

CHAPTER SIX

EARLY DAOIST MOVEMENTS

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DESCRIPTION

The early Daoist movements mark the beginning of Daoism as an organized religion. They developed in the turmoil at the end of the Han empire, promising the populace physical well being, the fair distribution of wealth and active solidarity. They thus became attractive to the many landless who roamed the country in search of food and employment. There were numerous mass movements at the time, some more Daoist than others, culminating especially in the late second century C.E. and again in the years 399-411. Among the most important movements are two, the first being the so-called Yellow Turbans (Huangjin 黄巾), also called the Taiping 太平 or Great Peace Movement. This movement began in Shandong and the eastern provinces and, under the guidance of Zhang Jue 张角, rose in rebellion in 184. The population followed them in numbers large enough to dangerously weaken the government and hasten the dynasty's end. Still, the rebellion was bloodily suppressed and both text and movement vanished, to be reconstituted only vaguely several centuries later. The movement was associated with a talismanic text called *Taiping qingling shu* 太平清领书 (Book of Great Peace Written in Blue), greater or lesser parts of which may be contained in the transmitted *Taiping jing* 太平经 (Scripture of Great Peace).

The second major movement was that of the Celestial Masters (Tianshi 天师), also known as the Covenant of Orthodox Unity (Zhengyi mengwei 正一盟威). It emerged in the west, in Shu (Sichuan), founded (according to legend) by Zhang Ling 张陵 or Daoling 道陵 and organized by Zhang Lu 张鲁. Limiting their rebellious activity and submitting to political authority, they survived (see Seidel 1984), so that the 64th Celestial Master is still a major religious figure in Taiwan today. The early Celestial Masters, after being forced to resettle in various parts of the country, provided the religious environment from which the various other Daoist schools of medieval China sprang, beginning with Highest Clarity (Shangqing 上清).

By the end of the fourth century, the agenda of Daoist movements had narrowed. They demanded revenge against the malpractices of political

power-holders, but they were mainly searching for an escape from their misery and trusted their charismatic leader Sun En 孫恩 to lead them to the isles of the blessed (Miyakawa 1979, 83). At the same time, as Daoism with its various newly developing schools widened its appeal to larger segments of the population, the early creeds and principles were seen as compromised by the rebellious environment they came from, and they were often pointed to as negative examples that believers should not follow.

Most of the movements, aside from promising general welfare to all members, also had an apocalyptic or eschatological vision that described the end of the world as imminent. They can thus be understood in terms of millenarianism and messianism (Seidel 1969b; 1984; Schipper 1979). Millenarianism was first described as a Western religious phenomenon with roots in Zoroastrianism that came to flourish in the two centuries B.C.E. especially in the Judaic environment. It led to the arising of the Jesus movement that later became Christianity (see Hanson 1983; Cohn 1995). Millenarianism's major characteristics include a single high deity who creates and controls the world, immediate personal revelation to a selected human representative by this deity, a dualism between good and evil, a linear conception of time which will soon reach its end, and the vision of a cataclysmic end-time battle that only the sworn members of the cult, the high god's chosen people, will survive (Cohn 1995). According to what we know about early Daoist beliefs, at least as far as they are represented in fifth-century documents (see Zürcher 1982), they shared many of these characteristics with their Western counterparts and thus signified a major new dimension of Chinese religion and religious organization (see Kohn 1998a).

HISTORY

POPULAR MOVEMENTS. The Daoist movements of the late Han dynasty belong to the tradition of popular movements, which erupted because economic and social conditions had destroyed the fabric that held society together. They were for the most part regional events, but in times of general crisis they could gain momentum and become a political factor acting throughout the country. It was customary for leaders of such movements to adopt political titles such as "king" or "emperor," and to have a program for socio-political reform. Religious elements, as propagated and performed by shamanic practitioners (*wu* 巫), played a role by attributing authority to a movement's leaders and institutions, and it can be argued that few mass movements took place without such support.

