CHAPTER TWELVE

DAOIST ORDINATIONS AND *ZHAI* RITUALS IN MEDIEVAL CHINA

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DESCRIPTION

Ritual played an enormous role in the Daoist religion. The number of liturgies in the Daoist canon, both as independent works and as passages in scriptures, codes and hagiographies is enormous. There were rituals for virtually all aspects of the priests' and parishioners' lives from use of the privy, conjugal relations and household exorcisms to sermons, meditation and alchemical processes. Furthermore, new liturgies emerged throughout history to accommodate social, political and religious changes. Needless to say, full coverage of this topic is well beyond the scope of a short survey. Consequently, this study has confined itself to ordinations and the great *zhai* of Daoism as practiced between 400 and 1000.

Daoist ordination (*chuanshou* 傳授, *shoudu* 授度) was the liturgical confirmation for the transmission or bestowal of a canon by preceptors to students. The notion of transmission was at least as old as Confucius (551-479 B.C.E.) who considered himself to be a transmitter, not an originator and gathered students around him to pass on the wisdom of the sages who lived in the golden age of the past. He was the founder of the teacher-pupil relationship that dominated pedagogy in ancient China.

In the Daoist religion the procedures for transmitting scriptures were far more elaborate than their earlier, secular counterparts. They derived, in part, from the *fangshi* 方士 (magicians) who flourished in the second and third centuries. One of the earliest descriptions of the magician's textual bestowals appears in the works of Ge Hong 葛洪 (383-343) who received esoteric, alchemical works from his master Zheng Yin 鄭隱 around the year 300. After earning his master's trust by performing menial tasks—sweeping and sprinkling—and impressing Zheng with his intelligence and talents, Hong received a transmission of three texts from Zheng at an altar after forging a covenant (*meng* 盟). Zheng Yin himself had received these works from Hong's uncle Ge Xuan 葛玄 (third century) who, in turn, had

acquired them from an eminent magician to whom a god had revealed them on a mountain (*Baopuzi*, CT 1185, 4.2a-b, 19.1b-3b; Ware 1966, 69-70, 310-312).

When Daoists set about the task of constructing ordination liturgies in the fifth and sixth centuries, they adopted the basic principles of Zheng Yin's bestowals. However, by that time, notions of scripture and their transmissions had changed and become more complicated. Daoists of that time believed that scriptures originated before the beginning of the cosmos as coagulations of *qi* 氣 (ethers, gases, energies, clouds, breaths, etc.) that the Dao engendered. The highest gods then had those vaporous scripts engraved on jade tablets in gold lettering and stored them in celestial archives. Periodically the deities removed the holy writs and bestowed them on their divine courtiers. When a mortal who had demonstrated his worthiness to receive the scriptures appeared on earth, the celestial sovereigns, one of the perfected or an immortal descended to earth and revealed the texts to the saint. The recipient became the founder of a new Daoist order in the mundane world. Thus the sanctity of the scriptures derived from their nature as concrete manifestations of cosmogonic energy, their circulation among the divine powers in celestial realms, and their bestowal on men or women by the grace of the gods (*Zhenwen tianshu jing*, CT 22, 1.1a-7a; Robinet 1993, 19-28).

Zhai 齋 rituals in medieval Daoism were formal court audiences with the gods. The term *zhai* has been rendered "fast," "retreat," "purification," "ceremony" and so on. None of these is satisfactory for the term's usage in medieval Daoist ritual. To emphasize the unique character of Daoist *zhai*, I propose to use a completely new rendition and in this paper will refer to them as *levees*. This adopts a term from French court ritual that, like *zhai*, referred to a formal audience held under special circumstances, for specific purposes and accompanied by various formal and purificatory measures.

As the offices of medieval Daoist clergy, the levees evolved from earlier state rites. If classical Chinese philosophy was largely political in character, so was the Daoist religion in medieval times. The sources for the concepts and practices that were the basis of the priesthood and its rituals were the imperial ideology and religion that reached their maturity in the Han dynasty. The clergy were the heirs to the traditions of the bureaucracy. As mandarins they were both masters and servitors. In those older Han practices the term *zhai* meant fasts. Fasts were preliminary procedures that the emperor or his officials undertook to prepare themselves for performing sacrifices. They entailed withdrawing into seclusion, bathing, and meditating as well as abstaining from eating meat or drinking rice wine and engaging in sexual intercourse. As acts of purification they elevated officiants to a state of grace so that they could confront the gods at altars.

After the advent of Daoism the term retained this sense. Its codes and rules required fasts for visiting preceptors to make inquiries, copying scriptures, drawing talismans and concocting elixirs among other things. However, in the fifth century, the word acquired a new meaning when Daoists compiled liturgies for their major rituals. It came to stand for the actual rites of worship, not the preliminary procedures of seclusion, meditation and abstention. The form, content, language and ideology in the rites of worship developed in large measure from imperial audiences, the levees, at which officials appeared before the emperor to report and request on important occasions (*Yujing baojue*, CT 425, 15b; *Keyi jielü chao*, CT 463, j. 8; Malek 1985; Yamada 1994).

History and Hierarchy

EARLY DEVELOPMENTS. Penitents smeared yellow mud on their brows. Then they undid their hair and tied it to the poles and railings of an altar erected on bare earth. Placing their hands behind their backs, they bound them together. Taking a jade disk in their mouths they laid face down on the ground, spread their legs three feet apart and struck their heads on the earth to repent and seek forgiveness for sins. The penitents performed the rite for six hours facing west during the day and six hours facing north during the night. This frenzied ritual took place three times yearly during the festivals of the Three Primes (*sanyuan* 三元) held in the first, seventh and tenth moons (*Lingbao wen*, CT 1278, 7b; Maspero 1981, 381-86).

The objective of this penitential, the Mud and Soot Levee (*tutan zhai* 塗炭齋), was to acquire the remission of sins, not only for the penitents, but also for hundreds of thousands of their ancestors, parents, uncles, and brothers—living and dead. Its merit derived from "suffering restraint" (*kujie* 苦節), that is mortifying the flesh and fettering the body. The penitents expressed their contrition by placing themselves in the most abject state—binding their hands like condemned criminals, undoing their hair like madmen, soiling their faces like beggars and beating their brows on the ground like lackeys. In the writ of annunciation (*qi* 啓) from a liturgy (*yi* 儀) for this rite in the *Wushang biyao* 無上秘要 encyclopedia of the late sixth century, the officiant declared that he and his congregation were malodorous, filthy insects, the most insignificant and base of all creatures. Priests and penitents depicted themselves as groveling supplicants so that their misery and servility would evoke sympathy from the gods who would then grant them, their kinsmen and ancestors pardons for their transgressions (*Wushang biyao*, 50.1a; Kohn 1993, 108).

Daoan 道安, a Buddhist monk of the sixth century, credited **Zhang Lu** 張路, the third of the founding Celestial Masters who ruled a Daoist state in Sichuan during the late second and early third centuries, with creating the Mud and Soot Levee. Healing the sick was the duty of Zhang's priests, the Libationers (*jijiu* 祭酒). They accomplished their task by writing three copies of a confession in which the ill declared their desire to repent. The first was dispatched to the Sovereign of Heaven by depositing it on a mountain top, the second to the Sovereign of Earth by burying it underground and the third to the Sovereign of the Waters by sinking it in a river. These three deities were the Three Primes on whose festivals the Mud and Soot Levee was performed. Zhang's penitential practices unquestionably laid the foundation for this rite as well as several other levees in medieval Daoism, but it is highly unlikely that the rite described above originated with the early Celestial Masters. To the contrary, **Lu Xiujing** 陸修靜 (406-477) wrote the earliest description of the ritual more than two centuries after the fall of Zhang Lu's state. Furthermore, the only surviving liturgy for executing the levee in the *Wushang biyao* bears the indelible imprint of Lingbao Daoism that emerged around 400. All of the documents in that text—its annunciations, incantations (*zhu* 祝), precepts (*jie* 戒) and vows (*yuan* 願) are citations from Lingbao scriptures (*Erjiao lun*, T. 2103, 12b; *Wushang biyao* 50; Kobayashi 1992).

All the evidence indicates that Daoist levees as known throughout the medieval period originated in the late fourth and fifth centuries, not earlier, with the "revealed" Lingbao scriptures. Lu Xiujing, who compiled liturgies for six of the rituals—including one for the Mud and Soot Levee—that are now lost, appears to have been the first major codifier of them. Lu also performed the Mud and Soot Levee with his followers repeatedly for several months during the winter and spring of 453-454. The frost, snow and gales at the time intensified the misery of the ritual mortification of flesh endured by the participants (*Lingbao wugan wen*, CT 1278, 1b; Chen 1962, 1: 43, Bell 1987).

The task that fell to Daoists of the **fifth and sixth centuries** was to organize the legacy of revealed scriptures that had emerged during the formative period of the religion between 142 to 400. Acting in accordance with the strictly stratified character of their society and the imperial bureaucracy, they chose to construct a hierarchy of ascending prestige for the sets of holy writs. In general, they assigned the oldest texts, Celestial Master works and the *Daode jing*, to the lowest ranks, and the newest, the Linbao and Shangqing canons, to the highest. Since ordination was the ritual transmission of scriptures by preceptors to students, the degrees of investitures and the grades of priests (distinguished by particular styles of liturgical vestments) conformed to the status of their scriptures in the hierarchy. The most elaborate delineation of investiture ranks appears in the *Fengdao ke-*

jie 奉道科戒 (Rules and Precepts for Daoist Worship, CT 1125), completed in 620 or earlier. Naturally, the codifiers also relegated levees to the same tiers in the hierarchy as the scriptures and ordinations to which they were affiliated. Lu Xiujing composed the oldest, surviving hierarchy of liturgies, and therefore scriptures and orders, in the *Lingbao wugan wen* 靈寶五感文 (Five Lingbao Writs of Arousal, CT 1278). Most of the liturgies for levees originated or were systematized about that time (*Fengdao kejie*, CT 1125, 4.5a-5.2b; *Lingbao wugan wen*, 4b-7a; Benn 1991, 72-98).

