in the historical material but rather to be heuristically useful categories of analysis and understanding. I would argue that these ways of understanding the nature of the Buddhist religion vis-à-vis Chinese culture should be seen as alternative strategies of domestication. For they each constituted a set of terms in which (or paradigm or episteme under which) the relationship between Buddhism and Chinese culture in general could be understood; and they also provided alternative responses to the challenge posed by Buddhism's main competitor on the field of religion, "the teachings of the Way" or Taoism.

The one model saw the Buddhist *tradition* itself, whatever sorts of spirits might lurk in the unseen interstices of the cosmos it posited, as a *human* tradition that, in this world-system at least, began in India at a more or less specifiable date with the career of a historical founding figure and had only recently been imported by an ongoing process of missionary travel from India to China, pilgrimage from China to India, and textual translation. On this model, Buddhism was *trans* cultural. The impulse was toward a relatively "closed" set of scriptures, although the gates were kept open to India as (paradoxically) new teachings of the Śâkyamuni Buddha continued to be "discovered." Foreign provenance was the key criterion of scriptural authenticity. Catalogues were constantly produced in an attempt to discriminate between authentic (imported) and spurious (indigenous/revealed) texts.

The other model took Buddhism to be a cosmic, *super*cultural reality that was not *essentially* tied to a particular historical tradition or path of transmission; or, when it was historiographically expressed, this model expanded the time frame outwards in both directions, envisioning Buddhism as having been known in China virtually as long as Chinese civilization had existed and ever accessible here and now through contact with the Buddha standing on the horizon of the future, Maitreya. On this model, the impulse was toward a relatively "open" set of scriptures, although (in the case of most elite clerics, at least) the gates were closed (paradoxically) to texts of any origin whose contents were seen as either politically sensitive or doctrinally concessive (often both). Foreign provenance, while certainly not rejected as a key criterion of scriptural authenticity, was no longer a necessary condition of authenticity. Direct "divine transmission" was added to translation as a legitimate mode of textual genesis.

Note that both models include a notion of scriptural authenticity; it is not that the second model allows just *any* text to be authentic. In each model authenticity involves the crossing of

a specific sort of distance or difference. For the first, the distance was a matter of geography, history, language, and culture. To these modes of distance the second model added another: that between this visible world as we daily inhabit it and the normally invisible, but occasionally permeable, realms of buddhas and bodhisattvas. To us, the second sort of distance may seem vaster, crossable as it is only by spiritual vehicles. To those of any level of society and literacy who contemplated crossing the Himalayas by foot or the Indian Ocean by sailboat, and who attempted the almost impossible task of rendering Sanskrit into intelligible Chinese without thereby dissolving Buddhism into simply a foreign version of familiar home teachings, the distance between China and the celestial realms might understandably have seemed slight by comparison.

Note, finally, that each model should also be seen as a distinctive strategy for responding to the Taoist challenge. In rejecting divine transmission and in picturing Buddhism as historically transmitted, the first model was able to dismiss Taoist revelation texts as fabrications. It was still vulnerable, however, to Taoist plagiarism (to use an unkind word). And its monopoly on the supply of authentic (read: translated) texts was also vulnerable to conquest by a kind of flooding of the textual market: Taoist deities might transmit faster than the Buddhist monks could translate, especially when their human scribes were prone to engage in what Strickmann has aptly called a "free-enterprise of the spirit."[56] It was also vulnerable to that famous Taoist historical "end-around" play, the theory of *huahu* or "the conversion of the barbarians," according to one version of which the historical Gautama Buddha on whom the proponents of the first model pinned their claims was none other than the high Taoist deity Laozi in disguise.[57] Because the second model was able to compete on Taoist terms, pitting revelation against revelation, it was not as vulnerable to the *huahu* attack or to the revelatory flooding of the scriptural market. But the cost here was the need to undertake the messy, labor-intensive work of discriminating the false from the true not on the *relatively* clean and simple basis of textual origin but in such murky arenas as doctrinal thought, ritual practice, and social embodiment, where lines were much harder to draw.

Taoist Translation

Meanwhile, the process of revelation envisioned by many Taoists--most aspects of which I will not treat here in as much detail, since by contrast with Buddhist revelation they are relatively well known--itself involved an element of translation. What we usually think of as Taoist revelation, a single adept receiving (orally or in writing) a text from a deity, is in fact only one link in a chain of transmissions that stretches across vast distances of language and of being.

Already in the *Taiping jing*, we encounter the notion that ordinary mortals do not receive textual transmissions directly from heaven; the transmission of high truths must be mediated through several intervening levels of beings and stages of language. The divine Celestial Master delivers to the earthly Perfected Ones texts containing a record of "celestial speech" (*tiantan*) or

56. See Michel Strickmann, "The Mao Shan Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy," *T'oung Pao* 63.1 (1977):15.

57. See Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest*, ch. 6, for a discussion of this most fascinating of interreligious co-optative endeavors.

"the speech of Heaven and the utterances of Earth" (*tiantan diyu*). The Perfected are then supposed to transmit these texts to a virtuous ruler who can transform the world. It is because "Heaven and Earth do not speak [directly] to humans" that they arrange for the periodic birth of a sage (*shengren*) or master (*shengshi*) through whose mediation the correct teachings can be promulgated.[58]

The Shangqing scriptures amplify the mediatory stages of revelation. First of all, the texts themselves, in their truest and purest states, are said to have been formed of primordial breaths in the highest heavens at the earliest stages of the cosmogony, an event usually described as generating brilliant light and causing the mythical creatures of the heavens to dance for joy.[59] Next they are transmitted--usually orally (*kouchuan* or *gao*)--by the most august celestial the archs (*tiandi*) to a somewhat more active deity, typically Li Hong (= Laozi), the Sage or Lord Who Is to Come (*Housheng jun*), or else the Queen [Turtle] Mother of the West (*Xiwang [gui]mu*). It is only at this stage, in most cases, that the words of the scriptures are described as being written down, often in purple characters on a gold background. These characters are either inscribed on an upper-celestial tower, hidden in the stars, or secreted in the sacred marchmounts of earth. The Sage or Queen Mother or another mediating figure then transmits a version or copy of the text--or often only an oral summary or explication--to a lesser deity, often the Azure Lad (*Qingtong jun*) or Lady An, Yang Xi's celestial consort. It is these latter figures who finally "reveal" this version of the text to a human adept destined for perfection, one such as Master Redpine or Yang Xi, with instructions to transmit it only to those who have sworn the proper oaths and whose names are already inscribed in the heavens among the elect.[60]

The process of revelation, then, is clearly a multi-leveled affair. The "texts" that human adepts receive from their perfected tutors stand at the end of a long chain of both oral and written transmission, and that transmission entails the gradual denaturing of the scripture's original power and purity. In other words, though they embody supreme power relative to other forces in this

---

58. The quoted passage ("Heaven and Earth do not speak...") may be found in Wang Ming, ed., *Taiping jinghejiao* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 651. On the *Taiping jing* concept of revelation and the scripture's conception of itself, see Max Kaltenmark, "The Ideology of the *T'ai-p'ing ching*," in *Facets of Taoism*, ed. Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 24-29.

59. See, e.g., HY 55.2a-3a, HY 56.1a-3b.

60. See, e.g., HY 1315.1a-2b, HY 639.1a-2b (a particularly clear example), HY 405.18b, HY 426.1a, HY 442.6b, HY 1312.1a-b, HY 1305.3a and 7b, HY 1323.5a, HY 1333.1.1a-2a, HY 1365.1.1b, and HY 331.12b-13a. This latter text, the important *Huangting jing* (*Yellow Court Canon*), is not listed as a Shangqing scripture by Isabelle Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing dans l'histoire du Taoïsme*, 2 vols. (Paris: Ecole Francaise d'Extrême-Orient, 1984), for she takes it to be anterior to the Maoshan revelations (see 1:147 n.1); but it is so listed by Michel Strickmann, *Le Taoïsme du Mao Chan: Chronique d'une révélation* (Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1981), 61-62. For cases in which the scriptures revealed to mortals are explicitly stated to be summaries or oral explications of written texts which are by implication different in word if not in substance, see, e.g., HY 421.3.3a and HY 424.1a. For a suggestive overall characterization of the early Taoist notion of scriptures, see Isabelle Robinet, *Méditation taoïste* (Paris: Dervy-Livres, 1979), 29-44; and for a more detailed discussion of the Shangqing conception of scriptures, see Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 1:112-116.

world, the texts as we have them are only pale reflections of their distant celestial prototypes. And the gap between the mundane and upper-celestial versions of any given scripture is not merely a gap of space, time, and filiation; it is also a gap of intelligibility, as the wavy lines of revealed talismans (*fu*) that sprinkle the pages of the texts make very clear. Humans' inability to read the celestial prototypes of their scriptures is occasionally mentioned explicitly in Shangqing scriptures. One passage, for instance, relates: "The twenty-four characters to the right were carved by the Grand Upper [Thearch] on the eastern wall of the Jade Chamber on Mt. Emei. The patterns of these characters are ancient and the script is unintelligible. It is now [herewith] reproduced."[61] It is this unintelligibility that renders the oral transmissions and summaries necessary.

But nowhere is the gap between mundane and celestial versions of scriptures--and the consequent need for mediation and translation--stated more clearly in the Shangqing corpus than by Lady Wang of Purple Tenuity in her discourse to Yang Xi on the origins of writing. Her speech, which appears in the first chapter of the *Declarations of the Perfected*, is prompted by his puzzled question as to why she and her perfected companions do not write texts in their own hand but only dictate their message orally, leaving the writing to him. She details the devolutionary process by which, after the initial "sproutings" of the five colors and the division of yang and yin, an original "pure" script was divided into two types, those of Eight Conjunction and those of Cloud Seal, which eventually devolved downwards through 64 further types (corresponding to the *Yijing*'s 64 hexagrams and parceled out to the appropriate levels of the 36 heavens) until finally today's worldly scripts were produced--"the frivolous and filthy traces of death." It is because of this gap, at once of purity and of intelligibility, that perfected beings are not permitted to communicate directly with mortals in writing. "Even if I did set down my hand [in writing]," Lady Wang explains, "you would certainly not be able to understand it, and we would both land in trouble pointlessly."[62] Communication through speech remains possible, however, because although the written "traces" differ at various levels of the cosmos, the "canons of sound" remain the same at all levels--precisely opposite the situation here on earth, where only the graphs of the writing system remain constant across different spoken languages and dialects.[63]

This basic conception of scripture, including the need for several stages of mediation between the upper-celestial forms of scriptures and their mundane forms, was carried over into the Lingbao tradition, only to be further elaborated. The Lingbao corpus makes clear that the language in which the heart of its new revelations (the secret names of the heavens, deities, and demon-kings) is uttered by the Primordial Heavenly Worthy is not a mundane language but rather the Concealed Language of the Great Brahman (*dafanyinyu*). These utterances were then written

---

61. HY 878.1b. Robinet comments in her summary of the standard Shangqing narrative concerning the origins of scriptures: ". . . Mais ces écrits sont abstrus. Seuls les saints supérieurs peuvent les comprendre. Aussi le Très Haut accompagne-t-il d'un commentaire 'oral' qui est consigné avec eux" (*La révélation du Shangqing*, 1:113).

62. I have summarized from the *Zhengao* (HY 1010.1.8a-9b).

63. This, too, is made explicit by Lady Wangat 1.8b.7-8.

down in celestial script on five tablets deposited in the five marchmounts, where they await transmission to the Most High Lord of the Dao. Like some Shangqing scriptures, the Lingbao texts append direct transcriptions of this celestial script, but they also provide *translations* by the August Heavenly Perfected, which he made when beseeched by the celestial assembly to "explain the meaning [of the celestial-script graphs] and reveal [lit. "penetrate"] their sounds."[64] Only after such mediation can the initial truth spoken by the Primordial Heavenly Worthy take on a form accessible to humans: namely, that of "wondrous scriptures" in ten sectional divisions totalling thirty-six *juan*, plus two *juan* of "jade instructions."

Most striking for our purposes is the obvious Indic imagery adopted by the Lingbao tradition to describe the highest forms of its scriptures. Not only are the characters of the celestial script based on transliterations of Sanskrit syllables, they are also grouped into strings of pseudo-Sanskrit "words" one to six syllables long. From the Taoists' perspective, however, it was not the case that they had projected an actual foreign language soaked (in Chinese eyes) with otherness and sacrality onto the highest heavens. Rather, to the Taoists the human language called Sanskrit *(fanyu)* was but a poor and barbaric imitation of the pure celestial tongue, taught to the Indians by Laozi and subsequently corrupted by them. And when chanting the celestial graphs represented in the texts, adepts were explicitly instructed not to attempt to pronounce them in their celestial form but to use the pure tones of the central Chinese plains.[65]

The Lingbao tradition, then, quite clearly maintains that the celestial script embodying the scriptures in their pure forms *requires translation* if it is to be understood by mortals. As if to emphasize the foreignness of this script, the Lingbao tradition describes it in Sanskrit-like terms. The final irony, however, is that in so doing, the tradition in effect co-opts the celestial prototype

---

64. HY97.3.6b.5. Thus in some cases we possess both the celestial (or "true"[*zhen*]) graphs and their earthly (or "jade" [*yu*]) "translations"; see, e.g., HY 22.1.7bff. (true) and HY 352.1.8bff. (jade), and HY 97 1.1bff. (true) and HY 97 3.6aff. (jade).

65. HY425.6b.10-7a.4. In this brief discussion I have followed Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures," esp. 462-65. Bokenkamp gives further illuminating examples of Lingbao use of pseudo-Sanskrit in "Taoism and Literature: The *Pi-lo* Question," *Taoist Resources* 3.1 (1991):57-72. Elsewhere he has translated and discussed another central Lingbao myth (found in HY 388) of the origins of some of its own scriptures, and, as we would by now expect, this story contains four important moments when figures semi-divine or human *cannot understand the script* in which the texts they have received are written, or else, understanding it, refuse to reveal its meaning to others. See Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "The Peach Flower Font and the Grotto Passage," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106(1986):65-77. The moments are these: (1) The arch Ku receives three books in celestial script but cannot read them, so he buries them in Mount Zhong (65). (2) The recluse of Baoshan, called the Elder of Dragon Prowess, while acting as envoy for King Ho Lü of Wu penetrates deep into a grotto and removes a scroll of writing which he cannot read. This scroll is in fact, unbeknownst to him, a transcription made by Yu the Great of the three books originally given to Thearch Ku (66). (3) King Ho Lü "prized [this] celestial script, but could not understand its expressions" (67). So he sends it to Confucius for explication. (4) Confucius, who seems to have the capacity to understand the text, refuses to explain or read it and returns it to the King's envoy unopened, with the admonishment: "Only Transcendents may employ this script; even sovereigns and kings are not to obtain its methods" (68). For further discussion of Taoist use of pseudo-Sanskrit, see Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism," 108-112.

of Sanskrit as its own religious "property" while debasing the actual human language of the Buddhist sûtras as a poor and corrupt imitation.

It seems appropriate, therefore, to speak of a developing Taoist notion of "supercultural" or "cosmic" translation which, if not in its earliest stages, certainly in the Lingbao texts was crafted to rival Buddhist"transcultural" translation. If initial linguistic otherness was a major Buddhist criterion of scriptural authority, the Taoists posited their own version of linguistic otherness: their texts, too, existed in their original form in an alien and sacred language, of which the Chinese translation was only a poor--but still effective--approximation. But the Taoists also recast the type of distance spanned by translation: in spatial terms, it was vertical, not horizontal as in the Buddhist case; temporally it was a distance of kalpas, not of centuries; and it was a distance not of culture but of levels of being and of purity.

Ironically, whereas those Buddhists who adopted a supercultural model of their tradition were more rather than less likely to admit direct revelation as authentic, the Taoists, in positing *their* tradition as supercultural, sought more and more to render revelation *in*direct and *mediated*.

Conclusion

Chinese Buddhist scriptures were produced not only by translation but also, in some cases, by revelation; Taoist scriptures were not only revealed but also, as part of the process of revelation, translated. These facts add to the growing weight of evidence requiring us to rethink the interrelationship between the Buddhist and Taoist traditions in the early medieval period. They challenge scholars of "Buddhism," in particular, to examine more closely the ways in which that religion was actually appropriated in China--and indeed to ask after the full range and depth of this colossal and complex process of "appropriation"--instead of viewing it as an "ism"-entity transplanted quite intact onto Chinese soil from India as a mere copy or extension of its Indian original.

On a more general level, the evidence presented here suggests that religious traditions' stories about the ways in which their own scriptures came to be are key modes for the fashioning of collective identity. Indeed, traditions' stories about the origins of their scriptures might be as important as the contents of those scriptures themselves when it comes to grasping what sort of thing people thought their traditions essentially were. Here, for example, to know that some Chinese Buddhists thought of their scriptures as revealed and that Taoists thought of scriptural revelation as including a phase of translation from an alien (if superior) language is to know something quite important about how Buddhists and Taoists viewed the nature and status not only of their respective scriptures, but also of their respective traditions.

This study also suggests that even an element as close to the "core" of a tradition as its basic picture of how its scriptures were generated must be seen, in part at least, as a strategy of interreligious and cultural contestation. Differences within a tradition over the authenticity of one or another mode of scriptural production must, to that extent, be seen as driven not only by internal disputes but also by shifting responses to external challenges. Prevailing modes of scholarship, teaching, and religious studies curriculum to the contrary, religious traditions are not adequately viewed as self-contained entities isolable from the cultures and societies in which they have their being and from the other traditions against which they strive for legitimacy and supremacy.

Texts Cited, Editions Used, and Citation Methods

BZL *Bianzheng lun* 辯正論
Essays on the Discernment of Right
Polemical treatise compiled ca. 627 by Falin. *T* 2110, v.52.

FYZL *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林
A Grove of Pearls from the Garden of the Dharma
Buddhist encyclopedia compiled ca. 668 by Daoshi. *T* 2122, v.53.

GSY *Guangshiyin yingyan ji* 光世音應驗記
A Record of Avalokiteśvara's Responsive Manifestations
Originally written before 399 by Xie Fu but lost in that year; partially reconstructed by Fu Liang (374-426). 7 tales + preface. *RKKO* ed.

GSZ *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳
Lives of Eminent Monks
Written by Huijiao ca. 531. *T* 2059, v.50.

HY *Daozang zimu yinde, Combined Indices to the Authors and Titles of Books in Two Collections of Taoist Literature*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series 25 (Peking, 1935). Number given is that assigned by this index to the cited text.

JYJ *Jingyi ji* 旌異記
Citations of Marvels
Written by Hou Bo between 581 and 604. 10 tales. LX ed.

LX Lu Xun, ed., *Gu xiaoshuo gouchen*, in *Lu Xun sanshinian ji* (n.p.: Lu Xun quanji chubanshe, 1941) 古小說鉤沉

Ancient Tales Rescued from the Depths of Oblivion
Citations give the serial order of the tale in the particular collection in which it appears, followed by the page numbers in this edition.

MXJ *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記
Visible Signs from the Unseen Realm
Compiled by Wang Yan between 485 and 501. 131 tales + preface. LX ed.

RKKO Makita Tairyô, ed., *Rikuchô koitsu Kanzeon ôkenki no kenkyû*
(Kyoto: Hyôrakuji shoten, 1970) 六朝古逸觀世音應驗記の研究

A Study of Tales of Avalokiteśvara's Responsive Manifestations Surviving from the Six Dynasties
Citations of tales first give the serial number of the tale in its particular collection, then the page number(s).