ORDINATION HIERARCHY. The lowest tier in the hierarchy was occupied by the ***Zhengyi jing*** 正一經 (The Canon of Orthodox-Unity). On June 11 of 142 Lord Lao, Laozi deified, descended to Mount Heming in modern Sichuan and bestowed the Dao on Zhang Daoling 張道陵. What Zhang purportedly received during that revelation is not at all clear since various sources supply different titles. The *Zhengyi jing* (now lost), the text transmitted at Celestial Master ordinations in the sixth century, claimed that Zhang received five texts in 1,502 fascicles. This is obviously an exaggeration that was probably intended to magnify the order's importance in an age when it had lost prestige to other Daoist orders. Judging from comments made in medieval texts, the early Celestial Master corpus included talismans (*fu* 符), registers or rosters (*lu* 籙), rules (*ke* 科), petitions (*zhang* 章), injunctions (*jin* 禁), precepts (*jie* 戒) , codes (*lü* 律) and contracts (*qi* 契; *Laojun yinsong jiejing*, CT 785; *Daomen kelue*, CT 1127, 1a; *Daojiao yishu*, CT 1129, 2.9a-11b; *Keyi jielü chao*, 1.1a; *Chisongzi zhangli*, CT 615, 1.1a; see Yang 1956; Chen 1962, 2: 351).

During the medieval period the Celestial Master order was responsible for inducting juveniles into the faith. Its priests conferred a command (*gengling* 更令) on children six years of age that parents accepted on their behalf. This writ contained the titles of nine types of divine functionaries and warriors. Thereafter children received a series of four registers entitled respectively one, ten, seventy-five and 150 Generals as they grew to maturity. The initiates received the registers either at fixed ages or by acquiring merit. These writs possessed apotropaic powers. Recipients attached them to their belts to control and impede demons as well as to beseech external gods or marshal energies (*qi*) and deities from within their bodies Initiation also entailed the conferral of the Three and Eight Precepts that youths received either before or concurrently with registers. The initiation and ordination rituals for all other Daoists orders also included bestowals of registers and administrations of precepts (*Zhengyi wailu yi*, CT 1243; *Zhengyi mengwei lu*, CT 1208, 1.1a-12a; *Daomen kelue*, 5b; *Sandong Zhunang*, 6.3b; *Chuanshou jingjie falu lueshuo*, CT 1241, 1.3b-4a; *Keyi jielü chao*, 10.5b-7b; Chen 1962, 2: 352-59; Seidel 1983, 323-33; Schipper 1985, 131-35; Benn 1991, 73-78).

There were four steps to Celestial Master ordinations during which ordinands received an additional thirty-one registers, a set of 180 precepts, the *Zhengyi jing* in twenty-seven fascicles and two collections of 1200 and 360 petitions. Petitions, the oldest Orthodox Unity writs that may date as early as the late Han dynasty, were the most important liturgical instruments employed by Celestial Master Libationers. These documents were the means by which the clergy implored the gods to carry out tasks—making rain, eradicating rats and locust, curing epilepsy and toothaches, releasing prisoners from jails and the like. Priests wrote them out while burning incense in their parishes and submitted them to the gods to promote the welfare of their congregations (*Dengzhen yinjue*, CT 421, 3.11b-14a; Cedzich 1987; *Fengdao kejie* 4.5b-6b; *Keyi jielü chao*, 10.8a-14b; *Chisongzi zhangli*, j. 3; see Benn 1991, 79-81; Penny 1996; Hendrischke 1996).

By the middle of the fifth century, Celestial Master rituals embraced two levees, the Mud and Soot Levee and the Levee for Direction and Instruction (*zhijiao zhai* 指教齋). Unlike the Mud and Soot Levee, participation in which was apparently open to all parishioners, the Levee for Direction and Instruction was reserved for Libationers and their students called register pupils (*lusheng* 籙生). Although a liturgy for this rite called for head banging and brow beating as acts of repentance, indoctrination appears to have been the main purpose of the ritual—the regulations called for meditating on scriptures and reciting precepts (*Zhengyi zhijiao zhaiyi*, CT 799).

Dongyuan jing 洞淵經 (The Canon of the Cavern-Deep). At the end of the Western Jin, around 316, the Most-Exalted Lord of the Dao, accompanied by a host of retainers descended in a blaze of light to the courtyard of Wang Zuan's 王纂 meditation chamber. There the deity bestowed the *Dongyuan shenzhou jing* 洞淵神祝經 (Scripture of Divine Incantations from the Cavern-Deep) on Wang whose humane concern for the victims of the anarchy, famines and epidemics that raged in north China at the time made him worthy to receive it. The tradition of the revelation to Wang was a myth. The first fascicle of the text was composed between 420 and 479 and fascicles two to ten in the late fifth or sixth century. This no doubt accounts for the fact that Lu Xiujing does not mention a levee for this order in his hierarchy of rituals (*Dongyuan shenzhou jing*, CT 335, preface; see Mollier 1991).

A rite for transmitting the scripture with a tally (*quan* 卷), register, illustration (*tu* 圖) and petition appeared by the end of the sixth century, but no liturgy for performing the order's investiture has survived in the Daoist canon (*Fengdao kejie* 4.6b; Benn 1991, 81-82).

The *Dongyuan shenzhou jing* is an apocalyptical text that envisions a world besieged by homicidal specters and demons, most of whom dispatch their victims by propagating diseases. It supplies vivid descriptions of ghosts that come in all shapes and sizes. There are wraiths with two, three or twelve

heads, three-legs, vertical eyes, red noses and three faces with one eye. These fiends execute their murderous missions in a variety of ways. Drowning specters, three feet two inches tall, slay men in rivers. White-headed spooks, who have black faces and white hair, stand thirty feet tall and spread ninety types of diseases. The demons often wield red staves, striking their victims who then sicken and die. They do not attack all people, only evil men who are unbelievers, the godless, slanderers of Daoist priests and malingers of scriptures (*Dongyuan shenzhou jing*, CT 335, 1.5b, 2.5b, 6.3b, 6.4ab, 7.1b, 7.3b, 8.2b, 9.5b, 9.10.5b).

This scripture is an exorcistic text whose function is to bind, expel or slay the murderous demons. In its first fascicle, it contends that mere recitation of it will destroy the specters. In later parts it advocates performing a great levee to accomplish the same end. Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933) composed the oldest surviving liturgies for its levees. One of them contains an address to the gods requesting that they gather in and eradicate thirteen varieties of ghosts. These fiends not only cause diseases, but lunar eclipses, nightmares, and jealousy among other things. Du also recorded four miracles that occurred when priests in the ninth century used the *Shenzhou jing* during famines, epidemics and rebellions in his *Daojiao lingyan ji* 道教靈驗記 (Records of Supernatural Confirmations for the Daoist Religion, CT 590; see *Dongyuan shenzhou jing*, CT 335, 1.4b,10.5b; *Dongyuan shenzhou zhaiyi*, CT 526, 6a-7b; *Daojiao lingyan ji*, CT 590, 8.7b-8b, 12.9b-10a, 15.1a-2a, 15.4a-5b).

Taixuan jing 太玄經 (The Canon of Greatest-Mystery). When Laozi became disillusioned with the decadence of the Zhou court, he abandoned his post as archivist and journeyed westward. On arriving at the Hangu Checkpoint 函谷關, he encountered Yin Xi 尹喜, its guard. Yin pleaded with him to put his ideas in writing so the sage composed the *Daode jing* in five thousand words. This text was the only work incorporated into the hierarchy of Daoist scriptures and ordinations that predated the advent of the Daoist religion. The oldest record of its transmission dates from the second century B.C.E. In the second century, the *Daode jing* that previously had been a secular classic, assumed a new role as a religious scripture. This transformation in its status resulted from the deification of Laozi and the adoption of the text by the Celestial Masters who required their congregations to recite it as an act of piety. From that time on, new and more elaborate myths about Laozi emerged, and new scriptures purportedly revealed by him appeared (SDZN, 8: 28b; see Seidel 1969).

By the sixth century, the canon transmitted at investitures for this order embraced fourteen texts in twenty fascicles. It included not only the *Daode jing*, but also five new scriptures, annotations and exegesis on the *Daode jing*, hagiographies of Laozi and Yin Xi, the Register of the Purple Palace (*zigong lu* 紫宮籙) and a set of precepts. At some point in the late fifth or sixth century, moreover, the character of the canon changed. An unknown

editor eliminated some of the titles and combined the remaining texts into a single work entitled the *Taixuan jing*. His purpose was apparently to provide a single, coherent text for transmission to ordinands at investitures. The eighth fascicle of the scripture was a liturgy for ordinations that has survived in the *Daozang*, while the tenth contains a liturgy for executing a levee that is not extant (*Fengdao kejie* 4.6b-7a; *Chuanshou jingjie falu lueshuo* 1.5a; *Chuanshou jingjie yi*, CT 1238, 5b-13a; *Chuanshou daode jing zixu luyi*, CT 808; see Benn 1991, 82-87).

The function served by the Levee of the Five Thousand Words (*wuqianwen zhai* 五千文齋), as it was sometimes called, is unclear. Although several texts mention it, none of them offer any description of it, and no liturgy for performing it has survived in the Daoist canon.

Dongshen jing 洞神經 (The Canon of the Cavern-Divine). The core texts for this canon were the *Sanhuang wen* 三皇文 (Writs of the Three Sovereigns), and there were two legends of its revelation. According to the first, Wang Fangping 王方平 instructed Bo He 帛和 (fl. 300), his student, to stare at the north wall of a grotto on Mount Emei in modern Sichuan, promising that the graphs of the writs would appear there. After gazing at the rocks for three years Bo was able to discern writings that the ancients had engraved on them. He erected an altar, left a pledge (*xin* 信) of silk, copied the texts and departed. According to the second, on March 7 of 292 (or 301), the writs spontaneously carved themselves on the walls of Lord Liu's grotto at Mount Song near Luoyang while Bao Jing 鮑靚 was fasting and meditating there. In keeping with stipulations in the writs, Bao deposited a pledge of pongee 400 feet in length and then copied them after forging a covenant (*Baopuzi* 19.8b, 20.9b; see Ware 1966, 314, 328; *Dongshen badi jing*, CT 640, 12b; *Daojiao yishu*, CT 1129, 2.6b-7a; *Yunji qiqian* 4.10b-11a; Chen 1962, 1: 71-76; Benn-1991, 87-92).

Although the legend of Bo He and his writs played a role in later traditions about the *Sanhuang wen*, it was Bao Jing's version of the texts that formed the basis of the Cavern-Divine Canon. In 666 the throne proscribed the *Sanhuang wen* on the grounds that they were seditious and had them burned. However, copies of them have survived in the *Daozang*. With time the writs acquired additional occult and liturgical materials that were combined with them to form a single scripture. Lu Xiujing had a version of the Cavern-Divine Scripture in twelve fascicles. When it passed down to the eminent Shangqing patriarch Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536), the text had grown to thirteen fascicles (*Sandong zhunang* 6.13b-14a; *Daomen dingzhi*, CT 1224, 4.1a-7b; Chen 1962, 1: 77).

By the fifth century ordination at this level of the priesthood entailed the transmission of a single scripture, the *Dongshen jing* in fourteen fascicles. The first three fascicles of the text contained the *Sanhuang wen* and materials relating to them. The following eight fascicles encompassed talismans and

other occult writs concerning eight mythical sovereigns (*badi* 八帝) who used the writs to rule in the epochs after the Three Sovereigns. The final three fascicles were liturgies for a levee, an audience (*chaoli* 朝禮) and the transmission of the scripture. The registers, talismans, precepts, tallies, contracts, seals and other items that ordinands received at investitures were probably excerpts from the scripture (*Fengdao kejie* 4.7b-8a; *Dongshen badi jing* 16b-17a; 1284; *Dongshen sanhuang yi*, CT 803; *Dongshen shoudu yi*, CT 1283; *Chuanshou jingjie falu lueshuo* 1.7a; see Benn 1991, 87-92; Andersen 1991).

Of all Daoist levees, the **Levee of the Three Sovereigns** (*sanhuang zhai*) had the closest affinities with the older mythology and religion of China. The deities to which it was addressed, the Sovereigns of Heaven, Earth and Humanity, constituted an ancient trinity, not that established by the Celestial Masters who substituted the Sovereign of the Waters for the ruler of humanity. More importantly, the form of worship for the rite was a sacrifice, specifically an offering (*jiao* 醮) of alcohol, fruit and meat. This was the standard practice in state and popular religions, but not in the levees of other Daoist orders. Officiants at the Levee of the Three Sovereigns penned the Writs of the Three Sovereigns in red ink on banners and displayed them at three tables on the north, east-north-east and west-south-west sides of an altar. They also placed lamps, a platter with nine jujubes (Chinese dates) and a beaker holding three pints of rice wine on each of the tables. In addition, they installed another thirty-six lamps, platters of fruit, beakers of wine and vessels containing meat around the altar. The rules prescribed one or three days for performing the rite. In the latter case, the obligatory offering consisted of 405 jujubes, 135 pints of rice wine and forty-five pieces of jerky. In the former case, the quantities were one-third of that amount.

The central rituals of this levee, that took place in the middle of the night, were three libations to the sovereigns. As the priest poured out the rice wine, he uttered prayers requesting that the Sovereign of Heaven obliterate the figure for the number of years of life originally granted him in their records and inscribe his name in the celestial ledgers of the immortals; that the Sovereign of Earth release his body from the offices of the subterranean world and erase his name from the ledgers of the dead; and that the Sovereign of Humanity prolong his age past the normal life span granted men. In short, the function of the rite was to elicit the intercession of the gods to secure longevity and immortality for the priest (*Lingbao wugan wen* 6b-7a; *Wushang biyao* 49).

When Lu Xiujing catalogued Daoist scriptures in the fifth century, he applied the label "Cavern" to the three most prestigious canons, creating a boundary between them and texts of lower esteem. The Cavern-Divine

was the first and lowest of the Caverns and transmission of its scripture marked a priest's ascension to the higher echelons of the clergy.

Dongxuan jing 洞玄經 (The Canon of the Cavern-Mystery). The Celestial Venerable of Primordial Commencement (Yuanshi tianzun 元始天尊) decided it was time to reveal the Lingbao scriptures to a mortal and ordered the Most-Exalted Lord of the Dao (Taishang daojun 太上道君) to dispatch his subordinates to transmit it. Three of the perfected descended with a cortege of 1,000 carriages, an escort of 10,000 cavaliers, a retinue of immortal lads and jade maids in the millions, a pride of lions, and flocks of phoenixes, simurghs and white cranes. This host landed on Mt. Tiantai in modern Zhejiang Province where the perfected bestowed the scriptures on Ge Xuan sometime between 238 and 251. Ge had made himself worthy of receiving the holy writs by suffering through innumerable reincarnations and having compassionately vowed to strive for the salvation of all mankind.

This tradition is obviously a fabrication since it is based on Buddhist notions of samâsra and bodhisattva compassion that Daoists did not adopt until the late fourth century. Actually the Lingbao canon first emerged around 400 when Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫, a descendant of Ge Xuan, transmitted the oldest of the texts to his disciples (*Quanjie falun miaojing*, CT 346, 1b-2a; *Yunji qiqian* 3.9a-11b; see Chen 1962, 1: 66-71; Bokenkamp 1983,1986; Kohn 1993, 44-48).

Ordination at this level of the priesthood entailed the transmission of twenty-five scriptures in thirty fascicles. Officiants also bestowed an additional fifteen texts in sixteen fascicles including liturgies for bestowing scriptures—the Annunciation of the Covenants—and performing Lingbao levees on ordinands. The Lingbao investiture was a tripartite ritual. The first phase, the Initial Covenant (*chumeng* 初盟), was a rite for Rending the Tally (*fenquan* 分卷) that established the ordinand's official status with the gods. The second, the Middle Covenant (*zhongmeng* 中盟), was a performance of the Nocturnal Annunciation (*suqi* 宿啓), a declaration to the gods that was also an essential element of Lingbao levees. The third, the Grand Covenant (*dameng* 大盟), was a conferral of 180 precepts (*Lingbao chishu yigue miaojing*, CT 352, j. 1; *Lingbao zhongjian wen*, CT 410; *Lingbao shoudu yi*, CT 528; *Fengdao kejie* 4.8a-9b; *Chuanshou jingjie falu lueshuo* 1.8a; *Wushang biyao* 39; see Benn 1991; Kohn 1993, 100-6).

Liturgically speaking, the Lingbao order was the most important in medieval Daoism. It was not only responsible for performing the largest number of levees, six, but its scriptures were the sources of many ritual procedures that appeared in the levees of other orders.

The **Levee of Spontaneity** (*ziran zhai* 自然齋) was a rite for internal self-cultivation and external salvation of all things. Salvation here meant beseeching the gods for the elimination of disasters and praying to them for

peace and prosperity. A single priest or group of them performed the rite for six or twelve hours from one to a thousand days. The central ritual was a series of venerations in which the officiant requested expiation of sins from the Deities of the Ten Directions, gods that Buddhism introduced to China (*Lingbao wugan wen* 6b; *Ziran zhaiyi*, CT 523).

The **Levee of the Eight Nodes** (*bajie zhai* 八節齋) took place on the first days of the four seasons, the equinoxes and the solstices. Those were critical times in the cyclical rise and fall of cosmic powers: yin, yang and the four elements. On those occasions priests performed this rite in their levee halls (*zhaitang* 齋堂) for twelve hours. Like the Levee of Spontaneity, the ritual consisted of obeisances to the Deities of the Ten Directions, but its primary function was to expiate sins that the officiant and seven generations of his ancestors had committed in past and present lives (*Lingbao wugan wen* 6b; *Bajie zhaiyi*, CT 1296).

The **Levee of the Three Primes** (*sanyuan zhai* 三元齋) was a rite of redemption during which priests sought pardon from the gods for their own violations of precepts and lapses in their study of scriptures. Three times yearly at midnight on the full moon of the first, seventh and tenth lunar months—the festivals of the Three Primes—they executed the levee for six hours in their levee halls. The priests addressed their repentances to twenty-one deities: the Gods of the Ten Directions; the sun, moon, stars and constellations; the Five Marchmounts; and the Three Treasures (*Sanyuan xiezui shangfa*, CT 417; *Lingbao wugan wen* 6ab; *wushang biyao* 52).