SBGTL *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄
Collected Records of Responses among the Three Treasures on the Sacred Continent
Miracle notices compiled by Daoxuan. *T* 2106, v.52.

T *Taishô shinshû daizôkyô* (Tokyo, 1924-34) 大正新修大藏經
Number following *T* is the number assigned to the title in this edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon; volume number is given next, followed by page numbers.

TPGJ *Taiping guangji* (Shanghai, 1930) 太平廣記
Number before decimal indicates the *juan* number; number after decimal indicates the cited story's place in the series of stories contained in that *juan* (e.g. 110.2 indicates the second item in *juan* 110).

XiGSY *Xi Guanshiyin yingyan ji* 繫觀世音應驗記
More Records of Avalokiteśvara's Responsive Manifestations
Compiled by Lu Gao in 501. 69 tales + preface. *RKKO* ed.

XuGSY *Xu Guangshiyin yingyan ji* 續光世音應驗記
Continued Records of Avalokiteśvara's Responsive Manifestations
Written by Zhang Yan in mid-fifth century. 10 tales + preface. *RKKO* ed.

XuGSZ *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳
Further Lives of Eminent Monks
Written by Daoxuan. *T* 2060, v.50.

XYJ *Xuanyan ji* 宣驗記
Records in Proclamation of Manifestations
Attributed to Liu Yiqing (403-444). 35 tales. LX ed.

XYiJ *Xiangyi ji* 詳異記
Signs of the Marvelous[66]
Author and date unknown; most likely pre-Tang. 2 tales. LX ed.

Glossary

(consult bibliography for titles of most primary sources)

anleguo 安樂國

baojuan 寶卷
Beishi 北史
Biqiuni zhuan 比丘尼傳

chu 出
Chusanzang jiji 出三藏記集
ci sui mingshou bu yin chuanyi 此雖冥授不因傳譯
dafan yinyu 大梵隱語
Daoan 道安

66. The character *xiang* ("detail") in the title is probably an error for the *xiang* ("sign") that also occurs in the title of *MXJ*. I translate accordingly.

Daoxuan 道宣
Daoxuan lüshi gantonglu 道宣律師感通錄
Da Tang neidan lu 大唐內典錄
donghua sanbao 東華三寶

fanyu 梵語
Fei Changfang 費長房
foguo 佛國
fu 符

Gan Bao 干寶
gao 告
Gaowang Guanshiyin jing 高王觀世音經
gaozuo 高座
gongyang 供養
Guang hongming ji 廣弘明集
Guangming an[le]xing pin 光明安樂行品
Guanshiyin 觀世音
Guanshiyin jiusheng jing 觀世音救生經
guizuo 鬼座

Housheng jun 後生君
huahu 化胡
Huangting jing 黃庭經
huyu 胡語

jiang 講
jiaosong 教誦
jingfa 經法
jinglu 精廬
jingshe 精舍
jingtu 淨土
jiuhu 舊胡
juan 卷

Kaiyuan shijiao lu 開元釋教錄
kouchuan 口傳

liao wu cancuo 了無參錯
Lidai sanbao ji 歷代三寶記
Li Hong 李弘
Lingbao 靈寶
lüzong 律宗

mengjian shengseng koushou qijing
夢見聖僧口授其經
meng shamen jiao jiangjing 夢沙門教講經
mingzhi shenshou yi 明知神授矣

mofa 末法

Nizi 尼子

Puti dasi 菩提大寺

Qingtong jun 青童君

sanbao 三寶
Soporutuo juanshu zhuangyan jing
薩婆若陀眷屬莊嚴經
Sengyou 僧祐
Shangqing 上清
shangtian 上天
sheli 舍利
shengren 聖人
shengshi 聖師
shengying 聖應
shenshou 神授
shou 受/授
shugan tianren 數感天人
shuwen 屬文
sitian dishi 四天帝釋
Soushen ji 搜神記
Soushen lu 搜神錄
Sun Jingde 孫敬德
suxi 宿習

tainei huaguangdian 台內花光殿
Taiping jing 太平經
tiandi 天帝
tianshi 天使
tiantan diyu 天談地語
tonggan 通感

wei 偽
Weishu 魏書

xiang 詳
xiang 祥
Xiwang [gui]mu 西王龜母

yi 疑
yi chu er shu zhi 依出而疏之
Yijing 易經
yu 玉
Yu Bao 于寶
yujie 欲界

zaozuo 造作
zhen 真
Zhengao 真誥
Zhisheng 智昇

Li Po's Ascent of Mount O-mei: A Taoist Vision of the Mythology of a Sacred Mountain

SHI Mingfei

> Mountains, whether large or small, are in all cases possessed of divine numina. If the mountain be large, then the divinity is a greater one; if the mountain be small, then the divinity is a lesser one (Ko Hung 17.1a, trans. Kroll 168, 1986).[1]

As a divine site, O-mei Shan 峨眉山 occupies a special position in the Chinese cultural tradition of famous mountains. Although the Mount is not among the five (earlier four) "Marchmounts" 嶽[2] that bear witness to a tradition of state-oriented worship established since the dawn of Chinese civilization,[3] it is certainly one of the most powerful of the deified natural forces in the tradition. The Mount now enjoys a high reputation as one of the four most renowned Buddhist holy mountains; and owing to this later fame, its earlier glory as a possibly notable center of Taoist activities seems almost completely overshadowed, if it has not died out totally. True, the literature concerning Taoist practice on Mount O-mei during medieval times is extremely meager, making it to a large degree merely a subject for scholarly speculation and debate. However, despite the unavailability or total loss of the oral tradition, and the scarcity of the literary records in Taoist scriptures and poetic or prosaic sources, one still can sporadically run across some interesting jigsaw puzzle pieces that signify the mountain as a crucial site of mystic revelations for Taoism from approximately the third to the ninth century. According to the *Chen kao* 真誥, a canonical text in Shang-ch'ing Taoism 上清, for example, O-mei Shan was an important link to the most sacred peak in the tradition, Mao Shan 茅山. While the grotto heaven of "Florescent Solarity" 華陽洞天 below Mao Shan was the center of a five-part network of underground heavens, O-mei Shan—rather than Ch'ing-ch'eng Shan 青城山, a traditional paradise for Celestial Master Taoism—was recognized as the western point of the subterranean interconnection.[4] In some T'ang literature, the Mount had long been noted as "the Seventh Grotto Heaven" 第七洞天 in Taoist circles and honored as a cardinal point for the indigenous Chinese religion.[5]

In order to glimpse the Taoist tradition that has long been lost, the present study will center on Li Po's (李白, 701-769) poem "Ascending Mount O-mei" 登峨眉山, around which to adumbrate a historical topography of O-mei Shan in medieval times as a transtextual coding of the text. I will begin by putting scattered pieces together in an intertextual pattern and proposing geographic as well as religious profiles of the mountain, and then proceed to a close analysis of

---

*This paper was originally prepared for a seminar on Taoism offered by Professor Stephen Bokenkamp at Indiana University. I would like to thank him for his valuable criticism toward the improvement of this study. Thanks are also due to my friends from the inter-art reading group at Indiana University, Lewis A. Dibble and Alice Chi-yun Wang, for their helpful suggestions on my manuscript.

the text itself. With its explicit Taoist imagery, Li Po's poem was an obvious transfiguration of the religious feelings evoked by the alpine environs; not only did the mountain symbolize the poet's yearning for Taoist immortality on high, it also inspired a vision of transcendence that testified to and heightened the spiritual power of the site.

I.

O-mei Shan is situated on the southwestern edge of the "Ssu-ch'uan Basin" 四川盆地 in western China, and is also known as Ya-men Shan 牙門山 or Liang-chou chih shan 梁州之山 (*OMSC* 3.1a).[6] Its current name, O-mei 峨眉 , actually derives from a homonym of the designation used in the Western Han dynasty, a poetic metaphor for the Mount 蛾眉 : beautiful moth-like eyebrows, a conventional synecdoche for beautiful women.[7] As the two main peaks of the ranges are positioned facing each other in a way comparable to a beauty's lovely eyebrows, the Mount was called "Moth Eyebrow Mountain"蛾眉山, a name later varied to "Lofty Eyebrow Mountain" 峨眉山 (note that the classifier of the graph O 峨 in the latter phrase became a "mountain" 山). So says the *Ssu-ch'uan t'ung-chih*: "This Mount (O-mei Shan) is a [beauty's] cloudy bun and pearls of halcyon with elegant make-up and kohl around her temples; therefore, it looks really like a pair of "moth eyebrows" on the beauty's cicada face, slender, long, beautiful as well as brightly colored."[8] Geographically, O-mei Shan sits at the beginning of an ocean of mountains extending into Tibet from western China. While the strong current of the Min-chiang 岷江 surges through the area near the foot of the mountain, the massive ranges of the Mount run into those of others such as Li-ching曬經 , T'ien-chu天竺 , Ch'ing-ch'eng 青城 , and Min Shan 岷山 , which stretch endlessly to K'un-lun Shan崑崙山 Owing to the cult of natural forces extant since the dawn of the culture, these boundless mountain areas constituted for the ancient Chinese a vast range of mysterious "unknown lands," a *terra incognita*, where spirits and transcendents were believed to reside.[9] O-mei Shan therefore became an entrance point to these mysterious reaches and a crucial connection for the communication system of divine numina in West China. This unique mystic power attached to the mountain is clearly described in the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* (雲笈七籤 5.5b), a conflation of the earlier legends from various Taoist lineages compiled in the Sung Period: ". . . Chiu-yi and Lo-fu extend to the Wu Gorge in the west. O-mei is like the brilliance of clouds and the soughing of winds in the pines; beauteous in its mountains and dazzling in its waters. In its achievement, it knocks [on the door of] the metaphysical, moves [the world of] the immortals, and transmits the instructions of spirits; self-contained, it connects and communicates among the Transcendent and the Perfected [of many sites]."

Although the name of the Mount stemmed from the poetic depiction of the two peaks that face one another, O-mei Shan is in fact a quadruple mountain, including 1) Ta-o 大峨 (the Big O), the main peak of the mountain; 2) Erh-o 二峨 or Chung-o 中峨 (the Second or Middle O), recorded in some ancient literature as Sui Shan 綏山 or Fu-p'eng 覆蓬 ; 3) San-o 三峨 or Hsiao-o 小峨 (the Third or Small O), also called in the *Classics of Mountains and Seas* 山海經 Hua-jen Shan 鏵刃山 and Hsi-huang Shan西皇山; 4) Ssu-o 四峨 (the Fourth O), or alternatively Hua Shan 華山 and Wu-yang lung-wei Shan 武陽龍尾山 , as in Li Tao-yuan's (酈道元?-527) *Notes to the Rivers Classic* 水經注 (*OMSC* 1.17b-18a). The Mount stands 3,099 meters at its highest point, and the Ta-o is not merely the loftiest peak in the whole Ssu-ch'uan area, but also one of the five Marchmounts. Seated at the edge of the basin, the mountain appears especially awe-inspiring,

as if its elevation, to use Li Po's poetic line, goes even "beyond the heavens of the Western Extremities" 峨眉高出西極天.[10] For the ancient mind, its physical height—the fact of its seeming proximity to the heavens itself—became imaginatively resourceful. As a reflection of the powerful divinity that was believed to have inhabited such a lofty mountain, it was thought during medieval times that inside O-mei Shan was a cloudland called "Grand Nothingness Mountain" 太無山, where one could find a "grotto palace" with jewelled doors; and that in this transcendent palace were listed the names of all those who have achieved the Tao, as well as of the Perfected and Transcendent (太無山中有洞宮玉戶 在峨眉之上, 諸得道真仙之名, 刊列此宮也, *TPYL* 660.1b).

Hence, though the vast and rich landscapes of O-mei Shan contained all natural necessities and virtues for Taoists to constitute their magical vision of a sacred mountain,[11] the charm of the Mount did not come simply from the natural landscape. Rather, as with other divine mountains, the enchantment of the Mount mainly emanated from the mythologized scenes, the supernatural aura or, in Rudolph Otto's terms, the "wholly other" revealed from on high and from the tremendous divine power associated with the mountain. What is important for our purposes, then, is the delineation of a recognizable, albeit sketchy, image of O-mei as a *locus spiritus* during medieval times. In so doing, we need to go further to trace sparse historical legends and records in the Taoist tradition with regard to the mountain.

II.

Although the precise origin of the Taoist tradition relating to O-mei will be never a matter of certainty, the records available show that the cult of the Mount was already established as early as the Eastern Chin period (東晉 317-420). The cult owed largely to a myth concerning the legendary cultural hero, the Yellow Thearch Hsüan-yüan 黃帝軒轅 , who was believed to have achieved the Tao on a sacred mountain. Although the prototype of the myth as recorded in the *Chuang-tzu* 莊子 has no relation to O-mei Shan whatsoever, some later Taoist literature tends to identify the sacred mountain as O-mei.[12] One of the earliest records to associate the myth with O-mei is the Inner Section of the *Pao-p'u tzu* 抱朴子 , a crucial Taoist discourse written by Ko Hung 葛洪 (284-363). In the text, O-mei Shan is unequivocally sanctified as the primary site where the Yellow Thearch encountered the Sovereign of Heavenly Perfected 天真皇人 (18.1b) and achieved the Tao.[12] Another important source is *Wei-shu: shih-lao chih* 魏書 (comp. 551-554). In tracing the origins of Taoism, the book presents a similar version of the myth, though the original transmitter here becomes Lao-tzu 老子 himself: "Taoism originated with Lao-tzu. . . [then, he] granted it to the Yellow Thearch on O-mei and taught Thearch K'u in Mu-te" (道家之原, 出于老子 . . . 授軒轅峨眉 ,教帝嚳于牧德 3048). It seems that this version of the myth, one of several origin myths concerning the religion, was a popular tale, because one can encounter a large number of variants of the legend in the literature of the period. In the *Wu-fu ching* 五符經 , supposedly a Chin text, the scripture even gives a detailed narrative: "The Sovereign lived at the foot of the cliff in northern O-mei . . . and the Yellow Thearch made a trip there and requested the *Principles of Three, One and Five Sprouts* 皇人住峨眉山北 . . . 黃帝往,授三一五牙之法 ."[13] Similar stories can be seen in the *Sui shu* 隋書 ,[14] and in the first six chapters of the *Yün-chi ch'i ch'ien*. In this latter, the myth appears at least four times in different contexts: not only was O-mei Shan honored as the mystic, sacred Mount of the transmission of the Tao, the mountain was also the primary site of revelations for Ling-pao Taoism.[15] Yet still

more important is the evidence of the fact that Li Po also knew the legend. In his essay "An Inscription on the Tablet for the Benevolent Rule of Lord Wei, the Inciting Notary Dispatched to O-chou, Written in the Festival of T'ien-ch'ang[16] 天長節使鄂州刺史韋公德政碑 (*LPCCC* 1663), we read: "The Thearch Hsüan searched for the Tao, came and ascended O-mei 軒后訪道,來登峨眉." Thus, from the disseminated records shown above, we see an almost coherent textual diffusion of the myth throughout the period; and, whatever the provenance of this version in relation to its prototype recorded in earlier literature,[17] this diffusion of the tale clearly indicates for us a consistent process of mythologizing the mountain during medieval times.

Of course, this process of mythologization denotes increased legendary Taoist practice on the site. Despite the meager records, it seems evident that the occult activities at the mountain were started at least as early as from the Han dynasty. In the *Hua-yang Kuo Chih* 華陽國志 (the history of the state of Florescent Solarity), for example, Ch'ang Chu 常璩 (fl. 265-316) collected an anecdote which attested that the Marshal Thearch of the Han 漢武帝 (140-88 B.C) made futile attempts to find the elixir on the mountain (3.38). And the Mount had long been exalted as a site for secret esoteric scriptures on alchemic and mystic practices. The Tzu-yang Perfected Chou Yi-shan 周義山, in the Han (his hagiography dates to the end of the fourth century), for example, was recorded as having attained his famous *Hidden Book of the Grand Elixir* and *Ten Instructions of Eight Petitions* in a golden chamber of the Void Grotto on O-mei (登峨眉山入中空洞金府，遇甯先生授太丹隱書八稟十訣 *TYCJCCNC* 9a). With all its concomitant fame, the Mount had become an ideal gateway to the transcendent world for pious or devoted Taoists. Practice of alchemy and Taoism on the mountain was reportedly popular; even the Ssu-o was marked by Li Tao-yüan in his *Notes to River Classic* as a well-known spot where many Taoists "transformed themselves into feathered transcendents" (仙者羽化之處, *SCC*, 39.10a).

To acquire a sense of this mythical locus for transcendence, I shall mention only two of the mythological figures whose legends were frequently referred to in post-Han literature. One is Ko Yu 葛由, the legendary woodcarver of goats in the Western Chou Period (1066-771 B.C.), and the other is Lu T'ung 陸通, who was probably better remembered as the madman Chieh Yü of Ch'u 楚狂接輿 for his laughing at Confucius and scolding Ch'u Wang 楚王 described in the *Chuang-tzu* (2.4; 185) and the *Lun-yü* 論語 (xx. 10). According to the *Hagiographies of Transcendents* (*Lie-hsien chuan* 列仙傳), a book attributed to Liu Hsiang 劉向 77-6 B.C.), both immortals were "transformed" on O-mei Shan. The madman, after traveling through all notable mountains, supposedly remained a recluse on O-mei, and was seen there for several hundreds of years (*LHC* 1.1a; *TPYL* 40.6b). As for Ko Yu—the so-called Goatback Lord 騎羊子 of many T'ang poems,[18]— including Li Po's "Ascending Mount O-mei"—not only did he himself ascend to the heavens from the mountain, but his followers also gained the way of transformation there. As his hagiography tells us (*LHC* 1.11b): "Once he rode on a goat to Western Shu, and many princes, marquises, and nobles in the mid-Shu area followed him up Mount Sui (namely Erh-O). The Mount is in the southwest O-mei and its height reaches nowhere. His followers never returned home and all of them attained the Tao of transcendence." Not surprisingly, these widespread miracle tales made a great contribution to mythology, thereby tempting many "followers" to pursue the Tao on the mountain.

Through the T'ang period, as Taoism was generally favored over Buddhism by the T'ang ruling house, the mountain was developed further as a well-known celestial kingdom and center

for the religion.[19] Taoist activities on the mountain, as some scholars point out, reached their most prosperous period ever (Li 91). The famous early T'ang alchemist Sun Ssu-miao 孫思邈 (581?-682?) practiced alchemy there for many years (*TPKC* 21:1), and the legendary Taoist Lü Tung-pin 呂洞賓 also reportedly pursued the Tao and left inscriptions behind on the Mount (*OMSC* 1.7a; 3.3b and 4b). Taoist practice on the mountain became such a spiritual force during the reign of the Hsüan-tsung emperor 玄宗 (713-755) that many Buddhist monks in the area, including the renowned Wu-hsüan 悟玄, were converted to Taoism there (Wang 209). Some O-mei Taoist priests were even invited by the Emperor in the fourteenth year of K'ai-yuan 開元 to the capital for "the meeting of transcendents" 仙會 (726 A.D.).[20]

Furthermore, during this period the mountain made its presence conspicuous in poetry. The spiritual force of the mountain aroused much poetic imagination, and the Mount became a central locus of sacrality, a divine place to yearn for, and a dream destination for spirit journeys. In Ch'en Tzu-ang's (陳自昂 661-702) *Kan-yu* 感遇 (xxxv; 12) we read:

> For what do I yearn as I sit in the all-embracing spirit?
> To O-mei in my own Shu I fly.
> I contemplate the madman of Ch'u,
> Amid clouds, endless and white.
> But time goes amiss and surely we won't meet,
> My tears thus burn forth and stream down.
> In dream I ascend to the grottos of Mount Sui,
> Pluck the fungus on Mount Wu in the south;
> Then explore the Origin, observe multitudinous Change,
> Leave the world, led by a dragon in the clouds.
> Yet just as its beauty would last forever and ever,
> Awakened, alas, I cannot see it any longer.