The **Levee of the Covenant with the Perfected** (*mingzhen zhai* 明真齋) took place on open ground in the courtyard of a home for twelve hours in the course of one day and one night. There priests installed a lamp-tree nine feet tall with nine cups of oil. When lit, the light of the nine fires shone on the Nine Heavens above and the nine dark sectors of hell below. The objective of the rite was to extricate the souls of innumerable ancestors who had languished in perdition for millions of kalpas. Although the ancestors mentioned in its writs included those of the officiant, hermit priests dwelling in mountains and officials, the clergy actually performed it for the dead of the family that sponsored it. Through a series of venerations to the Gods of the Ten Directions involving kowtowing and brow beating, the officiant begged for the release of the souls from hell, their liberation from the consequences of their karma, entry into the light, rebirth, acquisition of immortality, and ascension to the chamber of bliss in the heavens above (*Mingzhen ke*, CT 1411, 15b-24b; *Lingbao wugan wen* 6a; *Wushang biyao* 51; *Mingzhen dazhai yangong yi*, CT 521; see Chavannes 1919, 172-214).

The Yellow Roster Levee (*huanglu zhai* 黃籙齋) was, like the preceding, a rite of salvation for ancestors, but differed from it because it sought the release of souls from perdition and their ascension to heaven for nine generations only and required the establishment of an altar. The altar,

erected in a central courtyard, was a square, two-tiered affair with fourteen gates and nine lamp-trees each having nine cups of oil. The deities addressed in the course of the levee were the same twenty-one as those venerated in the Levee of the Three Primes, but the nature of the ritual was different. At each of the stations for the Deities of the Ten Directions the officiant made offerings, gages, of silk and gold dragons. Those pledges served as assurances for covenants sworn with the gods. The rules set fixed quantities for them based on the social status of the levee's sponsors. Commoners had to submit 136 feet of cloth, nobles 1,360 feet and the emperor 136 rolls. The weight of each gold dragon was one ounce for the emperor, but less for nobles and commoners. When the officiant uttered his prayers at each of the ten stations, he presented a single dragon and varying lengths of silk. The pledges possessed apotropaic powers that repelled evil specters intent on attacking the altar in the course of the rite. For the remaining eleven gods the priest merely offered incense. At the conclusion of the rite, the officiant distributed the silk in order to acquire merit for the dead. The gold dragons were tossed in rivers and buried on mountains to secure the salvation and immortality of the sponsor and/or the officiant (*Lingbao wugan wen* 6a; *Wushang biyao* 54; *Huanglu zhaiyi*, CT 507; *Huanglu dazhai licheng yi*, CT 508, j. 16; see Maspero 1981, 292-97).

The Gold Roster Levee (*jinlu zhai* 金籙齋) was the most powerful Daoist rite in medieval times. It was capable of tempering yin and yang to prevent natural calamities and to protect or save the emperor. The natural calamities included erroneous astral movements, epidemics, floods, holocausts and anything unpropitious. Protecting the emperor encompassed the suppression of rebellions, pacification of the people and perpetuation of dynastic rule. The altar for this rite was exactly the same as that for the Yellow Roster Levee except that the number of lamp-trees was far greater, from ninety to 1,200. The number of those accouterments depended partly on the season during which the rite was performed, but also on the tolerance of its sponsor who was the ruler of the empire. Its liturgy called for obeisances to the Deities of the Ten Directions, but only the first five of those, the Gods of the Five Directions (i.e., elements)— wood/east, fire/south, soil/center, metal/west, and water/north—counted. These were the deities of the Lingbao's True Writs (*zhen-wen* 真文). Officiants penned the writs on silk dyed the appropriate colors of the five directions (azure, red, yellow, white, and black), displayed them prominently on five tables at the altar and burned the cloth at the conclusion of the ceremony. Incineration imbued the cosmos with the powers of the elements (*Zhenwen tianshu jing* 1.7b-30a; *Lingbao zhaijie yaojue*, CT 532, 1a-7a; *Lingbao wugan wen* 5b-6a; *Wushang biyao* 53; *Jinlu zhai qitan yi*, CT 483; see Robinet 1997, 166-77).

Lingbao scriptures were so instrumental in the formation of Daoist rituals during the fifth century that Lu Xiujing subsumed all lower rituals,

excluding the Celestial Masters' Mud and Soot Levee, under the rubric "the nine procedures for Lingbao levees" (*Lingbao wugan wen* 5b).

Dongzhen jing 洞真經 (The Canon of the Cavern-Perfected). On February 22 of 364, the Perfected Wei Huacun 魏華存 appeared to Yang Xi 楊羲 in the vicinity of Nanjing where she began revealing the Shangqing scriptures to him. For the next seven years she and other immortals transmitted more than ten scriptures and hagiographies as well as more than forty fascicles of oral instructions to Yang during nocturnal visions. Of all Daoist revelations that occurred between 142 and 400 this was the only one that was well-documented and may actually have been the product of true ecstatic experience (*Zhen'gao*, CT 1016, j. 1-4, 19.2b-4a, 20.9b-10a, 20.11a-12a; see Strickmann 1977, 3, 41-42; Strickmann 1981, 82-88; Robinet 1984, 1: 107-9).

As with other Daoist canons, the *Dongzhen* grew between the time of its revelation and the end of the sixth century. By 600, the corpus that ordinands received during investitures encompassed thirty-four scriptures in forty-one fascicles, seven hagiographies in seven fascicles, two collections of oral instructions (*jue* 訣) and other materials in thirty-six fascicles, and five liturgies in seven fascicles. Two of the latter included rituals for performing ordinations and three for executing levees. The liturgies for the levees and a truncated version of the investiture rite have survived in the *Wushang biyao*. The transmission of the scriptures at Shangqing investitures took place the morning after the Nocturnal Revelation (*sulu* 宿露), a rite similar to the Lingbao's Nocturnal Annunciation (*Fengdao kejie* 4.9b-5.2b; *Wushang biyao* 40; see Benn 1991, 95-97).

In the fifth century the Shangqing order had no levees of its own. Its ordination was a rite of passage within the priesthood that marked ascension to a higher state of spirituality. In **Lu Xiujing**'s delineation of Daoist rituals he states that all lower Daoist orders took action or levees as their foundation while the Shangqing took nonaction as its guiding principle. He lists two methods for accomplishing the latter, but they differ only in the texts that priests recited during them. According to his notions, nonaction specifically meant that, after practicing embryonic breathing (*taixi* 胎息), an adept gazed into his mind to find marvelous insight. The ultimate objective in "nonactive" meditation was to abandon form and forget the body so that the adept could join in nothingness with the mystery, the Dao. This nonaction required rejection of social relationships—friendships and marriage—as well as the adherence to certain dietary regimes. In rituals, it served as a means of erasing visualizations. In the course of rites, officiants used visualizations to send forth the gods of their bodies and evoke cosmic energies from their internal organs to perform external duties. Afterward it was necessary for the priest to "anesthetize the gods" (*mianshen* 眠神) and "quiet the energies" (*jingqi* 靜氣), that is to deactivate them This meant that the

adept cleared his mind of all the images that he had created (*Lingbao wugan wen* 5a-b).

Circumstances changed after Lu Xiujing's time, and by the middle of the fifth century the Shangqing order had acquired a set of its own levees. The **Supreme-Perfected's Levee of the Lower Prime** (*taizhen xiayuan zhai* 太真下元齋), addressed to the Sovereign of Humanity, lasted three days. It consisted of fifteen obeisances made at different points of the compass. At each station the officiant recited a plea requesting the gods to liberate seven generations of his ancestors, cause their souls to live again, release them from punishment by fire, blood and knife in hell as well as from rebirth as animals, hungry ghosts or men, and enable them to ascend as immortals to the Southern Palace in the heavens.

The Supreme-Perfected's Levee of the **Middle Prime** (*taizhen zhongyuan zhai* 太真中元齋), addressed to the Sovereign of Earth, lasted six days. During it the priest performed double obeisances and recited five pleas facing the five directions. In them he asked the gods to forgive him for sins that he had committed in former lives and violations of rules and precepts that he was guilty of in his present life.

The Supreme-Perfected's Levee of the **Upper Prime** (*taizhen shangyuan zhai* 太真上元齋), addressed to the Sovereign of Heaven, lasted nine days. The officiant performed audience rites and recited pleas at six points of the compass. In his prayers he asked the gods to have an elixir concocted and gold fabricated. By so doing, he could become an immortal, fly aloft into the mysterious void of great space and ascend to the Palace of the Gold Gate Towers (Jinque gong 金闕宮) in Heaven. The number of participants at these rites was small, three to nine, and the levee took place indoors. They were not rituals performed for the welfare of the community, public or the state. Instead the priest executed them for his own benefit. (*Wushang biyao* 55-57).

TEXTS

ORDINATION. ***Chuanshou jingjie falu lueshuo*** 傳授經戒法籙略說 (A Synopsis of Transmissions and Bestowals for Scriptures, Precepts, and Liturgical Registers, CT 1241, 2 j.), by Zhang Wanfu 張萬福 (fl. 700-742), dat. January 1 of 713. Next to the *Fengdao kejie* described below, this is the most valuable survey of Daoist ordinations for the medieval period. Part one defines the ranks in the hierarchy of investitures according to sixteen sets of precepts administered to initiates and ordinands and describes the materials transmitted at the ordinations for Zhengyi, Taixuan, Dongshen

and Lingbao orders. In part two, Zhang comments on various occult writs, talismans and illustrations passed on during those rites. In part three, he supplies a glossary of terms relevant to investitures: pledges, oaths, cloth and the like. Zhang's accounts of the Lingbao and Shangqing ordinations for the Tang Princesses Gold-Immortal and Jade-Perfected are the only descriptions of actual investitures known to me (2.18a-21a). For details, see Benn 1991, 149-51; on Daoist investiture orders as reflected in Dunhuang manuscripts and the translation of the titles to sets of precepts in Zhang's text see Schipper 1985, 129-31.

Yujing baojue 玉經寶訣 (The Treasured Instructions of the Jade Scripture, CT 425, 20 folios [pages]), Lingbao canon, dat. fifth century. The procedures for transmitting the *Daode jing*, *Sanhuang wen*, the Lingbao canon and Shangqing scriptures here are older than the investiture rites of the fifth and sixth centuries (2a-3b). It speaks of occasions calling for levees, clacking the teeth to notify the gods, proofreading copies of scriptures and penalties for transcription errors (15b, 8a, 10b).

Zhengyi mengwei lu 正一盟威籙 (The Orthodox-Unity Registers of Covenantal Awe, CT 1208, 6 j.), author and date unknown. This text contains the major twenty-four Celestial Master Registers including the three that were bestowed on initiates (1.1a-12a).

Zhengyi wailu yi 正一外籙儀 (An Orthodox-Unity Liturgy for the Conferral of the Outer Rosters, CT 1243), author unknown, fifth or sixth century. The rules and writs for the transmission of the Celestial Master's Seventy-Five Generals Register to women and foreigners are supplied here.

Chuanshou jingjie yi 傳授經戒儀 (A Liturgy for Transmitting and Bestowing Scriptures and Precepts, CT 1238, 17 folios), author unknown, dat. about 618-649. This text was the eighth fascicle of the *Taixuan jing* (4b; *Sandong zhunang*, 5.5b, 6.1ab, 6.3b) that is now lost. It has a set of instructions for the bestowal of the *Daode jing* including notes on items transmitted, officiants at investitures and pledges (5b-17a). The table of contents for the *Taixuan jing* can be found there (4b-5a).

Lingbao shijie jing 靈寶十戒經 (The Lingbao Scripture of the Ten Precepts; CT 459, also P. 2347, P. 2350, S. 6454, P. 3770; 2 folios), author unknown, sixth century. These texts contain both the precepts and the covenantal writs for the initiation of Disciples of Pure Faith (*qingxin dizi* 清信弟子), recipients of the *Taixuan jing*.

Chuanshou Daode jing zixu lvyi 傳授道德經紫虛籙儀 (A Liturgy for Transmitting and Bestowing the *Daode jing* and the Register of Purple Vacuity, CT 808, 18 folios), by Du Guangting, ca. 900. Du's later version of the Taixuan ordination ritual has two lists of texts and other matter transmitted to ordinands (15b, 16a). Although the titles are basically the same as those given in CT 1125 and 1241, there are a few significant variations.

Dongshen badi jing 洞神八帝經 (The Cavern-Deep Scripture of the Eight Sovereigns, CT 640, 32 folios). This and CT 1202 are the only remnants of the *Dongshen jing* extant in the early sixth century. It contains rules for the transmission of the scripture (16b-17a).

Dongshen sanhuang yi 洞神三皇儀 (A Liturgy for the Three Sovereigns of the Cavern-Divine, CT 803, 7 folios), author unknown, dat. about 618-649. A list of the contents to the *Dongshen jing* can be found here (5ab) and a description of Rending the Tally as performed at Dongshen ordinations (7a).

Dongshen Sanhuang chuanshou yi 洞神三皇傳授儀 (A Cavern-Divine Liturgy for Transmitting and Bestowing the Writs of the Three Sovereigns, CT 1284, 16 folios) and *Dongshen shoudu yi* 洞神授度儀 (A Liturgy for Performing the Rite of Bestowal and Ordination for the Cavern-Divine Scripture, CT 1283, 15 folios) are ordination liturgies for the bestowal of the *Dongshen jing* that were probably compiled before 900.

Lingbao shoudu yi 靈寶授度儀 (A Liturgy for Lingbao Transmissions and Ordinations, CT 528, 52 folios), by Lu Xiujing, ca. 454. This is the oldest, longest and best of the ordination liturgies in the *Daozang*. It is also one of the earliest liturgies for executing a Lingbao levee (Benn 1991, 39-71, 121-36; Yamada 1995, 78-81). For other manuals on initiation and investiture, of post-Tang or unknown provenances, see CT 1126, 1231, 1236, 1237, 1239, 1244 and 1295. Accounts of modern investitures can be found in Schipper 1993, 67-71.

Zhenwen tianshu jing 真文天書經 (The Scripture of the True Writs in Celestial Script, CT 22, 3 j.), Lingbao canon, fifth century. The True Writs that officiants bestowed on ordinands during Lingbao investitures as well as a description of the origins of scriptures at the beginning of the cosmos and their transmission among the gods can be found on 1.1a-30a.

Lingbao zhongjian wen 靈寶眾簡文 (The Writs for All Lingbao Slips, CT 410, 13 folios), by Lu Xiujing, fifth century. This is one of the earliest liturgies for the transmission of the True Writs. Lu mentions the Three Covenants into which Lingbao investitures were divided here (1a).

Daoshi shou jingjie falu zeri li 道士受經戒法籙擇日曆 (A Schedule for Selecting the Days on which Daoist Priests Should Receive the Scriptures, Precepts and Liturgical Registers, CT 1240, 8 folios), by Zhang Wanfu, after 713. Zhang supplies the proper days for initiations and ordinations, beginning with the conferral of Celestial Master registers and concluding with the transmission of Shangqing scriptures (see Benn 1991, 146-48; Ren and Zhong 1991, 981-82).

Sanshi minghui wen 三師名諱文 (A Writ on the Taboo Names for the Three Preceptors, CT 445, 5 folios), by Zhang Wanfu, 710-713. Here Zhang supplies blank forms to be filled in by preceptors with the particulars of the names; titles and locations of home abbeys; parishes of

registration; and ages of the priests who were ordained and the officiants who presided over their investitures. Priests enunciated these formulas at the Rites of Homage to Preceptors that they performed before their rituals (see Benn 1991, 146-48; Ren and Zhong 1991, 330).

LEVEES. ***Lingbao wugan wen*** 靈寶五感文 (Five Lingbao Writs of Arousal, CT 1278, 7 folios), by Lu Xiujing, dat. 454. Lu's hierarchy of levees, the earliest, with brief descriptions of the rites is appended to this text (4b-7b; see Bell 1988).

Dengzhen yinjue 登真隱訣 (Secret Oral Instructions for Ascending to Perfection, CT 421, 3 j.), by Tao Hongjing, ca. 499. The earliest, datable Celestial Master liturgy for submitting petitions to the gods is preserved here (3.11b-14a; see Cedzich 1987; Seidel 1988).

Chisongzi zhangli 赤松子章曆 (Master Redpine's Calendar for Petitions, CT 615, 6 j.), author unknown, dat. Tang. Another liturgy for submitting Celestial Master petitions to the gods appears in this text as well as descriptions of the functions of those documents (see Nickerson 1997, 261-74).

Zhengyi zhijiao zhaiyi 正一指教齋儀 (A Liturgy for Performing the Orthodox-Unity's Levee of Direction and Instruction, CT 799, 6 folios), author and date unknown. This and CT 798 are the sole surviving liturgies for executing this Celestial Master ritual. It contains the twelve rules of the ritual (4a-5a).

Dongyuan shenzhou zhai xingdao yi 洞淵神咒齋行道儀 (A Cavern-Deep Liturgy for Performing the Levee of Divine Incantations, CT 526, 8 folios), by Du Guangting, ca. 900. For other Dongyuan liturgies, also composed by Du, see CT 525 and CT 527.

Lingbao chishu yujue miaojing 玄靈寶赤書玉訣妙經 (The Lingbao's Marvelous Scripture of Jade Instructions in Red Script, CT 352, 3 j.), Lingbao canon, fifth century. The elements that were drawn together to construct the Nocturnal Annunciation for Lingbao ordinations and levees can be found in the first fascicle of this scripture.

Lingbao zhaijie yaojue 靈寶齋戒要訣 (Essential Instructions for Lingbao Levees and Precepts, CT 532, 24 folios), Lingbao canon, fifth century. There are primitive versions of liturgies for performing a Lingbao levee (1a-7a) and transmitting the *Daode jing* (13ab) in this scripture.

Ziran zhaiyi 自然齋儀 (A Liturgy for the Levee of Spontaneity, CT 523, 6 folios), author and date unknown. This is the only liturgy for this Lingbao levee in the *Daozang*. It contains a statement on its function (2b).

Bajie zhaiyi 八節齋儀 (A Liturgy for the Lingbao Levee of the Eight Nodes, CT 1296, 9 folios), author and date unknown. This is the sole liturgy for performing this Lingbao levee in the *Daozang*. It specifies six hours of rituals and six hours of scriptural recitation in the course of a day and a night (5b).

Sanyuan xiezui shangfa 三元謝罪上法 (The Three Primes' Superior Method for the Expiation of Sins, CT 417, 16 folios), Lingbao canon, fifth century. This, CT 533, 534 and 535 are liturgies for performing the Lingbao's Levee of the Three Primes.

Mingzhen ke 明真科 (Rules for the Levee of the Covenant with the Perfected, CT 1411, 29 folios), Lingbao canon, fifth century. This contains the oldest version of the liturgy for this levee (15b-24a) and a statement on its functions (24b).

Mingzhen da zhai yangong yi 靈寶明真大齋言功儀 (A Liturgy for the Enunciation of Merit at the Grand Levee of the Covenant with the Perfected, CT 521, 17 folios), by Du Guangting, ca. 900. CT 519 and 520 were also composed by Du and contain other Lingbao liturgies of this sort. Edouard Chavannes' annotated translation of this text is the only complete translation of a medieval Daoist liturgy in a Western language known to me (1919, 172-214).