> 浩然坐何慕？吾蜀有峨眉 .
> 念與楚狂子 . 悠悠子雲期 .
> 時哉悲不會 · 涕泣久漣洏 .
> 夢登綏山穴 · 南采巫山芝；
> 探元觀羣化 · 遺世從雲螭；
> 婉孌將永矣 · 感悟不見之 ·

In the works of some T'ang poets, such as those of Ch'en Ch'an 岑參 (fl. 715-770), Ssu-kung Shu 司空曙 (720?-790), Shih Chien-wu 施肩吾 (fl. 805), and Pao Jung 鮑溶 (fl. 820), one can spot a large number of descriptions and references to Taoist activities on the mountain. The Mount comes to be, in some contexts, simply a synecdoche for transcendence. And phrases such as "*O-mei lao* 峨眉老" (aged master of O-mei) or "*O-mei k'o* 峨眉客" (O-mei guest) appear often in the T'ang poems as referring to immortality seekers or Taoist recluses on the Mount. Tu Fu 杜甫 (712-770), for instance, wrote a poem addressed to his friend Ssu-ma (Sent to Ssu-ma shan-jen in Twelve Rhymes 寄司馬山人十二韵 *CCCTTS* 403:2) in which he portrayed a marvelous unworldly image of the recluse in the O-mei area:

Long chanting north of O-mei,
And walking alone east of Yü-lei,[21]
You now ride on a fierce tiger,
Now live in the void chamber like a transcendent lad.

長嘯峨眉北，潛行玉壘東，
有時騎猛虎，虛室似仙童.

But the spiritual image of the mountain as a mysterious wonder for Taoism was never so well depicted as in Pao Jung's poem "Sent to the O-mei Alchemist Yang" 寄峨眉楊煉 *CTS* 486.5531):

Each night Taoists intone
the Scripture of Stamen and Pearl;
Flying down to listen, white cranes
circle the scented smoke.
When night is out, Scripture finished,
mortals ascend on the cranes,
The wind of transcendence blows over
in the Fall of dark.

道士夜誦蕊珠經，白鶴下遶香煙聽.
夜移經盡人上鶴，仙風吹入秋冥冥.

Here, *jui-chu* 蕊珠 (stamen and pearl) is a term appropriated from the first stanza of the *Scripture of the Yellow Court: Inner Book* 黃庭內景經, a most important Taoist canonical text, as an allusion to the "Palace of Stamen and Pearl" in the Shang-ch'ing Taoist heaven.[22] As an esoteric idiom, it is a symbol of the Taoist heavens in general, and as we shall see, is also found in Li Po's poems. By mystifying the religious activities on the Mount and vivifying the moment of *yü-hua* 羽化 (transforming into feathered deities) on the site, the invisible potencies of the reputed Grotto Heaven were never so apotheosized, and the supernatural power of the Mount, the entire corpus of the mythology associated with the Mount, were never so animated. Despite the absence of realistic details, the poem truly presents a holy mountain where Taoist adherents attended daily rites and yearned to achieve transcendence. Therefore, from what has been summarized above, we can readily avail ourselves of a general picture of O-mei Shan in the period, of the spiritual milieu in which Li Po wrote his poem "Ascending Mount O-mei," and of the religious force that inspired and energized his ascent.

III.

Li Po grew up in the Ssu-ch'uan area. For this reason, he had a close affinity with O-mei Shan: he left twelve poems that were associated with, or refer to, the Mount, although only two of these were dedicated to the mountain.[23] Moreover, he is the first poet in medieval times to have depicted his own physical experience with the mountain and devoted an entire verse to it. As a whole, O-mei Shan in his poems bears a nostalgic or mythical aura and emerges often as a wonderful *hsien-shan* (仙山, fairy mount) where numerous "transcendent courts" 峨眉山上列仙庭 exist, where mortal souls could encounter Taoist divinities and attain the secrets of immortality.[24] Thus, the mountain, for Li Po—as compared to some other T'ang poets such as Ch'en Tzu-ang—is not merely a divine locus to yearn for in dream journey, but a spiritual source

for the religious miracles.

According to Chan Ying's textual research on Li Po's poetry, the poem "Ascending Mount O-mei" was written in the twelfth year of the K'ai-yuan era (724 A.D.) when the poet was twenty-four years of age (4). Though Huang Hsi-kuei views it as an earlier work dated around 720 A.D (5), it seems without controversy that the poem was composed in the early K'ai-yüan era. Noting the Hsüan-tsung Emperor's "meeting of transcendents" (726 A.D.) in the capital, it might not be an exaggeration to say that at the period marked one of the montain's apices of spiritual and mystic power in T'ang times.

Although by that time Li Po had not yet met the great Taoist master Ssu-ma Ch'eng-chen司馬承禎(647-735), he nonetheless had already established some crucial connections with Taoist adepts.[25] As an enthusiastic Taoist practitioner and a native of Ssu-ch'uan, the poet was no doubt versed in the traditions of immortals who mythologized the mountain outlined above: his spiritual attachment to the divine lore about O-mei Shan was registered in his allusions to "the Goatback Lord" Ko Yu in various contexts,[26] to the myth about the Yellow Thearch, and to "the madman of Ch'u" as recorded in the *Lie-hsien chuan*.[27] Hence, even though the poem we will treat does not state the purpose of Li Po's excursion to O-mei, it denotes clearly his spiritual longing for the divine wonders surrounding the mountain. Like Ch'en Tzu-ang's *Kan-yü* (xxxv), which presents a dream journey to the Mount, Li Po offers a visionary experience through a physical trip to the mountain. Yet unlike Ch'en Tzu-ang, who described his vision as impossible, Li Po did achieve a transcendent experience in his ascent to the height. Here follows my translation of the poem, together with a transcription in medieval Chinese with the poem's tonal pattern (*LPCCC* 1213):[28]

Of the many fairy mountains in the Shu State,
O-mei afar is truly hard to compare.
Rambling around, I attempt to climb and survey the scenes,
4 How can I see all of its supreme marvels?
Blue-tinged blacknesses[29] unfold against the heavens,
Multi-colored patterns arise as if from a painting.
Rarified,[30] I relish the purple auroras,
8 Indeed have attained the secrets of the damask satchel.
Among the clouds I sound my rose-gem syrinx,
From atop a stone, I finger the gemmy zither.
My life long I've had this trivial aspiration,
12 Happiness and joy are complete hereafter.
As if the misty countenance appears on my face,
Dusty entanglements have suddenly disappeared.
If I encounter the Lord on goatback,
16 Hand in hand, we'll fly towards the white sun.

1. 蜀 國 多 仙 山
d'ziuok kuək ta siɛn sæn XX OOO
2. 峨 眉 邈 難 匹
nga miei mok nan p'iɪt OO XXXr
3. 周 流 試 登 覽
t'siəu liəu 'si təng lam OO XOX
4. 絶 怪 安 可 悉
dziuæt kuɛi an k'a siɪt XX OXXr

5.	青	冥	倚	天	開	
	ts'iɛng	miɛng	i'e	t'iɛn	kəi	OO XOO
6.	彩	錯	疑	畫	出	
	ts'əi	ts'uo	ngi	ɣuɐi	ts'iuɪi	XX OXXr
7.	冷	然	紫	霞	賞	
	liɛng	n'iɐn	tsiɪ	ɣa	'siang	OO XOX
8.	果	得	錦	囊	術	
	kua	tək	kiəm	niang	'ziuɪt	XX XOXr
9.	雲	間	吟	瓊	簫	
	jiuən	kɐn	ngiem	qiuɛng	siɛu	OO OOO
10.	石	上	弄	寶	瑟	
	d'ziɛk	d'iang	kung	pau	siet	XX XXXr
11.	平	生	有	微	尚	
	biəng	səng	jiəu	miuəi	d'ziang	OO XOX
12.	歡	笑	自	此	畢	
	xuan	siɐu	dziɪi	ts'iɪ	piɪt	OX XXOr
13.	煙	容	如	在	顏	
	.iɛn	iuong	'nio	dzəi	ngan	OO OXO
14.	塵	累	忽	相	失	
	diɪn	liuei	xuət	siang	'siɪt	OO XOXr
15.	儻	逢	騎	羊	子	
	t'ang	bung	gie	iang	tsi	XO OOX
16.		手	淩	白	日	
	ɣiuɛi	'siəu	liɪng	buɐk	'niɪt	OX OXXr

The poem might be a typical *yu-hsien shih* 遊仙詩, a genre Schafer aptly calls "Roaming to Sylphdom." Yet, in terms of its diction and imagery, it is much more accessible than many poems of the same type. The text is semantically divided into two parts: whereas the first part—including the beginning through line eight—proposes what the poet saw and had in mind during the trip, the second provides a wonderful visionary experience. The poem is a portrayal of the poet's climb up Mount O-mei. It is not a physical ascent but rather a spiritual ascent that is exhilarating to the poet. This is shown by the fact that the text contains very few descriptions of the mountain's physical glamour. What is more appealing to the poet, therefore, is the transcendent essence around the Mount—the divine numen replete with "supreme marvels" 絕怪 in the vicinity of the heavens. In other words, it is the establishment of spiritual contact with the ethereal realm that confers on the poet the vision of his great happiness and joy, his ultimate fulfillment of divine experience on the mountain.

In emphasizing the unique spiritual essence of O-mei Shan, Li Po from the outset presents a legendary image of the mountain, as emerging from the remote mythological sphere of Taoist immortals. The word *miao* (邈 afar, or remote) in the second line conveys a significant multiplicity: it does not function merely as modifier of the phrase *nan-p'i* (難匹 incomparable); more important is its evocative power for a sense of remoteness, a distance between the mundane world and the rarified divine mountain. The poet now stands at the gate of the celestial kingdom, but he is wandering around and around again before beginning to climb. Therefore, what is revealed here is indeed the sort of respect akin to what a pilgrim would have for a holy mountain. From its very inception, it is clear that the ascent of the mountain meant for the poet a truly spiritual journey, comparable to a pilgrimage that would accomplish his highest aspiration for the supreme "wholly other."

The metaphor *hua* (畫 painting) in the sixth line is equally suggestive. The character 畫 here specifies the T'ang blue-and-green painting 青綠山水, which was conventionally associated with depicting ideal or paradisiacal landscapes. By contextualizing the landscapes of O-mei with this genre, in which many works are overlaid with gold and other metals, the phrase *ts'ai-ts'o* 綵錯 is endowed with an extra shade: it does not simply mean "variegated colors" in its usual sense, but rather patterns composed of various metal wires as well as of different hues. The *ts'o* here is thus interchangeable with 錯, advancing the image of shining gold or metal plating on the blue-and-green painting. It is crucial in this context because these precious metals embellished on the painting, analogous to alchemical images, are symbolic of the dazzling enchantment of the Taoist paradise. With the power to absorb the mind and vision of the pious believer, the elements of metals are essential for Taoist representation of ideal landscapes, a tradition that goes back to Taoist censers like the *Po-shan hsiang-lu* 博山香爐, one of the earliest plastic works related to the visionary portrayal of the land of immortals from the Warring States Periods (320-226 B.C.). The analogy between painting and alpine scenes thereby becomes especially of revealing of Li Po's vision of the Mount as a true sphere of immortality.

Yet, if Li Po's attitude so far is revealed only between the lines, the allusion to "damask satchel" 錦囊 certainly makes an explicit statement, because this "damask satchel" was believed to have been possessed by two renowned Taoist divinities, the Queen Mother of the West 西王母 and the Lady of High Prime 上元夫人, and is thus attributed as a general symbol for secret texts and esoteric teachings in the religious tradition.[31] In order to make it fit the journey-oriented context here, some scholars have interpreted the allusion as one only to the satchel passed down to the Marshal Thearch of the Han in which the sacred text of the *Wu-yüeh chen-hsing t'u* (五嶽真形圖 Plans of the True Forms of the Five Marchmounts) was stored.[32] In reading the couplet as a unit (1.7 and 1.8), however, we may find that the term has a broader implication, referring not so much to the poet's seeking protection for the journey as to his pursuit of Taoist teachings in general. From the Taoist perspective, we may recognize that *tzu* (紫 purple) is a color closely related to the religion, especially in the Shang-ch'ing canon. *Tzu-hsia* (紫霞 the purple auroras) is a significant phrase that appeared in "Roaming to Sylphdom" poems and referred to an airborne carrier for the Transcendents within the celestial kingdom.[33] It is also a term taken from the first stanza of the *Scripture of the Yellow Court: Inner Book*, a scripture once owned by Li Po and called by him the "Book of the Purple Auroras." As an early commentator on the text pointed out, ritual use of this enigmatic scripture could bring immorality to the practitioner; if one could succeed in reciting the scripture ten thousand times, one would attain the Tao of transcendence (*YCCC* 11.3).[34] In this context, the meaning of the couplet becomes double: its semantics unmistakably become cause and effect. It describes the scenery on the Mount before the poet, but also symbolizes the poet's practice of Taoism in general and perhaps—as suggested by the commentator on the Scripture—his expected achievement of immortality on this journey. As Li Po wishes elsewhere: "Chanting the Book of the Purple Aurora/ I am permitted to open the Palace of Stamen and Pearl"朗詠紫霞篇請開蕊珠宮.[35] Having viewed the auroras floating on the horizon as the Transcendent carrier, Li Po—as perhaps any pious mind would—feels ecstatic and proclaims that he has discovered the secrets of the Tao of transcendence.

Consequently, the poet in the second section envisages himself becoming an immortal on the mountain. The visionary experience comes to a crux in lines nine and ten; the striking image is highlighted by the phonetic emphasis resulting from the fact that the two lines are entirely composed of even or deflected tones, and that they are the only two such lines in the poem.[36] As *ch'in-hsiao* 瓊簫 (the syrinx decorated by rose-jadegems) is a bamboo instrument and *pao-se*

寶瑟 (the zither ornamented with gems) is stringed, they are read together as *ssu-chu* 絲竹 (stringed and woodwind instruments), traditionally a synecdoche for music in general, fitting company for immortals in the Taoist mythology. The vision thereby turns out to be one where the poet imagines himself as an immortal playing music freely in the paradise, an image seen in many earlier Taoist legends. And this vision was indeed accomplished. In a trance, we are told, he suddenly feels as if his corporeal burden no longer exists.

Like many of his other "Roaming to Sylphdom" verses in which Li Po encounters certain Taoist divinities, this poem ends with his calling for a mythological figure, one of the transcendents on the Mount, the Goatback Lord Ko Yu. The vision is thus extended with Li Po's imaginary ascent into the heavens in broad daylight, hand in hand with the immortal, to roam around the heavenly paradises. Through this imaginary experience of the supramundane existence on high, the poet's journey to O-mei Shan is accomplished as a true ascent to transcendence, a successful pilgrimage for divine grace and revelation.

By tying his vision of the mountain to the transcendents and deities associated with the mountain, Li Po in effect indicates that he was ready to *follow* the Goatback Lord into the mythological world and become a new member of the Transcendent sphere. It is true that, if the spiritual power of O-mei Shan inspired Li Po's ascent and his ultimate vision of the supreme "wholly other," the poem in turn epitomizes and vitalizes the Taoist tradition as well as the mythology of the Mount. Consequently, what we can testify through a reading of Li Po's "Ascending Mount O-mei" is not merely a recognition of the magic vista of the site's spiritual tradition, but also a wonderful poetic vision that stands as an indispensable constituent of the mythological divinity related to the mountain.

As mentioned at the outset of this essay, the Taoist tradition on O-mei Shan is no longer available to us. However, as a poetic testimony to the spiritual power of the mountain during medieval times, Li Po's poem is no doubt a forceful signifier pointing to the past glory of O-mei Shan as a prominent Taoist site for mystic revelation. The power of its vision sent down through centuries, has not been weakened at all: it enables us to revive the religious feelings around the alpine environs as well as activate the remote sources of the Taoist tradition surrounding the mountain.

Appendix

According to the *O-mei Shan Chih* (it did not give any source information), the partial list of tangible signs of divinity in the Mount by the T'ang may include the following:

1. *Shou-tao t'ai* 授道台 ; the legendary spot where the Yellow Thearch consulted Kuang ch'eng-tzu about the Tao.
2. *Sung-huang p'ing* 宋皇坪; the legendary place where the Yellow Thearch was conferred the scriptures by the Sovereign of Heavenly Perfected.
3. *Chung-fen Shih* 中峰寺 , also called *Ch'ien-ming kuan* 乾明觀 in the Chin period; where some Perfected ones were believed to have transformed themselves into feathered deities.
4. *Mao-chen tsun-che yan* 茂真尊者庵, where the T'ang recluse Sun Ssu-miao once practiced alchemy.
5. *Pai-shui shih* 白水寺, also called *P'u-hsien shi* 普賢寺 in the Chin; one of the famous early temples on O-mei.
6. *Tso-t'zu tung* 左慈洞, where the well-known Taoist Tso-tz'u 左慈 in the Three Kingdoms period (22-280) practiced Taoism.

7. *Lei-tung-p'ing shih* 雷洞坪寺, built in the Han dynasty.

8. *Chiu-lao-tung* 九老洞 , where nine transcendents lived when the Yellow Thearch visited the Sovereign of Heavenly Perfected.

9. *Niu-hsing shih* 牛心寺 , erected at the beginning of the T'ang; where many alchemists and adepts, most notably Sun Ssu-miao, made elixirs and pills of immortality.

10. *Hei-shui ssu* 黑水寺, also called *Hua-chang* 華藏 , inaugurated by Jin Wei Chao-kung (晉肇公 281-325).

11. *Kuang-hsiang shih* 光相寺, at the top of the Ta-o; also called *Pu-kuang tien* 普光殿 when it was erected by Han Ming Ti (漢明帝 21-76).

13. *Ke-yu tung* 葛由洞 , at the top of the Erh-o 二峨 , where the Goatback Lord was believed to have ascended to the heavens riding on goatback during the Chou period.

Notes

The following abbreviations are used in the text and in note references:

OMSC *O-mei shan chih* 峨眉山誌 (Taipei, 1965)
CCCCTS *Chiu-chia chi-chu Tu-shih* 九家集注杜詩 (Taipei, 1966 ed.)
CK *Chen-kao* 真誥 (HY 1010)
CTC *Ch'en Tzu-ang chi* 陳子昂集 (Shanghai, 1960)
CTS *Ch'uan T'ang shih* 全唐詩 (Shanghai, 1964)
CTCS *Chuang-tzu chi-shih* 莊子集釋 (Shanghai, 1982 ed.)
HYKC *Hua-yang kuo-chih* 華陽國志 (Shanghai, 1933)
LHC *Lie-hsien chuan* 列仙傳 (HY 194)
LPCCC *Li Po chi chiao-chu* 李白集校注 (Shanghai, 1978 ed.)
PPT *Pao-p'u tzu* 抱朴子 (Shanghai, 1946)
SC *Shih-chi* 史記 (Shanghai, 1959 ed.)
SCC *Shui-ching chu* 水經注 (Taipei, 1976 ed.)
SCTC *Ssu-ch'uan t'ung-chih* 四川通志 (Taipei, 1978 ed.)
SS *Sui-shu* 隋書 (Shanghai, 1973 ed.)
TPKC *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 太平廣記 (Peking, 1959 ed.)
TPYL *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* 太平御覽 (Shanghai, 1960 ed.)
TTFTYTMSC *Yüeh tu ming-shan chi* 洞天福地嶽瀆名山記 (HY 599)
TYCJCCNC *Tzu-yang chen-jen Chou-chün nei-chuan* 紫陽真人周君內傳 (HY 296)
YCCC *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* 雲笈七籤 (HY 1026).

1. Translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

2. *Yüeh* 嶽 has also been translated as "sacred mountain." My translation follows the majority of sinologists'. For "marchmount" as an English equivalent for Yüeh, see Schafer, *Pacing the Void*, 6.

3. According to the *Canon of Documents* 書經 , ritual sacrifices on the four Marchmounts were first carried out by the great Shun 舜 (*Shu ching: Shun tien* 舜典).

4. The others were Lin-wu 林屋 to the east of Mao Shan, Lo-fou 羅浮 to the south, and T'ai Shan 泰山 to the north (*CK* 11.7a). Also cited in Kroll (1986), 197.

5. In Tu Kuang-t'ing's杜光庭(850-933) *TTFTYTMSC*, Mount O-mei's grotto-heaven—called *hsu-ling t'ai-miao tung* 虛陵太妙洞天—was ranked as seventh among the thirty-six "lesser" *tung-t'ien* (6b); also see Ssu-ma Ch'eng-chen's *T'ien-ti kung-fu t'u* 天地宮府圖 (*YCCC* 27.4b).

6. The mountain is located within O-mei County 峨眉縣, named Nan-an 南安 in the Han (206 B.C.-220) and *P'in-ch'iang* 平羌 in the later Chou 後周 (557-581), respectively. Since the time of the Sui 隋 (581-618), when the current name was bestowed, the region has been administered under various administrative divisions. The following list indicates the various administrational names in different ages since the Sui (*OMSC* 1.3b):

Mei-chun	眉郡	: Sui
Chia-chou	嘉州	: T'ang and Sung
Chia-ting lu	嘉定路	: Yuan
Chia-ting chou	嘉定州	: Ming
Chia-ting fu	嘉定府	: Ch'in

7. The first use of the phrase O-mei 峨眉 is found in the poem "Shih Jen" 碩人 (*Shih ching* 詩經). As the commentators on the poem explain, a beauty has darkened eyebrows which look like the twin antennae of a moth. The image thus not only explains O-mei's black lines against the usual Ssu-ch'uan "sea of clouds" which hovers around its peaks, but emphasizes the graceful curves of the twin peaks. As for the name of the Mount, it first appeared in the Han rhapsodies such as Yang Hsiung's 揚雄 (53-18 B.C.) *Shu-tu fu* 蜀都賦, "In the south, there are . . . K'un-ming and O-mei" (昆明,峨眉) and Tso Ssu's 左思 (250?-305?) *San-tu fu* 三都賦, ". . . with the double flows of the two rivers, and against ranges upon ranges of O-mei, 帶二江之雙流，抗峨眉之重阻."

8. This passage is quoted from Lo. It is probable that this quote comes from an earlier edition of *SCTC* because O-mei Shan was under the administrative division Chien-wei 犍爲 of the Han dynasty, which was divided later into three regions: Hsü-chou fu 敘州府, Chan-chou 詹州, and Mei-chou.

9. cf. *P'eng-lai* 蓬萊 in the uncharted eastern seas.

10. See Li Po's "Song for a Landscape Painting by Tang-t'u Chao Yan Shao-fu" 當塗趙炎少府粉圖山水歌 (*LPCCC* 424).

11. It is beyond the scope of this study to provide a topography of landscape and natural history of the Mount, but it might be useful to point out that O-mei Shan, like other alpine or cavern paradises, not only possesses all natural and spiritual resources for recluses—rich sources of medical tonics, fresh-running streams, various kinds of precious plants and herbs—but is famous for a unique scenic wonder, called *fo-kuang* 佛光 in later times though it has been viewed as a divine revelation for ages. The wonder, which can be experienced only during *Ssu-wu* (巳午, from 9:00 to 11:00 A.M.), is actually an optical illusion. It usually appears from the mists among the peaks, forming a colorful and dazzling circle that can reflect the shadow of the viewer like a mirror. Depending on the weather, the halo sometimes is surrounded by a sea of purple clouds and crossed by a rainbow, which has been described by many as a "golden bridge" 金橋 leading towards the divine sphere (*OMSC* 1:13a-b).

12. As for the earliest source about the Yellow Thearch who asked about the Tao on a sacred mountain, see *CTCS* (*Chai-yu p'ien* 在宥篇 4:11; 379). In *CTCS*, it is on *K'ung-tung Shan* 空同山 (The Mountain of the Void)—an obviously fictional site, though there have been many different claims for its location; and in *SC* the mountain was recorded as "崆峒山" (1.1; 6-7). This original version of the myth was also collected in the *Tao-tsang* 廣黃帝本行記 (HY 290). In some legends, Kuang-ch'eng Tzu was an incarnation of Lao Tzu during the time of the Yellow

Thearch (*TPKC* 1.1; 1).

13. *Wu-fu ching*, written in the Chin 晉 (265-420) period and also called the *Scripture of Ling-pao Five Talisments in Grotto Mystery* 洞玄五符靈寶經, is not included in the *Tao-tsang*. See Li Yuan-kuo's *Ssu-chuan tao-chiao shih-hua*, 89.

14. In the *Sui-shu*, although it does not mention where the Sovereign passed on the scriptures, the location is nonetheless suggested because *T'ien-chen* 天真 is a name associated with O-mei Shan; in Taoist texts, the term at the microcosmic level signifies the spot on the face between the two eyebrows (天真爲兩眉之間, *YCCC* 47.10An), which, as we know, corresponds to the name of the Mount.

15. In Chapter three, "Origins of Taoism" 道教本始部, we are told it was on O-mei Shan that the Ling-pao canon was first handed down to the Yellow Thearch (3.2b). Later in the same chapter, the original transmitter on the mountain is changed to Lao-tzu himself, and the scripture that passed through the Yellow Thearch becomes specifically the *Perfected Writings of the Five Talismans of Ling-pao* 靈寶五符真文 (3.18b). In Chapter six, "Teachings of the Scriptures of the Three Grottos" 三洞經教部, a similar narrative is repeated, yet the story here goes that it was the Yellow Thearch who sought the Tao on the mountain and requested the Sovereign of Heavenly Perfected to transfer the *Scripture of Five Sprouts of Ling-pao* 靈寶五符經 (a section of the *Perfected Writings of Five Talismans of Ling-pao*) to O-mei from Ch'ing-ch'eng Shan 青城山 (6.4a). It is also mentioned that the *Writings of the Three August Ones* 三皇文 was secreted only in O-mei Shan (6.11b).

16. The Festival of *T'ien-ch'ang* was first celebrated in August of the seventh year of K'ai-yuan for the birthday of the Hsüan-tsung Emperor.

17. The Ssu-ch'uan area was the birthplace of a famous Taoist sect, the so-called "*Wu-tou-mi tao* 五斗米道", founded by Chang Ling (張陵, 126-144; later called Chang Tao-ling 張道陵) in the Eastern Han dynasty (Ch'in 134-53). Chang reportedly established a parish *O-mei chih* 峨眉治 in the mountain area and compiled a book entitled the *Records of the Transcendents and Wonders on O-mei Shan* 峨眉山神異記, which is no longer extant. So the genesis of the myth with O-mei Shan might have been associated with him.

18. For example, see Ch'en Tzu-ang's *Kan-yü* 感遇 (xxxii).

19. Of course, it is now impossible for us to know exactly when Buddhism took over O-mei from Taoism because of the scarcity of historical records. It might be correct, however, as some scholars have argued, that the change took place during the Five Dynasties. As the T'ang ruling house generally favored Taoism and, during the years of *hui-ch'ang* 會昌 (841-846), the Wu-tsung Emperor 武宗 even rounded up monks and destroyed Buddhist temples on a large scale, Taoism seems to have remained dominant on the mountain until the decline of the dynasty. According to the *Yü-ti chi-sheng* 輿地紀勝 (146.12), Buddhist practice on O-mei was resurgent during the years of the *Hsi-tsung* 僖宗 Emperor (874-887) when the monk Hui-tung 慧通 went to O-mei. For this reason, the Monk Hui-tung was also called "the First Ancestor."

20. See Wei Wu-p'ing (130). According to him, the information is cited from the *Chang Tsun-shih t'an-hsien pei* 張尊師探玄碑 in the *Ching-shih ts'ui-pien* 金石粹編, but I have been unable to locate his citation from the source.

21. Yu-lei here refers to *Yü-lei Shan* 與壘山, situated near O-mei Shan in the south-east of Li-fan County 理番縣 .

22. The Inner Section of the *Scripture of the Yellow Court* begins:

In the purple auroras of Shang-ch'ing, before the Thearch of the Void,
The Highest, Greatest Tao Lord of the Jade Light of Dawn,
I reside serenely in the [Palace of] Stamen and Pearl, writing these seven lines,
And Dispersing, transforming the Five Forms into the myriad spirits:
This is the Inner Section of the *Yellow Court*.
Chant it ten thousand times, and you will ascend to the heavens.

23. Li Po's twelve poems are "Seeing a Friend Off to Lo-fu in Chiang-hsi" 江西送友人之羅浮 ; "Dangerous Paths in Shu" 蜀道難 ; "To Monk Hsing-cheng" 贈僧行融 ; "Song of the O-mei Shan Moon" 峨眉山月歌 ; "Listening to a Monk from Shu Playing the Lute 聽蜀僧濬彈琴 ; "Reminiscent Poem Sent to Tan-ch'iu Tzu, As I Heard He Built the Stone-gated House in the Northern Mountain of the City where the Relic of Beautiful Phoenix exists, and As I am Living Alone and Cherishing the Faraway with a Likewise Intention of Reclusion" 聞丹丘子於城北山營石門幽居中有高鳳遺跡僕羣遠懷亦有棲遁之因敘舊以贈之 ; "Response to the Gift, A Bamboo Book Container Carved with Peach Patterns, Given by the *Shao-fu* Yu-wen" 酬宇文少府見贈桃竹書筒 ; "Song for a Landscape Painting by Tang-t'u Chao Yan Shao-fu" 當塗趙炎少府粉塗山水歌 ; "Song of the Sovereign's Tour to West in Nan-king" 上皇西巡南京歌; "Parting the Southern Prefecture Ts'ao to Chiang-nan 留別曹難羣官之江南 ; "Song of the O-mei Shan Moon: Seeing Monk An from Shu Off to Chung-ching" 峨眉山月歌送蜀僧晏入中京 ; and "Ascending Mount O-mei" 登峨眉山.

24. See his "Song of the Sovereign's Tour to West in Nan-king" (vii) (*LPCCC* 562).

25. As for the poet's early experience with Taoism, see his connection with a recluse "Master of the Eastern Cliff" (Arther Waley 5) and his early poem, "Calling on a Taoist Priest in Tai-t'ien Mountain, but Failing to See Him" 訪戴天山道士不遇 (*LPCCC* 1355).

26. See Li Po's "Departing the Southern Prefecture Ts'ao on My Way to Chiang-nan" (*LPCCC* 904).

27. See Li Po's "Seeing a Friend Off to Lo-fu in Chiang-hsi" (*LPCCC* 1076).

28. I use Chou Fa-kao's 周法高 reconstruction of the phonetics of Medieval Chinese. In the tone chart, O stands for even tone, X for deflected tones.

29. Here, "blue-tinged blackness" 青冥 is a depiction of the color of peaks, and frequently used as a synecdoche for the blue peaks in Chinese poetic convention.

30. As Wang ch'i 王琦 annotated, the phrase "泠然" describes a state characteristic of the celestial insubstantiality, like that of the transcendent (輕舉貌 or 縹渺欲仙), thus I rendered it as "rarefied."

31. In the Taoist legends we can find three "damask satchels" in which some secrete Taoist texts were stored. Two were owned by the Queen Mother of the West; one was later transmitted to the Marshal Thearch of the Han (*TPKC* 3:1) and the other to the Lord Thearch of the Azure Crux 青要帝君 (HY 1304; 1.2a). The third, owned by the Lady of High Prime, was passed down to the younger Mao brothers (*TPYL* 678:4a).

32. For example, see Paul W. Kroll (1986), 102.

33. For example, see Lu Chi's 陸機 (251-303) *Ch'ien-huan Sheng-ke* 前緩聲歌, *Wen-hsuan* 文選 28.9.

34. For more information about the scriptures, see Paul Kroll (1986), 102-3 and Isabelle Robinet's *La révélation du Shangqing dans l'histoire du taoïsme*.

35. See Li Po's Poem "Arriving at Mount Ling-yang, Climbing Heaven Pillar Stone and Toasting Censor Han's Being Called into Seclusion at Yellow Mountain" 至陵陽山登天柱石酬韓侍御見招隱黃山 (*LPCCC*, 19.1140).

36. Here, by analyzing phonetics of a poetic text to see its semantic charge, I am indebted to Paul W. Kroll (1986: 115).

Bibliography

Chan, Ying 詹應. *Li Po Shih-wen hsi-nien* 李白詩文繫年. Peking: Tso-chia ch'u-pan-she, 1958.

Ching, Hsi-t'ai 卿希泰. *Chung-kuo Tao-chiao shih-kang* 中國道教思想史綱. Ch'eng-tu: Ssu-ch'uan jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1980.

Huang, Hsi-kue 黃錫珪. *Li T'ai-po nien-p'u* 李太白年譜. Peking: Tso-chia Ch'u-pan She, 1958.

Kroll, Paul W. "Verses from on High: The Ascent of T'ai Shan," *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice*. Ed. Shuen-fu Lin and Stephen Owen. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986.

———. "Li Po's Transcendent Diction," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. 106.1 (1986): 99-117.

Li, Yuan-kuo 李遠國. *Ssu-ch'uan Tao-chiao shih-hua* 四川道史話. Ch'eng-tu: Ssu-chuan Jen-min Ch'u-pan She, 1985.

Lo, Yu-yien 羅友援. "O-mei ch'en-wei t'an-yuan" 峨眉稱謂探源, *Jen-min jih-pao*. 2:17 (1990).

Robinet, Isabelle. *La révélation du Shangqing dans l'histoire du taoïsme*. Paris: Ecole Francaise D'extreme-Orient, 1984.

Schafer, Edward H. *Pacing the Void: T'ang Approaches to the Stars*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.

Wang, Chia-yu 王家祐. *Tao-chiao shu-kao* 道家論稿. Ch'eng-tu: Pa-shu chu-pan she, 1987.

Wei, Fu-p'ing 魏福平. *O-mei ts'ung-t'an* 峨眉叢談. O-mei: Ssu-ch'uan Chiao-t'ung Ta-hsuen Ch'u-pan She, 1986.

Taoist Scriptures as Mirrored in the *Xiaodao Lun*

Livia KOHN
Boston University

Introduction

The *Xiaodao lun* (Laughing at the Tao) is an anti-Taoist polemical text written by Zhen Luan, metropolitan commander and eminent astrologer of the sixth century. It was presented to Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou in 570 CE, who had it burnt upon finding it critical of his chosen teaching of Taoism. Today it is contained in the *Guang hongming ji* (T. 2103; 52.143c-152c). Divided into thirty-six sections, in mocking imitation of the division of the Taoist canon, the text concentrates on attacking Taoist mythology, doctrine, ritual, and religious practice. To do so, it cites heavily from Taoist scriptures and shows their inconsistency and absurdity by confronting them with other Taoist texts as well as with Confucian classics, historical documents, and common-sense calculations.[1]

There are five sections in the *Xiaodao lun* that deal specifically with the nature and development of Taoist scriptures. They are: Section 13, "Birds' Tracks As the Earliest Form of Writing;" Section 27, "Arising and Dying with the Kalpas;" Section 29, "Plagiarizing Buddhist Sûtras for Taoist Scriptures;" Section 31, "Taoist Scriptures—Revealed and As Yet Unrevealed;" and Section 36, "Philosophical Writings As Taoist Works."

These sections are translated in full below; they raise two major points of criticism. First, they deride the celestial origin of the scriptures, their relation to the creation of the world, the development of writing, and the continued process of kalpa cycles. Second, they criticize the historical position of Taoist scriptures in terms of their relation to Buddhism and other philosophical writings, as well as the circumstances of their revelation.

The Heavenly Nature of the Scriptures

According to the doctrines of religious Taoism, the scriptures originally exist together with primordial breath. Produced at the grand initiation of the universe, they are close to the Tao and embody the source of all life (see Robinet 1979: 32). Scriptures are formed through the coagulation of the original energy of the Tao and exist before even the world comes into being. Thus identical with the underlying force of all creation, the scriptures are uncreated, direct, primordial. Their recitation gave the gods, equally primordial, the power to furnish being from emptiness. Not only catalysts of creation, the scriptures are also the forces of survival. When the world comes to an end, as it does periodically due to the revolution of major kalpas, the highest scriptures alone survive.

Nothing but rays of pure light in the beginning, the scriptures then condensed to form written

1. A detailed study of the text, including a complete annotated translation, is currently being prepared by the author.

heavenly symbols. Made from jade, they are inscribed on tablets of gold in Grand Network, the highest of the thirty-six heavens. Incredibly big and written in characters entirely unintelligible to human beings, they are stored on the Mountain of Jade Capital in Mystery Metropolis. Only the highest and most refined of the heavenly host will ever gain access to this subtle realm. Once revealed to the world, they continue to create life and save humankind in the Tao.

Zhen Luan criticizes this basic Taoist outlook by confronting it with the traditional Chinese account of the origin of writing. His point is the mismatched integration of Chinese mythology into Taoist sacred history. While the origin of writing is traditionally associated with Cangjie, a minister of the Yellow Emperor who created Chinese characters on the basis of birds's tracks, in Taoism sacred scriptures—already written down in some form—exist spontaneously and originate together with the gods from primordial energy. Nevertheless, scriptures are written down in some form and, as the Taoist text claims, their writing was based on the patterns of birds' tracks.

Using this as the heading ("Birds' Tracks As the Earliest Form of Writing," Section 13), Zhen Luan's criticism focuses on the combination of Taoist sacred history and traditional Chinese mythology as found in the *Sanhuang jing*. This text, more commonly known as *Sanhuang wen*, is a collection of ancient talismans believed to have been used by the Three Sovereigns, usually listed as Fu Xi, Nügua, and Shennong (see Gu 1936), to govern the world in perfect harmony.[2] In the current age, they were first revealed to a certain Bai He—as writings in a cave after three years of wall-gazing—in the third century. Later they were rediscovered by Bao Jing, Ge Hong's father-in-law, in a grotto on Mount Song. From him they were transmitted to Ge Hong, who mentions them in the same breath as the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* (Chart of the True Shape of the Five Sacred Mountains; see Schipper 1967) and notes that they consisted of three scrolls. From him they were transmitted into the Ge-family tradition (see Kobayashi 1990: 223-25, 371-73). The text itself describes the events:

> The time of King Wu of the Jin arrived [265-90 C.E.]. Then there was a man from Jinling by the name of Bao Jing. He was an official who served as the prefect of Nanhai.
>
> From an early age he had been fond of the Tao of immortality and on the second day of the second month of the second year of Primordial Vigor [292], he withdrew to Mount Songgao. There, in a chamber of rock, he undertook a long pure fast. In the midst of it, suddenly before him there appeared the ancient texts of the Three Sovereigns—characters carved deep into the stone.
>
> At that time Bao did not have a proper teacher, so he relied on his own methods. Pledging 400 feet of pure silk, he made a formal compact with the gods and so received the texts. Later he transmitted them to Ge Hong and thus they have been handed down from one generation to the next, all the way to the present day. (*Yunji qiqian* 4. 10b-11a)

In the fifth century, further explanations were added and the texts grew to four scrolls. Called the *Dongshen jing* or "Scriptures of Spirit Cavern," the texts of the Three Sovereigns were then integrated as the lowest of the Three Caverns in the newly-devised arrangement of Taoist

2. See *Yunji qiqian* 4.10a for a description of the role the texts played during their rule.

scriptures.

Through yet more additions, the *Sanhuang wen* developed into eleven scrolls by the mid-sixth century. It then contained the writings of the Three Sovereigns together with those of the Eight Divine Emperors *(Badi jing).* The latter still survives in the Taoist canon (DZ 640, fasc. 342),[3] while the *Sanhuang wen* proper remain in citations (*Wushang biyao* 43.1a; *Daojiao yishu* 2.3a; *Yunji qiqian* 6.5b). Three further scrolls on the ritual application of the talismans and explanations of the texts completed the collection by the end of the Six Dynasties.[4]

Even in the time of Ge Hong the texts had contained both talismans and explanations. It was through the gradual addition of further commentary and various ritual formulas that the collection of the Dongshen group came into being. However, it remains unclear whether Ge Hong's text was transmitted intact throughout the Six Dynasties or whether the process of addition also effected a change in the nature of the original scriptures (see Ofuchi 1964: 277-343).

Zhen Luan's citation of the *Sanhuang jing* is quite reliable in the light of the fragments surviving today. As is common in his work, he abbreviates the passage, understanding of which is aided by adding what follows in other editions of the text. However, his point is clear. The *Sanhuang jing* claim to be a group of uncreated primordial texts that existed from the very dawn of creation. Their writing in itself is celestial and pure. It cannot be based, therefore, as they themselves claim, on the patterns of birds' tracks. Taoist doctrine regarding the origins and literary format of the scriptures is confusing and illogical. To further clarify his criticism, he then confronts a Lingbao account of the nature of celestial writings—of unclear origin but quite in line with Lingbao doctrine—with the *Huainanzi,* citing a passage that is not found in today's text.

In a separate section ("Arising and Dying with the Kalpas," Section 27), Zhen Luan further confronts the permanence of the Tao with the eternal changes of kalpa revolutions. Here he focuses on the inherent contradiction of the Tao, its nature as both permanent and eternally changing. Not just Laozi the savior, but the scriptures, too, are supposed to be original and unchanging. Yet the texts claim that they arise and die with the kalpas. What is true? What should a proper Taoist believe?

To make his point, Zhen Luan cites two scriptures of the ancient Lingbao corpus, the *Duming miaojing* (Wondrous Scripture of the Salvation of Life) (DZ 23, fasc. 26; see Ofuchi 1974, Bokenkamp 1983: 483), and the *Duren benxing jing* (Scripture of the Original Endeavor of Universal Salvation), extant in a Dunhuang manuscript.[5]

The former, the *Duming miaojing,* recounts the manifestations of the *Wondrous Scripture in Ten Sections* in the five lands of the blessed. The Heavenly Venerable of Primordial Beginning

---

3. Texts in the Taoist canon (Daozang, hereafter abbreviated DZ} are referred to by their numbers in K. M. Schipper's *Concordance du Tao Tsang: Index des ouvrages* (Paris: Publications de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, 1975). "Fasc." stands for "fascicle" and refers to the volume number in the 1923-25 Shanghai reprint of the original canon of 1445.

4. For more details and a full list of scriptures, see Chen 1975: 71-78.

5. P. 3022, reprinted in Ofuchi 1979: 54-55. The text is also cited in also *Wushang biyao* 47.4a-5b and *Yunji qiqian* 101.2a-3a. See Fukui 1952: 54, Bokenkamp 1983: 482.

relates the genesis of the Numinous Treasure in the kalpa Dragon Country, the beginning of the world, and the subsequent ordering of the world in accordance with the five agents. The latter, the *Benxing jing,* deals with the appearances of the Venerable Lord during the various ages of the world, always working to save people.

Both rely heavily on the doctrine of kalpa cycles at the beginning of the universe. According to this doctrine, as formulated in the *Zhihui zuigen pin* (DZ 457, fasc. 202), there are four major kalpic stages:

(1) Dragon Country. People were very pure and free from evil and led a simple life. The Heavenly Venerable descended to help them live in perfect accordance with the Law. There was no sin. At the end of this kalpa the world collapsed.

(2) Red Radiance. There was a trace of impurity and evil among living beings, karma and retribution first began. The Heavenly Venerable saved as many as he could and established the first colonies of celestial beings above. Again, the kalpa ended with the complete destruction of everything.

(3) Opening Sovereign. People were still living simply, but there were the beginnings of culture and civilization, as exemplified in the knotting of cords for reckoning. Since the minds of people were simple and their actions still largely unconscious, their lifespans were as long as 36,000 years. Again, the Heavenly Venerable supported the age.

(4) Highest Sovereign. Culture developed fully and the world declined seriously. There were strife and jealousy, hatred and war, bringing the dark age of humanity, which still continues. Ever since, the Heavenly Venerable has handed down precepts and rules to ensure the survival and salvation of at least a few (2a-3a).

In all of these world-ages, only the highest immortals and most primordial of the scriptures survive along with the chosen people who are rescued to Mount Kunlun for the period of total destruction. Lesser scriptures, notably those dealing with physical practices and longevity techniques, are recreated once the world is re-formed. At the same time, however, the texts claim that even Laozi, the gods, and the scriptures of pure primordiality arise and perish with the kalpas. This Zhen Luan finds absurd and impossible, a fiction, an unreasonable fraud. For him, the inner dynamic of the Tao, its function as the permanent nucleus of all existence joined as it is with its role in the continuously changing existence of the world, is logically impossible. He fails to recognize the very heart of the Taoist religion, the double nature of the Tao as ultimately transcendent and yet eternally immanent. The scriptures, since they partake in the essential nature of the Tao, are by necessity both eternal and changing. Zhen Luan recognizes their role yet fails to see the religious power of their nature.

His criticism thus correctly identifies a crucial point in the Taoist understanding of the sacred scriptures. He acknowledges the claim to celestial origin and to unchanging permanence. At the same time, he points out the necessary contradiction of this doctrine with any evolution of human history—be it history in the view of classical Chinese mythology or the history of kalpa-cycles as integrated from Buddhism. The Tao, fundamentally an ahistorical and timeless power, must embody itself in forms that are within time and therefore history. To be accessible to humanity, the Tao must leave its original state, must become visible and change along with the times. Scriptures, inherently of the Tao, must do the same: they are both transcendent and immanent, formless and embodied. To be both makes them religiously powerful—and logically absurd.

The Historical Position of the Scriptures

The scriptures of religious Taoism appeared over a period of several centuries after the first revelation of the Tao to Zhang Daoling in 142 CE. They were revealed to inspired visionaries or compiled by ambitious founders—in all cases embodying a religious truth in the words and doctrines available at that time and place. Taoist scriptures, however heavenly, have a concrete shape and position in the world. They depend on traditions, have forerunners, competitors, and successors. This role within the framework of Chinese intellectual and religious history is by no means simple. Taoist scriptures incorporate much traditional Chinese thought as well as Buddhist doctrines and terminology.

Certain Taoist texts were in fact close adaptations of Buddhist scriptures (see Zürcher 1980; Kamata 1986). Under the heading "Plagiarizing Buddhist Sutras for Taoist Scriptures" (Section 29), Zhen Luan criticizes this fact, a point already raised in the earliest Buddho-Taoist debates surrounding Gu Huan's *Yixia lun* (On Barbarians and Chinese; 467). Here, the Lingbao scriptures had been denounced as mere copies of the *Lotus Sutra.* Gu Huan countered with the argument that, quite to the contrary, the *Lotus sutra* was an imitation of the Lingbao scriptures.

Zhen Luan takes up this point of the old debate. He first cites the *Miaozhen ge* (Song of Wondrous Perfection), presumably the *gatha* attached to the *Miaozhen jing* (Scripture of Wondrous Perfection). This text is referred to variously in Buddhist polemics as an imitation of the *Lotus sutra* but its remaining fragments show it as a document of Lao-Zhuang philosophy (see Maeda 1987). Zhen Luan then proceeds to point out the similiarity of the passage he cites with the *Lotus* and quotes the Gu Huan's old defense.

In the argument that follows, Zhen Luan presents a strong case in favor of the Buddhist position. He refers to the Sanskrit originals of Buddhist texts, praises them as learned and concise, and notes that none of them ever refer to the *Daode jing.* In addition, he claims that only Buddhists recite their scriptures—a certain indication of their antiquity and authenticity—while Taoists do not do so. In this latter part of his argument, he is outright wrong; Taoist scriptures have been recited ever since recitation of the *Daode jing* began under the Celestial Masters. His overall picture, however, is quite correct. Many Taoist scriptures were in fact created as close copies of Buddhist sutras, when—in the fifth century—the religion was eagerly striving to establish itself as a teaching acceptable to broader segments of the population and at the imperial court. The Taoist religion as a whole developed under the strong influence of Buddhism, not only in its scriptures but also in its doctrines, cosmology, organization, and practices.

In a different vein, Zhen Luan further comments on the historical position of Taoist scriptures in Section 31, "Taoist Scriptures—Revealed and As Yet Unrevealed." This concentrates on the problem of faked religious documents and fraudulent cults. As we know today, Lingbao scriptures in particular were compiled consciously by Ge Chaofu in the last decade of the fourth century and were not traced back to any authentic revelation (see Bokenkamp 1983). However, Zhen Luan focuses less on this compilation as on texts that appeared more recently. He criticizes the fact that early Taoist catalogues of scriptures listed certain titles as "not yet revealed," while lists published in his own time contained the texts as available. To make his point, he cites the main Taoist catalogue current in his time, the *Xuandu jingmu* (Catalogue of Scriptures of Mystery Metropolis). This was compiled in 570, the year in which Zhen presented the *Xiaodao lun,* by

monks of the Monastery of Mystery Metropolis in the capital of Chang'an. The *Xuandu jingmu* in turn refers to the earliest list of Taoist scriptures compiled in 471 by Lu Xiujing,[6] one of the most important Taoists of the fifth century.[7] In the one hundred years between the two catalogues, a number of scriptures had appeared, but—at least to Zhen's own knowledge—there had not been a major new revelation.[8]

The conclusion Zhen Luan draws from a comparison of the numbers and titles is that the newly listed scriptures must be fraudulent, artificial compilations. This kind of trickery, he then proceeds to argue, has a long history in Taoism. Already the *fangshi* under the Han-emperor Wu cheated, and some Taoist texts were produced as plagiarisms of Buddhist sutras. Others again were actively compiled without any celestial inspiration by the founders of various Taoist schools. Even the first Taoist movement of the Celestial Masters was nothing but a big trick to delude the people, Zhen concludes.

Taoism as a whole emerges from this barrage of information as a big fraud. Accumulating examples from history and drawing on previous arguments—Section 7 on Zhang Daoling and the Celestial Masters, Section 29 on the plagiarizing of Buddhist sutras—Zhen Luan draws the reader into his web of evaluations, then clearly presents his condemnation of the entire religion as a necessary and obvious conclusion.

The scriptures here stand for the religion as a whole. Where the sacred core is rotten, Zhen seems to say, how can there be a sound truth anywhere else? Realizing quite correctly that Taoist scriptures continued to be compiled over the centuries, Zhen Luan does not accept the ongoing development and growth of the religion. Scriptures must come from a revelation, any other way is by necessity false and fraudulent. He does not, of course, question either the Buddhist or the Confucian tradition on the same grounds. His polemical purposes are solved by pointing to the problems regarding the historical position of the scriptures of Taoism.

The Universalist Claim of Taoist Scriptures

Combining the two points made so far, Zhen Luan reaches a further height of criticism in

---

6. All early Taoist catalogues are mainly known from their citations in Buddhist polemics. In addition to the *Xiaodao lun*, see *Falin biezhuan* 3 (T. 2051; 50.209a) and *Fayuan zhulin* 55 (T. 2122; 53.704b).

7. For Lu's biography, see Ma Shu's *Daoxue zhuan* (*Sandong Zhunang* 2.5a-6b; see also *Sandong Zhunang* 1.2a, 7b, 15b; 2.5a; 3.2a); Wu Yun's *Jianji xiansheng Lujun bei (Quan Tangwen* 926); Li Bo's *Zhenxi (Yunji qiqian* 5.5b); *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 24.9a (DZ 296, fasc. 139-48); *Maoshan zhi* 10.11a (DZ 304, fasc. 153-58); *Xuanpin lu* 3.15b (DZ 781, fasc. 558-59); *Sandong qunxian lu* 2.16a (DZ 1246, fasc. 992-95).

On his writings, see Yoshioka 1955: 18-44; Chen 1975: 282. The memorandum that accompanied the submission of his catalogue is preserved in the *Lingbao shoudu yibiao* (DZ 528, fasc. 294).

8. Between the two listings he uses, there were several other Taoist catalogues: the *Yuwei qibu jing mulu* (Catalogue of Scriptures and Texts of the Jade Warp in Seven Divisions) by Ritemaster Meng (Fashi) and the *Jingmu* (Catalogue of Scriptures) by Tao Hongjing, of which only the titles survive; and Ruan Xiaozhu's *Qilu xiandao lu* (Record of the Way of the Immortals in Seven Sections) that lists texts in altogether 1138 scrolls. On the various catalogues, see Yoshioka 1955: 31-35, Ofuchi 1964: 164, Chen 1975: 106-12.

his final section on "Philosophical Writings As Taoist Works" (Section 36). This not only continues the discussion of faked religious documents and fraudulent cults, following up on Sections 29 and 31, but also reverts back to the heavenly and original nature of the scriptures.

As in Section 31, Zhen Luan compares the two catalogues of 471 and 570 to show the discrepancies and inconsistencies of the Taoist teaching. He specifically focuses on the numbers of scriptures, finding that 884 scrolls of texts had been added in the newer catalogue. These, upon closer inspection, prove to consist largely of philosophical texts listed first in the bibliographic section of the *Hanshu*.

Zhen Luan's numbering and classification of Lu Xiujing's catalogue are consistent with the data given in Ruan Xiaozhu's *Qilu* (Seven Records) of the year 523, which is cited in *Guang hongming ji* 3 (T. 2103; 52.108c). According to the latter, the catalogue contained the following list of texts in four divisions:

Scriptures, precepts:	290 texts	311 wrappers	838 scrolls
Garb and Food:	48 texts	52 wrappers	167 scrolls
Sexual Practices:	13 texts	13 wrappers	38 scrolls
Talismans, charts:	70 texts	76 wrappers	103 scrolls
Total:	425 texts	459 wrappers	1138 scrolls[9]

On the other hand, no separate information has survived on the later catalogue. Zhen's comparison concludes that the earlier catalogues were more honest and limited themselves exclusively to Taoist scriptures and practical manuals. Later lists, on the contrary, contained large numbers of philosophical, pharmacological, alchemical, and other miscellaneous works.[10] Zhen Luan interprets this as a vain attempt to bolster the number of Taoist scriptures.

In the argument that follows, he first ridicules the religion by asking why Taoists did not also include works on divination, medicine, military strategy, and the like. He then points out the contradiction between listing generally known works as Taoist texts and the Taoist demand for secrecy, esoteric transmission, and proper initiation. Changing tracks, he turns yet again to the tension between the history of the Tao and the established view of the Chinese tradition: where Taoists honor certain personages, historical sources show them as ordinary men if not actually failures; where Taoists blindly accept the myths surrounding Laozi and his various transformations, history finds them contradictory if not outright false.

With this switch of emphasis, integrating the argument made first in Section 13, Zhen Luan places the problem of Taoist scriptures into a larger perspective. Doing so, he catches on to a basic tenet of the Taoist teaching, another consequence of the Taoist understanding of the Tao. If the Tao is everywhere and everything, then indeed all the teachings of the world should be part of it and should express it in some way. Even though traditional philosophers and miscellaneous writings may not be speaking of the Tao in exactly the same terms as the celestial scriptures or

---

9. In comparison, Buddhist materials consisted of 2410 texts in 2595 wrappers and 5400 scrolls.

10. The *Bianzheng lun*, in its more extensive quotation of the section, lists these in great detail (T. 2110; 52.546bc).

as Taoists with access to more esoteric spheres, their works are still part of the world and therefore part of the Tao.

Philosophical works and miscellaneous writings listed among Taoist scriptures are therefore active and vivid expressions of the Taoist claim to universality, a concrete example for the Taoist view of the harmony of all teachings (see Kohn 1992). These listings are yet another expression of the Taoist truth of universal oneness. They yet again show what the world is like according to the Tao. As in the other sections, Zhen Luan practices a purposeful misunderstanding in order to achieve his aims. Though his argument aims at showing the entire Taoist teaching as fundamentally fraudulent and absurd, he has been able to pinpoint a key Taoist doctrine. However polemical his presentation may be, he is a shrewd and well-informed observer of the Taoism of his time. Given the premises from which he was working, his logic is clear and his criticism ruthless, dismantling contradictions and fakes wherever he finds them. He holds up a mirror to Taoist scriptures that actively distorts yet in unexpected ways opens up new insights.

Translation

Section 13: Bird's Tracks as the Earliest Form of Writing

A. Proposition. The *Dongshen sanhuang jing* (Spirit Cavern Scripture of the Three Sovereigns) says:[11]

"The West Country Immortal[12] said, 'What is called august writing is the earliest written material. It comes from a time before the Three Sovereigns and was patterned on birds' tracks."

Again the text says:[13]

"The Three Sovereigns are the venerable gods of the Three Caverns,[14] the ancestral energy of great existence.[15] The Heavenly Sovereign presides over energy; the Earthly Sovereign rules

11. This passage is found in *Badi* jing 16a (DZ 640, fasc. 342), *Wushang biyao* 49.5b and *Yunji qiqian* 6.5b.

12. The *Badi jing* has "Lord King of the Western City." This is the celestial title of the immortal Wang Yuan, also known as Wang Fangping. See *Shenxian zhuan* 2; trl. Güntsch 1988.

13. This passage is a slightly abbreviated citation of the *Sanhuang wen* as quoted in WSPY 6.5ab.

14. The Three Caverns are the major division of the Taoist Canon, developed in the fifth century. See Ofuchi 1979a; Mollier 1990. On the history of the Canon and its divisions, see Fukui 1952; Yoshioka 1955; Chen 1975; Yamada 1984a; Liu 1973; Thompson 1985a; Boltz 1987.

15. The *Wushang biyao* version of the text adds here:

> The Lord of Heavenly Treasure is the head prime of Great Cavern, of great primordiality and jade mystery. The Lord of Numinous Treasure is the beginning prime of Mystery Cavern, of great simplicity and chaos perfected. The Lord of Spirit Treasure is the wondrous energy of Spirit Cavern, of shining numen and great emptiness.
>
> When these three primes coagulate and transform, they are called the Three Caverns. The energy of the Caverns is high and void, it reaches as far as Grand Network. Thus Great Cavern is located

over spirit; and the Human Sovereign governs all life. All three combine their virtue and the myriad beings are created."