Huanglu dazhai licheng yi 黃籙大齋立成儀 (The Liturgy for Establishing and Completing the Great Levee of the Yellow Roster, CT 508, 57 j.), by Liu Yongguang 留用光 (1134-1206) et al., completed in 1223. Lu Xiujing's liturgy for performing the Nocturnal Annunciation at Yellow Roster Levees, as edited by Zhang Wanfu, is preserved in fascicle sixteen of this work. This is the longest liturgy for the Yellow Roster Levee in the *Daozang*, but it is untrustworthy for the pre-Song period because the compilers consciously edited it to conform to the needs of their time.

Huanglu zhaiyi 黃籙齋儀 (Liturgies for the Yellow Roster Levee, CT 507, 58 j.), by Du Guangting, 901 or later. After presenting a basic three-day liturgy for executing this levee at morning, noon and night (j. 1-9), Du supplies variant forms of this ritual for performance on the birth of an heir to the throne (j. 10-12); to dispel calamities for the state (j. 19-21); at the behest of officials (j. 13-15) and commoners (j. 42-44); to save souls in hell (j. 35-36); and to cure the ill (j. 29-31) among other things. For other Yellow Roster liturgies, most of unknown provenance, see CT 509 to 513.

Jinlu zhai qitan yi 金籙齋啓壇儀 (A Liturgy for the Annunciation at the Altar of the Gold Roster Levee, CT 483, 11 folios), by Du Guangting, ca. 900. For other Gold Roster liturgies, most of unknown provenance, see CT 484 to 498.

Daojiao lingyan ji 道教靈驗記 (Records of Supernatural Confirmations for the Daoist Religion, CT 590, *Yunji qiqian* 117-122, 18 j.), by Du Guangting, ca. 905. Du records accounts of miracles that occurred in conjunction with the performance of levees in fascicles fourteen and fifteen and elsewhere in this text (Verellen 1989, 139-40,206-7).

COMPENDIA. ***Fengdao kejie*** 奉道科戒 (Rules and Precepts for Daoist Worship CT 1125, P. 2337, 6 j.), attributed to Jinming Qizhen 金明七真 (fl. 545-554), dat. probably ca. 620. This is the most important

text for the study of medieval ordinations. It delineates all of the steps (titles) for the various ranks and sub-ranks of investiture and lists all of the scriptures, registers, tallies, covenants, and the like that were transmitted to ordinands (see Yoshioka 1955, 301-40; 1976, 75-219; Akizuki 1965; Benn 1991, 72-97; Barrett 1997; Kohn 1997; Reiter 1988, 1998; Ôfuchi 1997, 557-90). Texts transmitted at Taixuan ordinations (Kusuyama 1979) included the *Xisheng jing* (trl. Kohn 1991, 231-56) and the *Xiang'er zhu* (trl. Bokenkamp 1997, 78-148). For revisionist views on the dating and character of the scriptures transmitted at Daoist ordinations, see Kobayashi 1990, 1992; 1995, 29-36; Ozaki 1995, 47-55.

Wushang biyao 無上秘要 (Secret Essentials of the Most High, CT 1138), dat. 577-578 (see Lagerway 1981). This compendium contains four of the oldest liturgies for the investitures of Daoist orders—Taixuan, Dongshen, Dongxuan, and Dongzhen (j. 37, 38, 39, and 40)—as well as liturgies for performing nine levees (j. 48-57). It also includes much material on various subjects relevant to investitures and levees: talismans, hymns, pledges, vestments, recitation of scripture and precepts among other things (j. 25-34, 36, 39, 41-47). Maspero's reconstruction of the Mud and Soot Levee (1981, 384-386) should be treated with great caution since it is not based on a liturgy for that levee. On medieval Daoist ritual in general, see Matsumoto 1983, 210-24.

Keyi jielü chao 科儀戒律鈔 (Excerpts from Rules, Liturgies, Precepts, and Codes, CT 463, 16 j.), by Zhu Faman 朱法滿 (d. July 9, 720). Zhu describes levees and the times for their performances (8.1a-2a), the duties of officiants—preceptors, cantors, directors, attendants of incense and lamps—who presided over them (8.7a-19a), vestments for priests of different Daoist orders (9.1a-2b) and several sets of precepts (4.1a-6.8a; see Ren and Zhong 1991, 344-45).

Daomen dingzhi 道門定制 (Hard-and-Levee Rules for Daoists, CT 1224, 10 j.), by Lü Yuansu 呂元宿 et al., dat. 118. To my knowledge the only extant versions of the *Sanhuang wen*, written in esoteric seal script with talismans appended, appear in this work (4.1a-7b). Neither the *Badi jing* nor *Wushang biyao 25* are fragments of them (Andersen 1994, 14), but the citations in the latter that supply rules for their use may have come from the first three fascicles of the *Dongshen jing*, in which the *Sanhuang wen* appeared.

PRACTICES

ORDINATION. Investitures established the ordinands' place in the lineages of transmission that not only stretched back to the beginning of the universe, but also forward to generation after generation of priests. At every step of ordination, rules required ordinands to recognize their status

as successors to their preceptors and the officiants at their investitures. Among the first acts that an aspirant for the priesthood had to perform was **the Visitation to the Preceptor** (*yishi* 詣師), during which he paid homage to his master by kowtowing before submitting a request to receive the scriptures. In the rite of ordination and the levees that he performed afterward as a priest, he had to make obeisances to, and visualize and recite particulars about, the three officiants—the Preceptors of Ordination, Registration and Scriptures—at his ordination, and pray for their immortality. The purpose of this was not only to establish the ordinand's position in the lineage of his order, but also his place in the cosmos (*Wushang biyao* 35.1a-b; *Chuanshou jingjie yi* 12a-13a; *Sanshi minghui wen*; see Benn 1991, 41-42, 141-42).

The **actual transmission** of the scriptures entailed transcription of the texts. Before the invention of printing in the seventh or eighth centuries this was the only means by which one person could acquire a book from another. In the case of the transmission for the *Daode jing* the copying took place during the rite of investiture. The rules stipulated that ordinands had only the three days of that rite to make fair copies of the canon in ten fascicles. In other instances, notably Dongshen and Dongxuan investitures, the liturgies merely state that the scriptures reposed on the altars. Presumably ordinands transcribed those canons before or after the performance of the ordination rite. The transcription of scriptures was serious business. According to rules in one of the Lingbao scriptures recipients of holy writs were required to proofread their copies three times, and lost one year of their life spans for every word erroneously written. (*Lingbao wugan wen* 7b; *Lingbao zhaijie yaojue*, CT 532, 10b).

Daoist ordinations not only established a priest's place in the lineage of clerics, saints, celestial mandarins and gods, it also afforded him the opportunity of **advancement**. Acquisition of one canon opened the door to higher ranks in the hierarchy of the priesthood. At each step of his rise the priest received larger, more prestigious and more powerful scriptures affording him access to increasingly greater and more awesome deities through separate rituals of investiture. This system was comparable to promotions of civil servants in the imperial bureaucracy where merit and learning were factors in promotions. There was one exception to the rule that ordinands received canons at separate rites. During the reign of Emperor Wu (561-578) of the Northern Zhou the throne issued "New Liturgies Imperially Compiled" (*Yuzhi xinyi* 御制新儀) that authorized the transmission of the Ten Precepts, *Daode jing*, *Sanhuang wen*, Lingbao scriptures and Shangqing canon at the same time on the same altar. This was probably an aberration that did not long survive Emperor Wu. He was a patron of Daoism who used the religion to promote his own secular ideology. It is likely that he revised the normal procedures for ordinations to supply himself with a large number of priests who would promote that

ideology and undermine Buddhism. Whatever the case, the ultimate objective for ordinands was to receive the three most esteemed canons and to assume the title Liturgical Preceptor of the Three Caverns (Sandong fashi 三洞法師; *Wushang biyao* 35; *Lingbao shijie jing*, CT 459).

The rites of Daoist investitures were overwhelmingly juridical in nature. The taking of vows or swearing of oaths at altars during ordinations is common to nearly all religions, but Daoist investitures went far beyond those simple acts. The roots of their procedures lay in legal, economic and political practices that had governed Chinese society from time immemorial.

At Daoist ordinations the **Chief officiant** assumed the role of guarantor. During the reading of the Yellow Silk Petition (*huangzeng zhang* 黃繒章), and its invocation at Lingbao investitures, he assured the Deities of the Five Directions that his students had earned the right to receive the canon by virtue of their diligence, submission of pledges, karma, encounter with certain scriptures and establishment of covenants. Like Ge Hong before them, these ordinards had earned their preceptor's trust and respect. Therefore, he undertook the responsibility of commending them to the gods. It was also his duty to administer oaths (*shi* 誓) that committed ordinands never to transmit the canon indiscriminately, reveal its contents, violate its precepts, converse or disparage the scriptures or bestow the texts for a fee. Daoist scriptures were powerful, esoteric writs that could inflict great harm if they fell into the wrong hands or passed on to the ignorant who had not received oral instructions for their use from a preceptor (*Wushang biyao* 39.3b-4a; *Lingbao shoudu yi* 43a-b; see Benn 1991, 44-45, 67-68).

Preceptors did not take this duty lightly because an officiant who transmitted scriptures to those unqualified to receive them was subject to punishment. The mandarins of the underworld would cut his life short and transform him with fire or water into a specter in the world of the dead. Since the goal of all Daoist priests and adepts was to acquire physical immortality and an office in the bureaucracy of the hereafter, this was a heavy sanction indeed. Even worse the erring preceptor would bring the wrath of the gods down on the heads of his kinsmen. The bureaucrats of the shades would review the dossiers of seven generations of his ancestors and condemn his dead kinsmen to suffer on the mountain of knives and in the village of fire in hell as well as sentence them to be reincarnated as hungry ghosts, animals or men (*Wushang biyao* 33; *Keyi jielü chao* 1.3a-7b).