B. Refutation. I laugh at this and say:

The *Nanji zhenren wenshi pin* (Chapter of Questions Asked by the Perfected of South Culmen) states:[16] "The true script of the Lingbao scriptures, in thirty-six scrolls,[17] is stored in a jade chamber on Mystery Terrace on the Mountain of Jade Capital. The huge characters of this true script fill the entire chamber. Heaven and earth may be destroyed, they may rise and fall ten thousand times, yet the true script will shine forth in eternity."[18]

Now, this true script is the writing of the Three Caverns. The Three Sovereigns are the venerable gods of the Three Caverns. This being so, they cannot possibly have been brought forth later than the text.

Also, in those days there were no birds or beasts. How, then, can they speak of "the earliest written material that comes from a time before the Three Sovereigns and was patterned on birds' tracks"?

On the other hand, if we assume that Fu Xi was one of the Three Sovereigns, the statement of the *Huainanzi* applies. It says, "the August Emperor ordered Cangjie to study birds' tracks and create writing."[19] But this took place only under the reign of a Sovereign, so how can they claim that writing began with birds' tracks before the Three Sovereigns?

Section 27: Arising and Dying with the Kalpas

> on Jade Clarity, Mystery Cavern is in the realm of Highest Clarity, and Spirit Cavern, with its combined appellations, is in the Great Ultimate.
>
> The energy of Great Cavern is the Heavenly Sovereign. The energy of Mystery Cavern is the Earthly Sovereign. The-energy of Spirit Cavern is the Human Sovereign. (6.5ab)

16. Citation unclear. *Yunji qiqian* 4.9b-10a mentions thirty-one scrolls of texts revealed at a meeting of the Lord King with the Perfected of South Culmen.

17. That the Lingbao scriptures consist of thirty-six scolls or wrappers is mentioned by Lu Xiujing in his *Lingbao shoudu yibiao* 5b (DZ 528, fasc. 294) as well as in *Yunji qiqian* 4.4b.

18. A similar statement is found in *Wushang biyao* 21.la. On sacred texts and their role in Taoism, see Robinet 1979, 1984.

19. Such a citation is not found in the *Huainanzi* as we have it today. It mentions Cangjie in chap. 19 and relates birds' tracks to writing in chap. 16. The *Shuowen jiezi,* however, has a similar statement in its introduction:

> Cangjie, a minister under the Yellow Emperor, observed the tracks left by birds and beasts. He realized that they could be divided according to their similarities and differences. Thus he first created written signs and tallies.

This story, which is also recorded in the *Diwang shiji* (YPYL 235.4b), is the classical Chinese myth on the origin of writing.

A. Proposition.[20] The *Duming miaojing* (Wondrous Scripture on the Salvation of Life) says:[21]

"When a great kalpa comes to an end, heaven tumbles and the earth is submerged.[22] In the world of desire, all perishes into nothingness.[23] Only the *Scripture of Great Peace (Taiping jing)* and the greater and lesser sections of the *Lotus sutra*[24] continue to circulate up and down throughout the eighteen heavens of the world of form.

"When a great kalpa comes to an end, these texts, too, cease to exist. Yet, the highest Tao of Jade Clarity,[25] the sacred scripture of the Three Caverns, and the perfected script and jade characters issue from Primordial Beginning and rest above the twenty-eight heavens, beyond even the world of formlessness. They are stored on the Mystery Terrace on the Mountain of Jade Capital in the Heaven of Grand Network. Here no disaster ever reaches.

"Therefore, the writings of spontaneity[26] arise and perish with the kalpas. By properly venerating them, you can cause your ancestors up to seven generations to be reborn in heaven. Transformed into sagely kings, they will continue for generations unending."

B. Refutation. I laugh at this and say:

The *Duren benxing jing* has:[27] "The Tao said: 'From the time when Primordial Beginning first opened the light to the first year of Red Radiance, through more than nine hundred billion (10^{11}) kalpas, I have saved living beings as uncountable as the sands of the

---

20. This entire section, with slightly less abbreviated citations, is also contained in *Bianzheng lun* 8 (T. 2110; 52.543ab).

21. This passage is an abbreviated but substantially correct citation of the *Duming miaojing* 14a-15b (DZ 23, fasc. 26). It is also found in *Wushang biyao* 31.14b-15a.

22. On the situation at the end of a kalpa, see the selection of passages in *Wushang biyao* 6.1a-5a, "Kalpa Revolutions" (Lagerwey 1981: 80-82) and in *Yunji qiqian* 2.4b-9a under the same heading. For discussions of Taoist eschatology, see Zürcher 1982; Kobayashi 1990: 403-81; Mollier 1990.

23. The world of desire *(kamaloka)* is the lowest of the three worlds. In Taoism, it consists of the first six of the thirty-six heavens. Above it are eighteen heavens of the world of form, followed by four heavens of the world of formlessness. Beyond the twenty-eight heavens of the three worlds, there are furthermore four so-called Brahma heavens for true believers, the Three Clarities, and the heaven of Grand Network. See *Daojiso sandong zongruan (Yunji qiqian* 3.5b-6a)-; *Wushang biyao* 4.1a-3b (Lagerwey 1981: 74). For a description of Buddhist cosmology, see *Jinglü yixiang* (T. 2121; 53.1a-4a); Beal 1871: 68-100; Lamotte 1958: 759-61.

24. On the *Lotus sutra* and its adaptation in Taoism, see section 29 below.

25. The heaven of Jade Clarity is the third of the Three Clarities and therefore the thirty-second among the heavens. Sacred scriptures revolve around in it. See *Zhengao 1*.15b-16a; *Yunji qiqian* 3.4b-5a.

26. The highest writings of Taoism are themselves the pure spontaneity of the Tao. They create the world and never perish. See *Wushang biyao* 24.2b-16a (Lagerwey 1981: 105); Robinet 1979: 29-44, 1984: I.112-16.

27. This is an abbreviated and somewhat altered citation of the *Duren benxing jing* as contained in *Yunji qiqian* 101.2a-3b and P. 3022 (Ofuchi 1979: 54).

Ganges. By the first year of Highest Sovereign, those saved were utterly innumerable.

"'Following the kalpas, I arose and died for generations unending. Always I emerged together with the Numinous Treasure. At the end of one kalpa, when the nine energies revolved again, I took refuge in the womb of Lady Hong for more than three thousand years.

"'Then the period Red Radiance began. When the year star was in *jiazi*, I was born in the Heaven of Supporting Strength.[28] Again I emerged together with the Numinous Treasure to save living beings. Because of my excellent karma, the Heavenly Venerable of Primordial Beginning bestowed the title Highest Lord upon me. Since then I have resided in the Jade Capital in Mystery Metropolis.' "

According to this account, all perfected writings are on the Mountain of Jade Capital, where no disaster ever reaches. Yet the earlier text also claims that "the writings of spontaneity arise and perish with the kalpas." Arising and perishing with the kalpas, how can they not be affected by disasters?

Again, the text says, "I emerged and perished at the same time as Numinous Treasure." And, "I arose and died following the kalpas." This means that, with the cyclical end of the Numinous Treasure, the Highest Lord also perishes. Yet the text insists that he lives forever and never dies. This is plainly false.

Also, the Mountain of Jade Capital is above all the heavens. Here no disaster ever reaches. The logic of this statement is suspect. All things that have matter and form do not exist permanently. The Jade Capital and the Jade Terrace undeniably have form and so belong to the world of form. The world of form is impermanent. How can the Jade Capital exist forever? Finally, the name Red Radiance and its year *jiazi* are as unreal as the Yellow and the Han rivers are real.

Section 29: Plagiarizing Buddhist Sutras for Taoist Scriptures

A. Proposition[29]. The *Miaozhen ge* (Song of Wondrous Perfection) says:[30]

As many people as there are sands of the Ganges
Who have heard the Law
Will not be able
To measure the wisdom of the Tao,[31]
Even though they try with their combined efforts.

---

28. This heaven, Fuligai, is written Fudaogai in the *Yunji qiqian* and Dunhuang editions.

29. The same argument, formulated slightly differently, is also found in *Bianzheng lun* 8 (T. 2110; 52.544c). A similar criticism is moreover voiced in *Erjiao lun* 10 (T. 2103; 52.141b) and *Bianzheng lun* 6 (T. 2110; 52.543b).

30. Citation unclear. The *Bianzheng lun* cites the passage as from the *Lingbao miaozhen jing ge* (Song from the Scripture of Wondrous Perfection of Numinous Treasure). On this text, extant only in citations, see chapter 3 above. On the importance of this passage for a dating of the text, see Kobayashi 1990: 348.

31. "Wisdom of the Tao" is one of three types of wisdom according to the *Daojiao yishu* (8.3b), the others being "wisdom of reality" and "wisdom of exigency."

B. Refutation. I laugh at this and say:

This text is merely a plagiarism of the *Lotus sutra,* changing "wisdom of the Buddhas" to "wisdom of the Tao." Except for this minor change, the two texts are identical. Nor is this a unique example.[32]

In the old days, the Taoist Gu Huan was confronted with the problem.[33] He countered: "The heavenly script and great characters of the wondrous scriptures of Numinous Treasure were brought forth directly from spontaneity itself. They were originally not based on the *Lotus sutra.* On the contrary, Kumarajiva and Sengzhao[34] copied our Taoist scriptures to compile the *Lotus.*"[35]

Stealing the text of the Numinous Treasure from the *Lotus sutra* is an act that may deceive the eastern people of Xia [China]. Yet it cannot belie the fact that the *Lotus sutra is* different from the Numinous Treasure scripture in that it is identical with the texts that came from the western regions. All the versions that are produced by translators even today never deviate from the original text of the sutra. Seen from this angle, it is clear that the Taoists plagiarized it rather than vice versa.

Also, Buddhist sutras are learned and concise; their words and meaning are broad and deep. Though they make up a thousand scrolls and a hundred divisions, there is no superfluous repetition. Not at all like the scriptures of Laozi's followers which entirely lack special purpose and have to rely on Buddhist sutras to expand their volume.

In addition, there is not a single reference to the Buddha in the *Scripture of Five Thousand Words.* Nor do the eight collections of Buddhist texts ever talk about the Tao.[36] All other

---

32. A very similar passage is indeed found in the *Lotus sutra (Fahua jing* 1) (T. 262; 9.6a). It runs:

> As many people as can fill the world
> Who are as wise are you, Śāriputra,
> Will not be able
> To measure the wisdom of the Buddhas,
> Even though they try with their combined efforts.

(Murano 1974: 23; for other translations, see also Kern 1963; Hurvitz 1976; Soothill 1987).

33. The *Bianzheng lun* (T. 2110; 52.544c) names Gu Huan's challenger as Mr. Xie of the Liu Song. In *Hongming ji* 6, a letter from Xie Zhenzhi to Gu Huan is preserved, in which he indeed raises the issue of Taoist versus Buddhist scriptures (see T. 2102; 52.42c).

34. These are two important and famous Buddhist translators and authors of the early fifth century. On Kumarajiva (344-413; biogr. *Gaoseng zhuan* 2 and *Jinshu* 95), see Zürcher 1959: 226; Chen 1964: 81-83; Tsukamoto and Hurvitz 1985: 869-87. On Sengzhao (374-414; biogr. *Gaoseng zhuan* 6), see Tsukamoto 1955; Chen 1964: 86-88; Robinson 1967, 1968; Liebenthal 1968.

35. This specific rejoinder is not found in Gu Huan's biographies in *Nan Qishu* 54 and *Nanshi* 75 or in the section of the *Hongming ji* dedicated to his work.

36. According to the *Chu sanzang jiji,* the eight collections were created by Ānanda after the *parinirvāna* of the Buddha and detail the main division of scriptures according to Mahayāna, Śrāvaka, and Vinaya. The eight are: (1) Collection of Transformation in the Womb; (2) Collection of Intermediate Existence; (3)

Taoist texts were made up later, stolen from Buddhist sutras. The case really is so self-evident, there is no need to go into it any further.

One more point, though. Ever since antiquity, the wise and worthy have been chanting and reciting Buddhist sutras.[37] To the present day they have thus been handed down for generation after generation without interruption. If the Taoist teaching really were superior, why is it that their scriptures aren't handed down through recital? Wherever you look throughout the whole country—who would ever recite a Taoist text?[38] Thus we know that Taoist scriptures cannot possibly be of any authority.

Section 31: Taoist Scriptures—Revealed and as yet Unrevealed

A. Proposition.[39] The catalogue of scriptures submitted by the Taoists of Mystery Metropolis[40] quotes Lu Xiujing of the Liu-Song dynasty as saying:[41]

"Of altogether 186 scrolls of Highest Clarity scriptures, 117 have already been revealed.[42] Beginning with the *Scripture of Initial Clarity,* sixty-nine scrolls in forty divisions have not yet been revealed to the world."

Examining the present catalogues of Taoist scriptures, we find they all say that these texts are already available.

Collection of Great Methods; (4) Collection of Rules; (5) Collection of the Ten Bodhisattva Stages; (6) Collection of Miscellanea; (7) Collection of the Diamond; (8) Collection of the Buddha (T. 2145; 55.4a).

37. Chanting and reciting the scriptures in ancient India was a way to preserve them (see Warder 1970: 205-06). The first text ever chanted ritually, at the bery beginning of Buddhist monachism, was the *Prātimoksha* (see Dutt 1962). Later the very voicing of the Buddha's words became a sacred act that conferred much merit and one of the main tasks of the sangha was to keep the scriptures alive.

38. Taoists have been chanting scriptures from the very beginning, starting with the Celestial Masters' recitation of the *Daode jing* (see Stein 1963; Kobayashi 1991). Later schools, too, have placed a high emphasis on recital, claiming that the very voicing of the sacred words can transpose the practitioner into the heavens of the immortals (see *Wushang biyao* 23.8a-15b; Lagerwey 1981: 141-43). Even today, the recital of scriptures form an integral part of Taoist monastic practice (see Yoshioka 1959: 122).

39. The same section, slightly longer, is also found in *Bianzheng lun* 8 (T. 2110; 52.545bc).

40. The *Bianzheng lun* refers to this as "the catalogue of all scriptures submitted by the Taoists of the Monastery of Mystery Metropolis et al." The monastery was the major Taoist instituion of Chang'an at the time (see *Chang'an zhi* 9).

41. Lu Xiujing's catalogue was the first systematic list of Taoist scriptures. He submitted it to the throne in 471. It survives only in fragments (see *Yunji qiqian* 4.4a; *Daojiao yishu* 2.3b-4a). The passage cited here is not found among them. For early Lingbao catalogues, see Ofuchi 1974; Bokenkamp 1983. For a list and analysis of Shangqing scriptures, see Robinet 1984. See also section 36.

42. This refers to the concept that sacred scriptures are originally created and stored in the highest heavens above. They are revealed, i.e., translated for the benefit of mortals, in accordance with the rhythm of the kalpas. On the appearance of the Shangqing scriptures, see *Zhengao* 19.9b; *Yunji qiqian* 4.6ab. On their collection and editing, see Strickmann 1978.

Lu also says, "Among the scriptures of the Mystery Cavern,[43] fifteen scrolls are still hidden in the heavenly palaces."[44] Yet upon examination of today's catalogue, it turns out that they are also listed as extant.

B. Refutation. I laugh at this and say:

Lu Xiujing lived under the reign of Emperor Ming of the Liu Song dynasty [r. 465-73 C.E.]. In the seventh year of the reign period Great Beginning [471 C.E.], he compiled the catalogue upon imperial order. Here he says that certain scriptures are "still hidden in the heavenly palaces."

Since then over a hundred years have passed. Yet I have not heard that any heavenly being has descended in the meantime.[45] Nor have I seen any Taoist ascend to heaven. Therefore I do not know from where and how these texts should have appeared.

They must be quite as fraudulent as the trickery of Shaoweng, General of Peaceful Accomplishment, who fed an apparently ancient script to an ox and pretended to speak upon the orders of Madam Wang.[46]

Scriptures like the *Huangting* (Yellow Court) and the *Yuanyang* (Primordial Yang) substitute the word "Tao" for "Buddha."[47] Those of the Numinous Treasure were made up by Zhang Ling and first appeared in the reign-period Red Bird of the Wu Kingdom [238-51 C.E.].[48] Similarly, the texts of Highest Clarity originated with Ge Xuan and first emerged in the time of the Song and Qi dynasties [420-501 C.E.].[49] Bao Jing, finally, put together the scriptures of

---

43. These are the scriptures revealed by the Lord of Numinous Treasure (see *Jiutian shengshen zhangjing* 1ab; *Daojiao yishu* 2.6a). For a list, see Lagerwey 1981: 271.

44. The *Bianzheng lun* version expands this: "Xiujing's catalogue also says, 'The scriptures of the Mystery Cavern consist of thirty-six scrolls. Twenty-one of these have already been revealed to the world, come down during greater and lesser kalpas in eleven sections. Altogether fifteen scrolls are still hidden in the heavenly palaces and have not yet appeared" (T. 2110; 52.545b).

45. On the phenomenon of Taoist celestials descending to earth, see Fukunaga 1982.

46. This refers to two incidents in the time of the Han Emperor Wu. The fraudulent *fangshi* was duly executed. See *Shiji* 28, Watson 1968: II.41-42.

47. The same criticism is also voiced in *Erjiao lun* 10 (T. 2103; 52.141b) and *Bianzheng lun* 6 (T. 2110; 52.534b). The "Yellow Court" is the *Huangting jing*, contained in DZ 331 and 332, fasc. 167 (see Schipper 1975; Robinet 1979). The "Primal Yang" is the *Yuanyang miao jing*, found in DZ 334, fasc. 168-69 (see Maspero 1981: 485). Neither shows a particularly strong Buddhist influence, unlike a large number of other, especially Lingbao, scriptures. On those, see Zürcher 1980.

48. In the last decade of the fourth century the Lingbao scriptures were compiled by Ge Chaofu, who traced them back to his ancestor Ge Xuan. They inherit the Tao of the Celestial Masters, but have nothing immediately to do with Zhang Daoling, the first Celestial Master. See Bokenkamp 1983.

49. The Shangqing scriptures were revealed to Yang Xi in 364-70. See Strickmann 1978, 1981; Robinet 1984. On Ge Xuan, ancestor of both Ge Hong and Ge Chaofu, see *Shenxian zhuan* 7; Güntsch 1988.

the Three Sovereigns. But in his case the fake was discovered and he was executed.[50]

Though the trickery of Shaoweng brought him execution in the Han dynasty, some people these days still follow his example. Is this not deplorable, indeed? Also, the *Hanshu* states that Zhang Lu's grandfather, Zhang Ling, in the time of Emperor Huan [r. 148-69 C.E.], produced talismans in order to delude the masses.[51] Those who received his Tao paid tribute in the form of five pecks of rice. Thus people called the Zhangs "rice thieves." Ling passed the leadership to his son Heng, who in turn gave it to his son Lu. Together they are called the "three masters;" their wives are the "three ladies." They all are said to have ascended to heaven in broad daylight. Those who first received their Tao were called "demon soldiers." More advanced adherents were known as "libationers."

The whole thing is rather evil and utterly vulgar, uncivilized in the extreme. All these examples show the same basic decrepitude.[52]

Section 36: Philosophical Works as Taoist Texts

A. Proposition.[53] The *Xuandu jingmu* (Catalogue of Scriptures of Mystery Metropolis) says:

"Of altogether 6,363 scrolls of Taoist scriptures, biographies, talismans, sacred charts, and discussions,[54] 2,040 are available at present. They make up 40,054 pages altogether. Of these texts, more than 1,100[55] scrolls are scriptures, biographies, talismans or sacred charts. The remaining 884 scrolls are philosophical discussions.

"Texts in altogether 4,323 were listed by Lu Xiujing. We know their numbers and titles, but they have not yet been revealed and are therefore unavailable in earthly editions."

B. Refutation. I laugh at this and say:

According to the catalogue submitted by the Taoists [of Mystery Metropolis], Lu Xiujing's

---

50. The *Sanhuang wen* are the texts by which the Three Sovereigns governed the world. See above. Bao Jing was a relative of Ge Hong, and so also of Ge Xuan, by marriage. His life is recorded in *Jinshu* 95 but no mention is made of a violent end. See Chen 1975: 76; Robinet 1984.

51. The *Bianzheng lun* details this: "The biography of Liu Yan in the *Hanshu* states that Zhang Lu's grandfather Zhang Ling in the reign of Emperor Huan came to visit Shu and studied the Tao on Crane-Cry Mountain. There he produced talismans" (T. 2110; 52.545b). The passage is found in *Hanshu* 64.

52. The *Bianzheng lun* has a lengthy addition at the end of this section. See T. 2110; 52.545bc.

53. This entire section, with a very detailed list of catalogued scriptures, is also contained in *Bianzheng lun* 8 (T. 2110; 52.546b-47a).

54. These are four of the altogether twelve divisions of the Taoist canon today. They are: Basic Texts; Divine Talismans; Jade Formulas; Sacred Charts; Genealogical Registers; Rules and Precepts; Rituals and Observances; Techniques and Methods; Secret Arts; Biographies; Hymns of Praise; Memorials. On the divisions and development of the Taoist Canon, see Liu 1973; Ofuchi 1979; Yamada 1984; Thompson 1985a; Boltz 1987.

55. The *Bianzheng lun* specifies the number as 1,156 (T. 2110; 52.546b).

work listed 1,228 scrolls on medicines, health practices, talismans, and sacred charts.[56] He had no miscellaneous or philosophical works listed at all.

Yet Taoists now present a list of more than 2,000 scrolls of texts.[57] This is because they simply integrated the titles of 884 scrolls of works in the bibliographic section of the *Hanshu* as Taoist scriptures and treatises.[58] This being so, the entire catalogue becomes questionable. How could philosophers like Hanfeizi, Mengzi, or Huainanzi all be talking merely about the Tao?

Also, they include the [alchemical] methods of yellow and white of the Eight Worthies,[59] the art of metamorphosis according to Tao Zhu,[60] talismans for turning over heaven and toppling earth, as well as techniques to become immune to weapons and kill demons. Now, if they consider works on pharmacology and casting spells proper Taoist materials, I really cannot understand why they don't also include [texts on divination like] the *Connected Mountains, Safe Repository, Forest of Changes,* and the *Great Mystery,*[61] [texts on medicine like] the *Yellow Emperor's Classic* and the *Golden Casket,*[62] as well as [texts on military strategy like] the *Six Tactics of Taigong.*[63]

Moreover, in Lu Xiujing's catalogue the philosophers are not listed. On what basis are they included today? In the catalogue that the Taoists presented in the seventh month of last year, only 350 scrolls of philosophical writings were declared Taoist scriptures. But now they are talking about more than 800 scrolls. Why this discrepancy between then and now? Now, when people have faults, they are afraid that others know of them. But when they have good points, they are anxious that others should not see them. The Taoists write in their texts: "Who has not received

---

56. The same information is also found in *Fanyuan zhulin* 55 (T. 2122; 53.704a).

57. The *Bianzheng lun* specifies the number as 2,040 scrolls (T. 2110; 52.546c).

58. The same sentence is also cited as by Zhen Luan in *Fayuan zhulin* 55 (T. 2122; 53.703b).

59. The Eight Worthies are the immortality teachers of Liu An. They are described in his biography in *Shenxian zhuan* 4. See Giles 1948: 42-43.

60. Tao Zhugong, better known as Fan Li, was a minister in Yue. For the full story, see below.

61. These four texts refer to the divination classics of the Xia, Shang, Zhou, and Han dynasties. On the first two, the *Lianshan* and the *Guizang,* lost today, see Imai 1974. On the *Changes (Yijing),* see Wilhelm 1950. On the *Great Mystery (Taixuan* of Yang Xiong) of the Han, see Fung and Bodde 1952: II.36-46.

62. Classics on Chinese traditional medicine frequently have the Yellow Emperor in the title but there is also a text called *Record of the Golden Casket (Jinkui ji)* listed among medical texts in the bibliographic section of the *Suishu.* On medical texts, see Unschuld 1985.

63. Taigong wang was a master of military strategy and the teacher of the early Zhou kings, whom he helped to defeat the Shang. See Allan 1972.

The *Bianzheng lun* adds: ". . . and the *Scripture of the Hidden Talisman,* works on yin and yang, charts on interpreting names and siting houses, the seventy-two kinds of burials and more of the like" (T. 2110; 52.546c).

Taoist precepts must not read Taoist scriptures!''[64]

Taking this position, are they afraid that others will see their faults? Then, of course, if they declare the philosophers to be Taoist scriptures, they have to collect and withdraw all the philosophers from general circulation in society. How could they possibly leave them at large?

Again, the Taoists state clearly: "Our Laozi's *Daode jing* was originally among the philosophers, but now it is venerated as scripture. The traditions are so close to each other, so what is bad about this?" This being so, we know that Laozi and Huangzi belong to the tradition of the philosophers.[65] But, whey, then should their tradition be all that different from the seven classics of the Confucians?[66] Also, Ban Gu places the six classics first, then the two sections. He also lists Laozi among the "medium to higher wise ones." He is quite right in this.[67]

Another point. Tao Zhu actually is Fan Li, a retainer of Gou Qian, the King of Yue. Together they were imprisoned in a stone keep in Wu. Tao Zhu then ate excrement and drank urine, being in an altogether awful state.[68] How one can venerate and follow his so-called art will forever escape me.

Also, Fan Li's son was later killed in Qi.[69] Why, then, didn't he use his father's "art" and transform himself [to escape his fate]?

Another story, in the *Zao tiandi jing*,[70] records how Laozi took refuge in the womb of the queen of King You. This means he was King You's son. Then [the text claims] he served as an archivist. This means he was King You's official. The *Huahu jing* mentions that under the Han, Laozi was Dongfang Shuo.[71]

---

64. A warning against giving access to sacred materials to the uninitiated is contained in many Taoist texts. A clear rule is stated in the *Laojun jiejing* (DZ 784, fasc. 562): "When any man or woman has received the proper precepts, then and only then may he or she proceed to pursue the scriptures and teachings." (22a)

65. The name Huangzi is not known outside of Buddhist polemics, where it is found twice more in *Guang hongming ji* 1 (T 2103; 52.99a, 100a). It might refer to Huangdi, the Yellow Emperor, and the texts associated with him, which in the Han were grouped with the works of Laozi as the tradition of Huang-Lao. See Jan 1978; Murakami 1988.

66. The seven classics as listed in *Hou Hanshu* 35 are the *Shijing* (Songs), *Shujing* (Documents), *Liji* (Rites), *Yuejing* (Music), *Yijing* (Changes), *Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals), *Lunyu* (Analects).

67. This refers to the bibliographic section of the *Hanshu*. The six classics are the ones listed above, excepting the *Lunyu*. The two sections are the two parts of the *Daode jing*, the *Daojing* and the *Dejing*.

68. The biography of Gou Qian in *Shiji* 41 mentions Fan Li as his retainer. The specific story referred to here is recorded in *Wuyue chunqiu* 7.52a.

69. He was actually killed in Chu. See *Shiji* 41.

70. This text gives an account of the creation of the world and the migrations of Laozi. It is not known outside of *Xiaodao lun* citations. For a dicussion, see Kusuyama 1979: 430-32.

71. This information is not found in the *Huahu jing*. Dongfang shuo, an immortal under the Han Emperor Wu, is identified with the essence of the planet Venus, i.e., he was a celestial being of high quality. Like Laozi, he transformed himself:

Let us examine this. In the event, King You was killed by the western barbarians. Why, then, did Laozi not provide his lord and father with a divine talisman and prevent his death?

Also, when Emperor Wu of the Han drove the country to exhaustion with his wars, more than half the population died. Why, if Laozi was Dongfang Shuo, did he bear this and not give them all talismans that made them invulnerable and insensitive to hunger?[72] Why didn't he provide them with methods for repelling the barbarians and with spells against demons and thus save the country? With his own eyes he saw the hardships people were suffering. How could someone so heartless and unmoved to save the people be anything other than a fraud, a cheat, and a liar?

Finally, the catalogue of Taoists scriptures lists over 6,000 scrolls of texts.[73] Examining this figure closely, it becomes clear that only 2,040 scrolls are actually available.[74] The remainder[75] are merely listed and classified as "not yet revealed." Should it be that brush and ink failed to be prepared, so that the worldly editions of the texts could not yet be written?[76]

Now, here's enough of this abuse and brawling! After all, it isn't worth expanding further.

Bibliography

Works in Western Languages

Allan, Sarah. 1972. "The Identities of T'ai-kung-wang in Chou and Han Literature." *Monumenta Serica* 29: 57-99.

Beal, Samuel. 1871. *A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese.* London: Trubner & Co.

Boltz, Judith M. 1987. *A Survey of Taoist Literature: Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries.* Berkeley: University of California, China Research Monograph 32.

Bokenkamp, Stephen. 1983. "Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures." In *Tantric and Taoist Studies* Vol.

In the time of the Yellow Emperor, he was the Wind Lord. Under Yao he was the Master of Duty Accomplished. Under the Zhou he was Lao Dan. In Yue he was Fan Li, and in Qi he was Chiyi Zipi (*Fengsu tongyi* 2).

See also Giles 1948: 47-51; Kaltenmark 1953: 93; Seidel 1969: 68.

72. Literally, "able to avoid grains." This refers to the basic method of Taoist dietetics. See Levi 1983; Engelhardt 1987.

73. The *Bianzheng lun* specifies this number as 6,363 (T. 2110; 52.547a).

74. The same information is also found in *Fayuan zhulin* 55 (T. 2122; 53.7O4b).

75. The *Bianzheng lun* gives the exact number of 4,323 (T. 2110; 52.G547a).

76. The *Bianzheng lun* cites this differently:

The remaining texts in 4,323 scrolls, as indicated in Lu Xiujing's catalogue, do not yet have a proper edition. What terrible falsehood! Already Lu's catalogue was a great fake, but now the list of Mystery Metropolis really is the fake of a fake!. (T. 2110; 52.547a).

II, edited by Michel Strickmann, 434-86. Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises.

Chen, Kenneth. 1964. *Buddhism in China.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Dutt, Sukumar. 1962. *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: Their History and Contribution to Indian Culture.* London: Allen and Unwin.

Fung Yu-lan and Derk Bodde. 1952. *A History of Chinese Philosophy.* 2 vols. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Giles, Lionel. 1948. *A Gallery of Chinese Immortals.* London: John Murray.

Güntsch, Gertrud. 1988. *Das Shen-hsien-chuan und das Erscheinungsbild eines Hsien.* Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Hurvitz, Leon. 1976. *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma.* New York.

Jan Yun-hua. 1978. "The Silk Manuscripts on Taoism." *T'oung-pao* 63: 65-84.

Kaltenmark, Maxime. 1969. *Lao-tzu and Taoism.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kern, Hendrik. 1963. *Saddharma-pundarika or the Lotus of the Wonderful Law.* New York: Dover.

Kobayashi Masayoshi. 1991. "The Celestial Masters under the Eastern Jin and Liu-Song Dynasties." *Taoist Resources* 3.2: 17-45.

Kohn, Livia. 1992. "Philosophy as Scripture in the Taoist Canon." *Journal of Chinese Religions* 20.

Lagerwey, John. 1981. *Wu-shang pi-yao: Somme taoiste du VIe siècle.* Paris: Publications de l'Ecôle Française d'Extrême-Orient.

Lamotte, Etienne. 1958. *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien.* Louvain: Institut Orientaliste.

Levi, Jean. 1983. "L'abstinence des cereals chez les taoistes." *Etudes Chinoises* 1: 3-47.

Liebenthal, Walter. 1968. *Chao-Lun, the Treatise of Seng-chao.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Liu, Ts'un-yan. 1973. "The Compilation and Historical Value of the *Tao-tsang.*" In *Essays on the Sources of Chinese History,* edited by D. Leslie, 104-20. Canberra: Australian National University Press.

Maspero, Henri. 1981. *Taoism and Chinese Religion.* Translated by Frank Kierman. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Mollier, Christine. 1990. *Une apocalypse taoiste du Ve siècle. Le livre des incantations divins des grottes abyssales.* Paris: College du France, Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, vol. 31.

Murano, Senchu. 1974. *The Lotus Sutra.* Tokyo: Nichiren shu Headquarters.

Ofuchi Ninji. 1974. "On Ku Ling-pao ching." *Acta Asiatica* 27: 33-56.

———. 1979. "The Formation of the Taoist Canon." In *Facets of Taoism*, edited by Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel, 252-68. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Robinet, Isabelle. 1979. *Meditation taoiste.* Paris: Dervy Livres.

———. 1984. *La revelation du Shangqing dans l'histoire du taoisme.* 2 Vols. Paris: Publications de l'Ecôle Française d'Extrême-Orient.

Robinson, Richard. 1959. "Mysticism and Logic in the Thought of Seng Chao, Fifth Century Thinker." *Philosophy East and West* 8: 99-120.

Robinson, Richard. 1967. *Early Madhyamika in India and China.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Schipper, Kristofer. 1975. *Concordance du Houang-t'ing king.* Paris: Publications de l'Ecôle Française d'Extrême-Orient.

Schmidt-Glintzer, Helwig. 1976. *Das Hung-ming-chi und die Aufnahme des Buddhismus in China.* Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner.

Seidel, Anna. 1969. *La divinisation de Lao-tseu dans le Taoisme des Han.* Paris: Ecôle Française d'Extrême Orient.

Soothill, William E. and Lewis Hudous. 1937. *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms.* London: Kegan Paul.

———. 1987. *The Lotus of the Wonderful Law.* London: Curzon Press.

Stein, Rolf A. 1963. "Remarques sur les mouvements du taoisme politico-religieux au IIe siècle ap. J.-C.," *T'oung-pao* 50: 1-78.

Strickmann, Michel. 1978. "The Mao-shan Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy." *T'oung-pao* 63: 1-63.

———. 1981. *Le taoisme du Mao chan; chronique d'une revelation.* Paris: College du France, Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises.

Thompson, Laurence. 1985. "Taoism: Classic and Canon." In *The Holy Book in Comparative Perspective*, edited by F. M. Denny and R. F. Taylor, 204-23. Columbus: University of South Carolina Press.

Tsukamoto, Senryu, and Leon Hurvitz. 1985. *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism.* 2 vols. Tokyo: Kodansha.

Unschuld, Paul. 1985. *Medicine in China: A History of Ideas.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Warder, A. K. 1970. *Indian Buddhism.* Delhi: Motilal Barnasidan.

Watson, Burton. 1968. *Records of the Grand Historian of China.* 2 vols. New York: Columbia University Press.

Wilhelm, Richard. 1950. *The I Ching or Book of Changes.* Translated by Cary F. Baynes. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series XIX.

Zürcher, Erik. 1959. *The Buddhist Conquest of China.* 2 vols. Leiden: E. Brill.

———. 1980. "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism." *T'oung pao* 66: 84-147.

Works in Chinese and Japanese

Chen Guofu. 1975. *Daozang yuanliu kao.* Taipei: Guting.

Fukui Kōjun. 1952. *Dōkyō no kisoteki kenkyū.* Tokyo: Risosha.

Fukunaga Mitsuji. 1982. "Dōkyō ni okeru tenshin no shōrin shūkai." In *Chūgoku chūsei no shūkyō to bunka,* edited by Fukunaga Mitsuji, 1-46. Kyoto: Jimbun kagaku kenkyujo.

Gu Jiegang. 1936. *Sanhuang kao.* Beijing: Yenching Journal of Chinese Studies Monograph 8.

Imai Usaburo. 1974. "Renzan kizō no nieki ni tsuite." In *Uno Tetsuto sensei hakuju shukuga kinen Tōyōgaku Ronsō,* 211-25. Tokyo.

Kamata Shigeo. 1986. *Dōzōnai bukkyō shisō shiryō shūsei.* Tokyo: Daizo shuppansha.

Kobayashi Masayoshi. 1990. *Rikuchō dōkyōshi kenkyū.* Tokyo: Sobunsha.

Kusuyama Haruki. 1979. *Rōshi densetsu no kenkyū.* Tokyo: Sobunsha.

Maeda Shigeki. 1987. "Rōshi myōshinkyō shōkō." *Waseda daigaku dagakuin bungaku kenkyūka kiyō* 14:31-32.

Murakami Yoshimi. 1988. "Kōtei naikyō taiso to dōka shisō." *Tōhōshūkyō* 71:1-19.

Ōfuchi Ninji. 1964. *Dōkyōshi no kenkyū*. Okayama.

———. 1979. *Tonkyō dōkei*. Tokyo: Kokobu shoten.

Schipper, Kristofer M. 1967. "Gogaku shingyōzu no shinkō." *Dōkyō kenkyū* 2: 114-162.

Tsukamoto Senryū, ed. 1955. *Jōron kenyū*. Kyoto: Hosokan.

Yamada Toshiaki. 1984. "Dōzō jūnirui seiritsu ni kansuru shiryō no haikei." In *Makio Ryukai hakase shoju kinen ronshū Chūgoku no shūkyō to kagaku*, 519-38. Tokyo: Kokusho kankokai.

Yoshioka Yoshitoyo. 1955. *Dōkyō kyōten shiron*. Tokyo: Dokyo kankokai.

———. 1959. *Dōkyō to bukkyō* vol. 1. Tokyo: Kokusho kankokai.

Glossary

Badi jing 八帝經
Bao Jing 鮑靚
Bianzheng lun 辯正論

Cangjie 蒼頡
Chang'an zhi 長安志
Chu sanzang jiji 出三藏記集

Daode jing 道德經
Daojiao sandong zongyuan 道教三洞宗元
Daojiao yishu 道教義樞
Diwang shiji 帝王世紀
Dongfang Shuo 東方朔
Dongshen jing 洞神經
Duming miaojing 度命妙經
Duren benxing jing 度人本行經

Erjiao lun 二教論

Falin bezhuan 法琳別傳
fangshi 方士
Fayuan zhulin 法苑珠林
Fengsu tongyin 風俗通義
Fu Xi 伏羲

Ge Chafu 葛巢甫
Ge Hong 葛洪
Ge Xuan 葛玄
Guang hongming ji 廣弘明記
Gu Huan 顧歡
Guizang 歸藏

Hanshu 漢書
Huahu jing 化胡經
Huainanzi 淮南子
Huangdi 黃帝
Huangting jing 黃庭經

Jinglü yixiang 經律異相
Jinshu 晉書
Jiutian shengshen zhangjing 九天生神章經

Kunlun 崑崙

Laojun jiejing 老君戒經
Lianshan 連山
Lingbao shoudu yibiao 靈寶授度儀表
Lu Xiujing 陸修靜

Miaozhen jing 妙真經

Nanji zhenren wenshi pin 南極真人問事品
Nügua 女媧

Qilu xiandao lu 七錄仙道錄

Ruan Xiaozhu 阮孝緒

Sandong zhunang 三洞珠囊
Sanhuang jing 三皇經
Shaoweng 少翁
Shennong 神農
Shenxian zhuan 神仙傳
Shiji 史記
Shuowen jieji 説文解字
Suishu 隋書

Taiping jing 太平經
Tao Hongjing 陶弘景

Wushang biyao 無上秘要
Wuyue zhenxing tu 五嶽真形圖

Xiaodao lun 笑道論

Xuandu jingmu 玄都經目

Yijing 易經
Yixia lun 夷夏論
Yuanyang miaojing 元陽妙經
Yunji qiqian 雲笈七籤
Yuwei qibu jing mulu 玉緯七部經目錄

Zhang daoling 張道陵
Zhengao 真誥
Zhen luan 甄鸞
Zhihui zuigen pin 智慧罪根品

BOOK REVIEWS

Une Apocalypse taoïste du Ve siècle. Le livre des incantations divines des grottes abyssales. By Christine MOLLIER. Paris: College du France, Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1990. Vol. 31. 239 pp. (Bibliography, index. ISBN 2-85757-045-7.)