As the wording of the Yellow Silk Petition indicates, the ordinands bound themselves to the gods by **submitting covenants** as Ge Hong had. The rules required formal written Covenantal Writs at various stages of initiation and all investitures. During ordination rituals the ordinands read those documents aloud to convey them to the gods of the Nine

Heavens above and announced them to the Sovereigns of the Five Directions and myriad powers on earth below. In the text of the covenant for receiving the *Daode jing*, the ordinands promised to treat the scriptures as personal treasures and venerate them with offerings forever. Should they violate the rules or their covenants with the gods, they declared that they would accept condemnation to the dark prisons of eternal night in hell without uttering any objections (*Lingbao shoudu yi* 37a-38a; *Wushang biyao* 37.3ab; see Benn 1991, 60).

The word of the ordinands alone was insufficient to guarantee his compliance with covenants and codes. Rules called for them to submit concrete manifestations of their commitments in the form of pledges. Those gages served as assurances for their oaths to the divine rulers of the unseen world. As previously noted, the size and value of the pledges depended on the status of the persons submitting them. During the ordination of two imperial princesses in 711, the ladies tendered 7,920 grams of gold, 240,000 copper coins, 295 meters of cloud brocade, 2,832 meters of purple silk gauze, 5,664 meters of pongee, 24,000 sheets of fine paper and seventy-six kilograms of incense among other items. Obviously, these extravagant amounts were well beyond the wherewithal of anyone but the imperial family. The pledges required of commoners were much less than those of the princesses (*Chuanshou jingjie falu lueshuo* 2.18a-21a; Benn 1991, 33-37).

With the exception of the transmission of the *Daode jing*, all levels of ordination included a ritual for **Rending the Tally**, another legal formality. During the rite, as performed at Cavern-Divine investitures, the officiant ordered the ordinand to seize a knife by its hilt and place it over a graph at the top of the tally that was written on paper. Then the student pulled the blade, while the preceptor pushed it, to cut the document in two. The officiant retained one half of it and the ordinand the other. This was another ancient bureaucratic practice. When an emperor, official or military officer received a subordinate into his service, the superior split a tally, keeping one-half and giving the other to his retainer. Subsequently, whenever circumstances required, the two men mated the uniquely parted pieces to authenticate appointments to office, commissions for performing specific tasks or socio-political status. In Daoism, the rite firmly established the ordinand as the preceptor's subordinate (*Dongshen shoudu yi* 7a; *Lingbao ziran quan yi*, CT 522; see Rotours 1952; Benn 1991, 42-43).

Of all facets in Daoist investitures and levees the administration of precepts (*jie*) best reflected the influence of Buddhism. Originally in the Han dynasty *jie* or admonition was a type of rescript, specifically cautionary in nature, that the throne issued to its officials. Whatever function those documents served in the early Celestial Master movement, they assumed a role of enormous importance in Daoism after Buddhism began ordaining Chinese monks in the fourth century. Buddhists adopted the term admoni-

tion for their precepts, and their ordinations were nothing more than administrations of precepts as vows. The Lingbao canon that assimilated many Buddhist notions elevated precepts to a status that they had not enjoyed in earlier scriptures. Subsequently every Daoist order acquired a set or sets of their own that ordinands received during their investitures. Some of the sets were virtually identical to those of the Buddhists, while others were strictly Daoist in character (*Wushang biyao* 44-46; *Keyi jielü chao* 4.1a-6.8a; *Chuanshou jingjie falu lueshuo* 1.1a-2a; *Sandong zhongjie wen*, CT 178; see Schipper 1985; Penny 1996; Hendrischke 1996; Kohn 1993, 100-6).

Finally, Daoist ordinations were **rituals of empowerment**. During those rites ordinands not only received official titles, divine permission to acquire the scriptures and authorization to perform the levees associated with them, but also the right to hold and wield the magic instruments contained in the canons. First and foremost among those devices were the registers that ordinands of all Daoist orders received at investitures. In ancient times, they were rosters of a king's or noble's retainers. In Daoism, they became registers of the gods. Those rolls supplied the titles of deities whom a priest could summon and implore to do his biding. Most of the gods were celestial and terrestrial mandarins and marshals, but in some cases, notably Lingbao registers, they included gods residing in the priest's body—in his brain, heart, hair, skin, eyes, lungs, liver, nose, tongue and elsewhere. By evoking the deities named in the rosters the priest could aid the state, save the people, destroy bloodthirsty specters, prevent disease from arising, preserve life and gather in goblins (*Zhengyi mengwei lu*; *Lingbao ershisi sheng tu jing*, CT 1407, 21a-47a).

The most ubiquitous and versatile of the occult tools bestowed on ordinands at investitures were talismans. They served many of the same functions as registers, but differed from the latter in that they were not rosters of the gods and were inscribed in an arcane script that only the initiated could read or write. Some idea of their liturgical role can be gleaned from their use in activating Inciting Staffs (*cezhang* 策杖), at Lingbao ordinations. In the course of that rite ordinands sanctified five talismans representing the deities of the five elements or directions. They accomplished that by visualizing colored *qi* for the talismans that entered their mouths and flowed into their viscera where the vapors produced glorious lights that radiated to the nape of their necks. After each visualization the students handed the talisman to their preceptor who installed it in one of five hollows of segments in a bamboo staff. When all five were in place, the officiant sealed the holes into which he had inserted the writs and bestowed the batons on the ordinands. After ordination the priests employed the staffs during levees, pointing the top upward to communicate with celestial deities or the bottom downward to communicate with terrestrial gods. In this fashion the priest induced the gods to perform the functions called for in the liturgy of the levee and to annihilate demons (*Zhenwen tianshu jing*

1.35b-36a; *Lingbao chishu yujue miaojing* 1.23a-24a; *Lingbao shoudu yi* 31b-37a; *Wushang biyao* 41.1a-5b; see Benn 1991,57-60).

LEVEES. The roots of Daoist levees lay in formal **court audiences**. Audiences were hearings at which the emperor received officials to conduct the day-to-day business of government. During them, the sovereign received reports from his ministers and issued decrees to them. It was the priest's responsibility to make all arrangements for his audiences with the gods. One of the priest's first tasks was to establish a defense for the altar or levee hall. At Lingbao rites, even before entering those sacred spaces, the officiant visualized a purple cloud that covered the entire area like a crown and a host of 50,000 warriors, 10,000 for each of the Five Sovereigns. That army was comparable to the guard units that stood watch at imperial audiences. Later in the rite the priest chanted the Invocation of Guardian Powers and Gods (*song wei lingshen zhu* 誦衛靈神祝), during which he visualized the gods of his five viscera, the five sacred mountains, the five stars and the five sovereigns standing guard in his body. Then he recited the invocation in five parts, evoking the radiant *qi* of the five directions and charging them with restraining, obstructing, slaying and otherwise deterring demons and specters that might attack the altar or levee hall (*Lingbao shoudu yi* 8a,10a-11a; see Benn 1991, 126, 129).

Visualization was the instrument by which an officiant actualized deities. He first envisioned an ether of a specific color in his mind. Then he transformed the cloud into the image of the god dressed in raiments of a hue appropriate to it. The vapor was the primordial essence of the deity, but in and of itself was ineffectual until the priest gave it an anthropomorphic form. The officiant had to take great care in envisioning the proper attire for the god lest he evoke the wrong deity. Next the officiant performed a series of acts intended to inform deities that he was convoking an audience to transmit documents. To accomplish that end he first notified the gods by clacking his teeth (*kouchi* 叩齒), a specific number of times. The number varied according to the deities addressed—nine times for the rulers of the Nine Heavens, thirty-six times for the sovereigns of the Thirty-Six Heavens, for example. The priests sent signals of this sort to the gods throughout the rite when he recited various writs that he wished them to hear (*Yujing baojue* 8a).

The objective of **clacking the teeth** was to catch the attention of the gods only. It conveyed no message, so priests resorted to several devices to inform deities of their intentions. Among the first was the Opening of the Censer (*falu* 發爐). After the lighting of incense the officiant recited an invocation, in which he called on the deified Laozi to summon forth thirty-six incense officers from his, the priest's, body. Those internal spirits were envoys who announced the commencement of the ritual to the perfected mandarins and true gods of the soil, hamlets and cities of the district where

the levee took place. The incense was not only the bearer of the message, but also a means of inducing the *qi* of the gods to descend and enter the priest's body. In addition its fragrance was capable of destroying defilements and thereby purifying the altar to ready it for the rite (*Lingbao shoudu yi* 11b-12a; Benn 1991, 129).

The most elaborate form of notification at Lingbao levees was the rite of **Externalizing the Bureaucrats** (*chuguan* 出官). During that act the officiant summoned deities residing in his own body by reciting their titles and describing their majestic vestments and regalia. Then the priest arrayed his retainers as a cortège. He installed the clerk on duty at the center, officers in charge of healing to his left as guards, officials bearing banners to his front, functionaries bearing insignia to his rear, the mandarin of the yang nimbus to his left and the mandarin of the yin nimbus to his right. After he finished arranging his entourage of those and other gods, he stationed a guard of tiger-tilting cavaliers; armored infantry; strongmen; bailiffs charged with gathering in and devouring specters, demons and toxins; a clerk for submitting petitions, and others before, behind and around him. Equipped with a train befitting an emperor or noble, he set out with his cortège to visit the Celestial Master parishes, holy mountains, elysian fields, sun, moon, stars, constellations and other regions of the cosmos. There he announced his intention to perform a levee to the greatest of the divine lords and sovereigns (*Lingbao shoudu yi* 4a-6b; Benn 1991, 124-25).