Livia KOHN
Boston University

With this book, Christine Mollier presents her dissertation, a detailed and extensive study of the *Shenzhou jing* (Scripture of Divine Incantations or Spells Against [Evil] Spirits), a text in twenty scrolls contained in the Taoist Canon and—for the first half only—in a variety of Dunhuang manuscripts (list p. 34). Neither dated nor signed with an author's name, the text has baffled scholars for many years as to its provenance and sectarian affiliation. Japanese studies especially abound, discussing its probable date and textual history (bibliography p. 200-201). Now the mystery of the text is unraveled a great deal further, and its contents and belief system analyzed for the first time.

The book begins with an introduction (pp. 7-25) that criticizes scholarly reticence in acknowledging an indigenous and active eschatological tradition of traditional China. It also describes relevant early movements. The first of these is the wave of public enthusiasm for the divine realm of the Queen Mother of the West to come in the year 3 C.E., followed soon by the Great Peace movement and the Celestial Masters. In the Six Dynasties, the time to which the *Shenzhou jing* can be dated, all major Taoist schools had eschatological visions of their own, many of which are reflected in the text.

The first chapter (pp. 27-65) concentrates on the history of the text. It summarizes the Japanese and Chinese scholarship on the date and compilation of the *Shenzhou jing* and takes up various debatable points. It emerges that the *Shenzhou jing* originially had ten chapters (or scrolls), which constituted an integrated whole and were transmitted rather intact ever since its original appearance—probably in fifth-century Jiangnan.

Like many other important Taoist texts, the *Shenzhou jing* was understood to have been received from the gods after the establishment of the Liu-Song dynasty. This time followed a period of continued invasions by northern and western barbarians and a bloody civil war, instigated by the rebellion of Sun En in 399. The text, under the vivid influence of these disasters, appeals to the sense of catastrophe still strong in people's minds and contrasts the then-current age with the vision of a new world of Great Peace, toward which Liu Yu with his new dynasty had just taken a great step. Depicting the end of the world in its gory details—not unlike its Lingbao, Shangqing, and Celestial Master counterparts—the text warns that bad times will come yet again. Soon, a great kalpa will end and not only the dynasty but the whole world will be destroyed. One can only be saved through possession and recitation of the scripture and

proper initiation into its cult.

This cult of the *Shenzhou jing* was in many ways very similar to the organization and practices of the Celestial Masters. In fact, the cult represents a schismatic group within the latter. Although it never denies its close ties to the Celestial Masters, the *Shenzhou jing* maintains its own special features and insists that is the only way to deliverance.

The most notable among these special traits of the *Shenzhou jing* group, discussed at length in chapter 2 on the"Environment of the Origins" (pp. 67-91), is its strong appeal to the masses. With the text written in a rather straightforward style, it takes into consideration even the illiterate: mere possession of this talismanic token of the gods suffices, there is no need to be able to read it. The group is concerned with the masses of peasants, farmworkers, servants, and slaves, and encourages them to join the communal effort of salvation. In that, the group is much more egalitarian than comparable Taoist schools.

In terms of religious organization, it is still very much like the Celestial Masters. The same holds true for religious practice with two exceptions. The *Shenzhou jing* group had strong reservations toward ritual sexual practices, the"harmonizing of energies" commonly undertaken by the Celestial Masters. And it accepted conventional medical methods of healing, such a herbs, acupuncture, and moxibustion, which were eschewed if not outright prohibited by the Celestial Masters in favor of the confession of sins and the use of talismans.

Chapter 3 (pp. 93-152) lets the text speak for itself. It contains a full and very competent translation of the first chapter together with skillful summaries of chapters 2-10 and 19-20. The *Shenzhou jing*, one finds, is predominantly concerned with demons—small demons, big demons, red demons, green demons, demon armies, and demon kings. Chapter titles invariably contain things done to them: "Banishing the Demons," "Decapitating the Demons," controlling, summoning, killing demons, binding them up, and chasing them away.

The demons, described in colorful physical detail, tend to appear in armies by the tens of thousands—not unlike the northern and western barbarians which continued to make Chinese life so unstable. They are governed by "demon kings," a group of spirits who used to be stout supporters of the Tao in the golden age—at the beginning of creation—but turned more and more evil as the world degenerated. Now, as the end of a great kalpa cycle is imminent, they threaten to rise and have to be, well, summoned, controlled, tied up, banished, killed, or—best of all—made to swear a pledge of allegiance to the Tao. But since they won't do that voluntarily, the heavenly host has to form an army of its own which welcomes the support of every human believer.

The text, spoken by the Tao itself, depicts the impending events and provides a means—the only means—of escape.

The fourth and last chapter (pp. 153-94), titled "Theological Structures and Apocalyptic Themes"—why not"Doctrinal Structures and Eschatological Themes"?—discusses the worldview of the *Shenzhou jing*, giving for the first time a well-organized overview of an integrated Taoist eschatology in a Western language.

The chapter covers several topics: veneration for the sacred scripture (the *Shenzhou jing* itself), considered part of the Tao and a protective talisman; the role of Laozi in his appearance as Li Hong, messianic savior of the world; the cosmology of kalpa cycles and the dualism of Great Peace versus total destruction; the hierarchy of demons and their military

organization—opposed to the heavenly host similarly formatted in army-style and including many of the traditional deities of ancient China; the end of the world with its many wars, natural disasters, and epidemics; and the eventual rescue of the chosen, the "seed people," identified by their destinies (karma—one of several instances of Buddhist influence) and their active participation in the movement.

The chapter also discusses the relation between sins and sicknesses, the cosmology of hells and paradises, and the—almost racist—distinction made between the good and the bad (which is attributed to the heritage of each). It ends with a description of the perfect state—the absolute opposite of the degeneration and destruction that precedes the end of the world.

With the appended bibliographies (pp. 195-216) and an index (pp. 217-36), the book represents indeed a thorough and exemplary study of this neglected and rather unusual Taoist scripture. The study goes very well with the recent book by Kobayashi Masayoshi, *Rikucho dokyoshi kenkyu* (Studies in Six Dynasties Taoism; Tokyo: Hirakawa, 1990). The latter,while largely ignoring the *Shenzhou jing*, provides succinct descriptions of the eschatologies of the Lingbao and Shangqing schools and analyzes with great acumen the textual history and compilation of various important Taoist scriptures mentioned by Mollier for reference and comparison. Together, they form a thorough history of fifth-century Taoism and give a detailed picture of its schools and religious beliefs. It is regrettable that several articles which were eventually included in Kobayashi's book, published in 1988, did not make it into Mollier's work. They would have enriched her analysis of the Chinese situation.

It would also have made the volume more relevant to students of religious studies if she had not limited her discussion of the theory of eschatology, messianism, and millenarianism to two pages in the introduction. The reader of the book comes to understand very well that, aside from the works of Susan Naquin and Daniel Overmyer (centered on post-Song China), the Chinese eschatological tradition has been grossly neglected and that its early parts are all but unknown. On the other hand, one wonders—especially in the light of the many theoretical as well as Judeo-Christian works on the subject listed in the bibliography—how the Chinese tradition relates to other movements of the same kind and how the phenomenological definition of eschatology might profit from the Chinese case.

Not doubting Mollier's proficiency on the subject, one wishes she had cited the works she lists and added—if in only a few more pages—a discussion on the state of the field and a statement on what exactly she thinks that Chinese and specifically Taoist eschatology can contribute to our understanding of such movements.

Also, not all the authors listed in the bibliography agree on what factors are relevant to an eschatological religion. It would be interesting to consider how important, for example, are political and social factors in the Chinese context? Mollier asserts that there exists a strong persistance of millenarianism in Chinese history (p. 191). She also mentions that emperors of various dynasties used messianic prophesies to legitimize their rule (p. 193). How much, then, has this persistance to do with the imperial input? And how important are the social factors not merely to understanding the Chinese situation but, more importantly, in comparison to "the characteristc logic of millenaristic mentalities" (p. 154)? The latter remains ill-defined throughout the book. Since, moreover, it is by no means an undisputed concept, some parts of the discussion echo somewhat hollowly in the reader's mind.

The merits of the book are thus stricly sinological. It succeeds admirably in giving a clear and vivid picture of the *Shenzhou jing*—its history, textual problems, social context, religious practices, and worldview. More than that, it provides a succinct and insightful discussion of the organization, practices, and beliefs of one form communal Taoism took in the fifth century—an area all too little known until now. The book is thus a must for anyone interested in Taoism and early Chinese religion. It fills an important gap in our understanding of Chinese organized religion in its formative stages, presenting with deep erudition a difficult and vastly complex material.

Zhongguo daojiao shi 中國道教史 (*A History of the Chinese Daoist Religion*) By QING Xitai 卿希泰 et al. Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chupanshe, 1988. Volume 1, pages 346 pp.

YAN Shoucheng
Indiana University

Since the introduction into China of the Western term "religion" through the Japanese translation *shūkyō* 宗教 in the late nineteenth century, *daojiao* 道教 (Teaching of the Way) has been distinguished from *daojia* 道家 (School of the Way). The former usually refers to the philosophy of Laozi 老子 and Zhuangzi 莊子, and the latter to the institutionalized religion which can be traced to Zhang Daoling 張道陵 of the Later Han. We might compare this religion to a river, joined along its course by many trubutary streams—yin-yang ideology, Huang-Lao 黄老 theory, techniques for longevity and other practical and secret arts (*fangshu* 方術), including shamanism and other folk beliefs. Qing Xitai's *History* gives us a multifaceted and detailed map of this Daoist river.

According to Wang Ming's 王明 preface, the entire series will consist of four volumes, corresponding to the four periods Qing discerns in the development of the Daoist religion: (1) formation and reform, (2) growth and development, (3) sectarian branching-off and continued development, and (4) gradual decline.

Volume 1, the subject of this review, deals with the first period, including the following four chapters: (1) the origin of the Daoist religion, (2) the appearance of early Daoist scriptures and the rise of popular religious Daoism, (3) the differentiation and development of the Daoist religion in the Wei-Jin period, and (4) the reform and enrichment of the Daoist religion in the Northern and Southern Dynasties period.

According to Qing, a wide range of factors contributed to the formation of the Daoist religion, such as the lore of prophecy and the apocrypha (*chenwei* 讖緯), arts for longevity and immortality, Moism, and Huang-Lao thought. The most important among these for the formation of Daoism was Huang-Lao thought, which itself showed three trends—it combined with Legalist ideas, with yin-yang ideology and secret arts, and with hygiene methods for nurturing the *qi* 氣 In the Former Han, the emphasis of Huang-Lao thought was on government and statecraft, whereas in the Later Han it shifted to the secret arts and the worship of *xian* 仙 (immortals). The *Laozi Heshanggong zhu* 老子河上公注 was representative of the third trend, which laid the foundation for the Daoist religion. Thus, according to Qing, it was from the Chinese "feudal" society itself that Daoism emerged. Foreign influence, if any, was insignificant.

The *Taipingjing* 太平經 played a key role in the establishment of Daoism as a religion. It inherited the *dao* of the *Laozi* and the worship of gods and demons, and at the same time absorbed the cosmology of yin-yang and the Five Processes, secret arts, and Confucian ethics. This syncretic corpus was closely related to the Celestial Master Sect (*tianshidao* 天師道), and gave rise to the revolt of the Yellow Turbans. A significant idea in this scripture is that of *chengfu* 承負, which means that people's disasters result from sins which have been accumulated by their ancestors, and that they can be saved only by means of a celestial scripture.

Pecks of Rice, the main ideas of which are presented in the *Laozi xiang'er zhu* 老子想爾注. Daoism as an organized religion began with this sect.

The Daoist religion at this stage, heavily tinged with shamanism, was a typical folk religion. It reached its climax in the uprising of the Yellow Turbans. From then on, the ruling class, drawing lessons from the rebellion, tried to break up this new religion and transform it to their advantage. They succeeded in controlling Zhang Lu's sect through both co-option and restriction. Nevertheless, popular Daoist religion remained quite alive through, for instance, the Celestial Master Sect and Li Sect (*Lijiadao* 李家道), which were active in Sichuan and Jiangnan, respectively.

At the same time, the Daoist religion began to spread into the ruling elite, and became more and more intertwined with political struggles among them. As a result, the elitist Daoist religion—*xian* Daoism—came to dominate popular Daoism. Ge Hong 葛洪 was representative of this trend. The schools of Shangqing 上清 and Lingbao 靈寶 also emerged against this background. Popular religious Daoism persisted, however. One example was the frequent appearance of Daoist-led rebellions associated with the messiah Li Hong 李弘.

In response, the ruling class made further efforts to transform this popular religion into a real elitist one. One main figure who sought to achieve this was Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之 in the Northern Wei period.

After that, Daoist scriptures increased greatly in number, codes of law were promulgated, discipline for monastic life was established, the Daoist pantheon was completed, and Daoist bibliography began, while at the same time the conflict between Daoism and Buddhism intensified. Although there was still differentiation within the Daoist religion, it was stabilized and thereby open to its durable development in Chinese "feudal" society.

From the above, we can see that this *History* is quite successful in making a comprehensive description of objective history and making in-depth analyses of doctrines. However, regarding interpretation, this reviewer has the following questions:

On the origin and formation of Taoism we should first of all keep in mind the fact that *daojiao*, like *daojia*, is "a retrospective creation," in the words of A. C. Graham.[1] Thus, the Daoist religion is inherently syncretic in nature. From this perspective, Qing's argument about the differentiation and reunification of the Daoist religion needs reconsideration. According to Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤, the name *daojiao* first appeared in the *Laozi xiang'er zhu*.[2] This commentary states: "When the true Way was hidden, heretical texts appeared. [Therefore] faulty arts are often called the teaching of the *dao* (*daojiao*) in the world. All those are totally wrong and should not be used." Obviously, in the late Han there did not exist a unified Daoist religion, and therefore no differentiation within it can be posited. In fact, in the Later Han even Buddhism

---

1. A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1989), 170-71.

2. Rao Zongyi, *Laozi xiang'er zhu jiao jian* 老子想爾注校箋 (Hong Kong: Tong Nam Printers and Publishers, 1956), 58.

was considered one "tradition of the Dao" (*daoshu* 道術).[3]

All the "secret arts" except Buddhism gradually merged into a huge body, which was retrospectively classified under the name of *daojiao* or *daojia*. This merging was to some extent due to the formation of the corpus of Daoist scriptures by Lu Xiujing陸修靜and others. In many of these scriptures, different "secret arts" are interpreted and developed within a framework of yin-yang and the Five Processes characteristic of the cosmology which permeated the Chinese mind since the beginning of Han. One important aspect of this cosmology is the mutual influence between Heaven and man. In the old style of worship of gods and demons, as advocated in the *Mozi* 墨子, man must unconditionally follow Heaven's intent. However, to Han cosmologists like Dong Zhongshu董仲舒, man is on par with Heaven.[4] He can influence Heaven's intent, whether through moral cultivation as in the case of Confucians or by means of various formulae as in the case of those "men of secret arts" (*fangshi* 方士). Efforts to manipulate operations of Heaven through different "arts" underlie a diverse spectrum of religious Daoism. Perhaps a further study in this respect will shed some light on the formation of religious Daoism.

On the question of foreign influence on the development of Taoism, Chen Yinke陳寅恪wrote a very important article about the relationship between the Celestial Master Sect and the coastal area.[5] According to him, many literati families in the Jin and the Northern and Southern Dynasties periods were followers of the Celestial Master Sect. During the three hundred years from the early second to the early fifth century, certain great events, such as the Yellow Turban rebellions and the assassination of Emperor Wen of Song by his own son, were related to this sect. The "tradition of the Dao" (*daoshu*) of trouble-makers almost without exception originated in the coastal area. Besides, Zou Yan鄒衍, the forerunner of yin-yang ideology, and most of the "men of secret arts" in the Qin and Han era came from the northeast coastal region of Yan 齊and Qi 燕 . Therefore, it is very possible that the idea of *xian* resulted from the inter-cultural communication in this coastal area. In view of this, it seems too early to deemphasize the foreign influence on the early Daoist religion.

Finally, it seems to this reviewer that this book has a single thread running through its interpretation of the development of religious Daoism, that is the positing of a popular/elitist dichotomy and subsequent conflicts between the two. Undoubtedly, this point of view is related to the authors' Marxist ideology of class struggle. But is this dichotomy a historical fact as regards the Daoist religion?

First of all, the fact that a religion that is popular in nature does not necessarily mean that it is organized by common people or represents their interests. One example is Zhang Jue 張角, the leader of the Yellow Turbans, who was in fact a local despot (*tuhao* 土豪).[6]

---

3. Tang Yongtong 湯用彤, *Han Wei liang-Jin nanbei chao fojiao shi* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), vol. 1, 37-41.

4. See Xu Fuguan, *Liang-Han sixiang shi* 兩漢思想史, vol. 2 (Taibei: Xuesheng shuju, 1989), 396-98.

5. "Tianshidao yu binhai diyu zhi guanxi"天師道與濱海地域之關係,in his *Jinmingguan conggao chubian* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chupanshe, 1980), 1-40.

6. See Lu Simian呂思勉 , *Lu Simian dushi zhaji* 呂思勉讀書札記 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chupanshe, 1982), vol. 2, 778-779.

Second, it may be said that the Daoist religion remained in essence "popular" rather than "elitist" throughout its history, despite the fact that it converted many people of the upper class. In Chinese history few members of the literati elite would openly raise religious Daoism, whether the "elitist" *xian* type or the "popular" *guidao* 鬼道 (the Way of ghosts and demons) type, to the same level as Confucianism or Lao-Zhuang philosophy.

Third, the fact that Taoism was a popular religion does not entail the impossibility of conversion of members of royal houses or noble-literati families. In fact, quite a few Chinese emperors were personally more attracted to Daoist "secret arts" than to Confucian moral teachings. As for members of the noble-literati elite in the period of the Jin and the Northern and Southern Dynasties, many openly observed Confucian ethics in their deeds and discussed Lao-Zhuang's natural philosophy in words, but privately, in their hearts and souls, followed the teachings of the Celestial Master Sect and bequeathed to their offspring this religious legacy, the essence of which is nothing less than Zhang Lu's *guidao*.[7]

Finally, in traditional China, as pointed out recently by Benjamin Schwartz, "perhaps the government did not really aspire to control all popular belief . . . And so, in relation to modern times, perhaps totalitarian thought in China owes its origin more to the West, to Marxism-Leninism, than to the Chinese tradition."[8] Whether from the viewpoint of Confucian or Huang-Lao statecraft, local customs, social or religious, had better not be interfered with except in extraodinary situations. In light of this, it seems not quite pertinent to interpret the whole history of Chinese religious Daoism within the framework of popular/elitist contradictions.

7. Chen, 39.

8. John R. McRae et al., "The Historical Legacy of Religion in China," *Journal of Chinese Religions*, no. 17 (Fall, 1989): 112.