Toward the end of the levee the officiant dismantled his entourage and dismissed his retainers with the rite of **Restoring the Bureaucrats** (*fuguan* 復官). He called on the functionaries to return to his body and resume their customary stations therein so that they could stabilize and protect it. He also cautioned them to put themselves in order and wait for the next occasion on which he would summon them again for duty at another ritual (*Lingbao shoudu yi* 7a-b, 47a-49a; see Benn 1991, 125, 134).

Externalizing the Bureaucrats appears to have been a soul voyage, an ancient Chinese shamanistic ritual during which priests in a trance sent their souls out to the far-reaches of the cosmos to meet with the gods. However, in a variant form of the Daoist rite the officiant, who summoned hundreds of immortal officials and millions of warriors from his body, ordered them to split up and inform deities on their own. In either case, the levee was a gathering at which the priest's spirit minions paid court to gods and their underlings (*Lingbao shoudu yi* 13b-21a; Benn 1991, 130-31).

In these acts the officiant played the role of commander-in-chief, a superior mandarin in charge of inferior officials and warriors residing in his body as well as external deities, their functionaries and their soldiers. However, the priest was also a subordinate to higher authorities. As such he had to pay homage to the gods by repeatedly bowing, kneeling, prostrating and kowtowing to them at levees. The priest's subservience was also apparent

in the wording of certain acts and documents. In the "**Entreaty to the Immortal Mandarins**" (*qing xianguan* 請仙官), he implored millions of infantry and cavalry of the celestial immortals, terrestrial immortals, perfected, sun, moon, stars and other deities to descend to their levee halls, oversee the ritual and accomplish the ends for which the rite was being performed. Officiants did not have power over the great deities of heaven. In the levee's writs addressed to those unseen powers, priests employed obsequious phrases such as "I beg you," "in abject fear," "banging my head," "at the risk of death" and "I dare offend you," that emphasized their servility to their masters. Furthermore, during Lingbao levees officiants sang Formulas to the Deities of the Ten Directions. Each of those chants began with the words, "I most earnestly entrust my fate to" (*zhixin guiming* 至心歸命). The recitations were in effect oaths of allegiance to the gods in which priests affirmed their obedience to the will of their superiors (*Lingbao shoudu yi* 12a-13b; Benn 1991, 129-30).

Like the emperor and his ministers, Daoist priests also served as intermediaries between humanity and the gods. In one form or another many levees had acts whose purpose was to effect the salvation of rulers, officials, priests, parishioners and most importantly their ancestors. The most prevalent of those pieties at Lingbao rituals were the **Expiations** (*xie* 謝). This term is often mistranslated as "confession." Although the phrase "to admit fault" (*shouguo* 首過) appears occasionally in the liturgies, the nature of sin characterized in them was formalistic or nebulous—all transgressions that the living or dead have committed in this and former lives, or all violations of rules by officiant. Furthermore, there is no obligation imposed on sinners or their agents in the writs to acknowledge specific wrong doings in the texts. To the contrary, during Expiations priests requested that the gods eradicate sins and/or excise reports of them in their records so that the souls of the dead could be released from hell and avoid reincarnation as hungry ghosts, animals or humans. The spirits of ancestors could then enter the light, become immortal and ascend to heaven. Thus the remission of sin was yet another bureaucratic process accomplished by the intercession of the priest who addressed his plea through official channels. Likewise, immortality was not the product of nostrums, elixirs, yoga or other practices, but a divine dispensation of grace that the clergy induced the unseen powers to bestow (*Wushang biyao* 52.3b, 53.6ab, 54.8a-15a).

As audiences, Daoist levees were instruments for communicating with the gods. Standing on an altar or in a levee hall, the officiant addressed his messages to deities on three planes: the celestial in the heavens above where the most powerful gods presided, the terrestrial at the center where the sovereigns of the five and ten directions governed, and the subterranean under the sacred mountains where judges of the dead ruled. In the course of levees, priests orchestrated an elaborate process for transmitting

documents to his superiors on those planes. Both the messages and the procedures for conveying them were bureaucratic in origin, substance and form. Three of the documents—the annunciation, the petition and the manifesto (*biao* 表)—were standard memorials that officials submitted to the throne during the Han Dynasty.

The **annunciation** was another notification that officiants read to inform the gods that they were about to perform a levee at an auspicious hour of the day for a given purpose. In it they asked the highest deities to inform the Gods of the Five Directions and the sacred mountains to oversee the rite and promised not to violate the rules governing the ritual (*Lingbao shoudu yi* 8b-9a; Benn 1991, 128).

The **petition** was the oldest form of document that Daoists used in their rites. When the codifiers of ritual constructed liturgies for levees in the fifth and sixth centuries, they incorporated those writs into their rites. There they served some of the same functions that they had in early Celestial Master rituals. For example, the officiant at Lingbao levees chanted the "Gold Perfected's Petition" (*jinzhen zhang* 金真章) to vanquish demons. The petition also served other ends. Toward the end of Lingbao levees the priest dispatched the "Enunciation of Merit" (*yangong* 言功), in which he requested that the Gods of the Three Heavens confer merits on the spirit functionaries of his, the cleric's, body as rewards for their service in his cortège. The number of merits to be bestowed—3,000, 2,000, 1,000 and 500—depended on the magnitude of the spirit officer's contribution to the transmission of documents and counted toward his promotion to a higher-ranking post in the bureaucratic hierarchy of immortals. This system of commendation was based on the practices of the civil service during the Han dynasty (*Lingbao shoudu yi* 9a-10a,47a-49a; Benn 1991, 128,134).

The **manifesto** was the most important document submitted to the gods during the Nocturnal Annunciation at Lingbao ordinations and levees. Also called the Petition on Yellow Silk at investitures it contained the preceptor's statement that he was going to transmit the canon to his disciples. It differed from the previous writs because it conformed precisely to the standard form for memorials that officials submitted to the throne. The manifesto began with the phrase, "I am sending word up" (*shangyan* 上言) and concluded with a signature that supplied the name of the officiant and the district of his registration, the date when it was submitted and the place where it was tendered. Furthermore, after reading it aloud, the priest performed a separate rite to dispatch it. He uttered an incantation that ordered the spirit functionaries from his body to seize the document and convey it to the deities. Finally he issued the "Rescript of the Strict Bond" (*zhongyue chi* 重約敕), in which he commanded twelve of his assistant calligraphers (internal gods) to correct all errors and supply all omissions in his manifesto before they turned it over to the gods. This punctilious regard

for accuracy was necessary because the gods acted on the wording of the documents that they received and stored the writs in their archives. Errors and omissions in an officiant's writs led to misinterpretations on their part and caused disasters for the priest and his parishioners or patrons (*Lingbao shoudu yi* 6b-7a; Benn 1991, 44-45).

It would be a mistake to assume that state ideology and religion were the only sources for the theory and practice of the Daoist priesthood and liturgy. Many facets of levees—hymns, dances, salutes and invocations—as well as aspects of the priest's role in performing them derived from occult traditions that flourished before the advent of the religion. Most importantly, unlike the emperor and his officials, the clergy did not derive their dominion from charisma, personal or institutional, or the law. Their power sprang from their ability to control *qi*, external and internal. The structure of altars for Yellow Roster and Gold Roster Levees included gates through which external *qi* from distant nodes of the cosmos flowed, but they did not enter the sacred space spontaneously. It was the officiant's task to implore the Gods of the Ten Directions to send them forth. Afterward he manipulated his own *qi* in response. The priest visualized a light emanating from the rear of his lungs that covered his entire body and imparted a golden hue to it. Then the officiant envisioned a round beam of luminescence at the nape of his neck and radiated it in all directions. In that manner he consecrated the altar, changing it into a primitive engine powered by cosmic gases/energies and endowing it with an aura that sanctified the rite (*Lingbao shoudu yi* 10a-11a; Benn 1991, 38,129).

The priest's power did not reside only in his personal control of *qi*. It derived also from the magic scripts that he received during ordination and employed subsequently in rituals. The most potent of those were the Lingbao's True Writs that were capable of altering natural forces for the welfare of mankind and the state when implanted and burned at the Gold Roster Levee. Furthermore, mere recitation of some scriptures such as the *Dongyuan shengzhou jing* was sufficient to prevent and alleviate calamities caused by evil spirits. In fact the chanting of scripture assumed a major role in Daoist liturgy after 400, probably under the influence of Buddhism that advocated the practice for the perpetuation of its dogma and the salvation of the dead. Buddhism was also responsible for the Daoist notion that the performance of ritual was a means of accumulating merit (*gongde* 功德) for the dead that would lead to their liberation from perdition and rebirth.

Finally, Daoists not only believed that their rituals effected changes in the world of the living and the realm of the dead by means of prayers, penance and pieties, but also that the performance of the rites in and of itself elicited miracles. They thought of levees as means for arousing the gods who would respond with work of wonders. When Emperor Ming fell ill in 471, Lu Xiujing executed the Levee of the Three Primes to pray for

the state. On May 25 the sky grew dark with clouds, a gale blew up and a light rain moistened the dust. As Lu sang the liturgy between 9:00 and 11:00 in the evening, a yellow cloud in the form of a jeweled canopy rose from below to a height of one-hundred feet and completely covered the palace courtyard. In a few moments the vapors became a multicolored nimbus that shone on the eaves of the roof and porches. After drifting to and fro for quite a while, it turned and moved over a scripture hall where it gradually dissipated. The emperor was then cured. However, he did not survive for long. He died on May 10 of the following year at the age of thirty-three (*Sandong zhuang* 1.7b-8a).

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