One of the first movements known from the literature is that of the **Red Eyebrows** (Chimei 赤眉). It was initiated in 18 C.E. by Fan

Chong 樊崇 from Langye 琅瑯 (Shandong), and reveal its social background and original aims in its nomenclature, which was taken over from local government and colloquial language, and overlaps with titles used by later movements. The dynastic histories inform us that the Red Eyebrows turned to religious support when their movement had outgrown its initial locally defined framework. They invited shamans to make use of a popular local deity, King Jing of Chengyang 城陽景王. Han authorities had originally set up this deity as the central figure of a local cult in order to integrate the region of Chengyang into the Han empire (Stein 1979, 80). When addressed by the Red Eyebrows' shaman, the deity promptly complained about being linked to rebellious bandits and demanded an institutional upgrading (*Hou Hanshu* 後漢書, abbr. HHS, 11.480). The rebels thereupon enthroned Liu Penzi 劉盆子, a member of the Han ruling house of Liu, as emperor and granted mimicry court titles to themselves.

Thus, while the Red Eyebrows were not a religious movement *per se*, they did make use of the supernatural for their purposes, as did all factions during the period of civil war between the end of the Western and the outset of the Eastern Han. The antagonists closely observed each others' propaganda, as is clear in the struggle between Wang Mang 王莽 and his opponent, the later Emperor Guangwu. But even the Red Eyebrows impressed Wang Mang as being "miraculous" (*guai* 怪; *Hanshu* 99C.4179; Dubs 1955, 436). Another example of such interactions among different groups is the invitation issued by Gongsun Shu 公孫述, ruler of Shu until 36 C.E., to a rival group in southern Henan. He was quite disappointed when they turned out to be simply bandits, especially since he had set his own ambitions much higher. In a fashion characteristic for his time, he proposed that heaven had issued texts which revealed that after twelve generations—following the model of the twelve generations in Confucius's *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals)—the Han house of Liu had come to an end and would be followed by the Gongsuns. Speculation about the sequence of the five phases—the Han had ruled under the auspices of the red phase of fire—led him to take up the title of "White Emperor" (HHS 13.533-34).

The **use of colors** was highly significant. Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179-104 B.C.E.) and other thinkers had correlated the succession of historical eras and dynasties with the sequence of the five phases, each of which was represented by a certain color. Some rebels would still use the Han-color red, trying to amend their rule, but many strove to overcome the Han and accordingly linked themselves with various other colors. Thus, while Zhang Bolu 張伯路 had still used red, yellow became increasingly popular, so that in 145 a certain Ma Mian 馬勉 in Jiujiang 九江, south of the Huai river, proclaimed that he was the "Yellow Emperor" (HHS 6.277). The propagandistic effect of this was ambivalent, however, because yellow

had two associations: its progressive, innovative quality vis-à-vis the reigning red; and the Daoist image of the mythical Yellow Emperor. Another Jiujiang rebel, possibly linked with Ma Mian, had similarly been known as the "yellow tiger" (HHS 38.1279).

While yellow was in vogue, other colors continued to play a role, probably for the sake of distinction and identity as much as for their symbolic meaning. One of Ma Mian's associates, Xu Feng 徐鳳, was wearing scarlet (*jiang* 絳); another, Hua Meng 華孟, chose for himself the title "Black Emperor" and created seals, a reign period and other imperial paraphernalia matching the water phase (HHS 38.1279). In 148 C.E. rebel leaders in eastern Henan called themselves either "Son of the Yellow Emperor" (*huangdi zi* 黃帝子) or "perfected" (*zhenren* 真人).

We may expect to find some sort of Daoists at work when the histories refer to shamanic activities, yet it seems reasonable to limit the appellation "Daoist" to those movements which not only engaged the services of certain religious or perhaps Daoist experts, but were actually led by them. It can be argued that the shaman or "sorcerer" (*yaoou* 妖巫) Wei Si 維汜 and his disciples in the first century instigated the first Daoist mass movement of which we know (Fang 1993, 4). His home was on the Yellow River, not far from modern Zhengzhou. He called himself a "spirit being" (*shen* 神) and before being put to death by the authorities had assembled a few hundred disciples. They later spread the message that he had not died but rather had become a god (HHS 24.838).

Among these disciples, moreover, was **Li Guang** 李廣, who, in 41 C.E., with a group of followers attacked Wancheng in modern Anhui, north of the Yangzi, and established himself as the "Great Master of the Southern Peak" (Nanyue taishi 南嶽太師). This, according to Fang Shiming (1993), was the place in Anhui where Wei Si had resided and served as teacher or "master" in the sense of a "celestial master," an emissary of a central deity. After Li Guang's defeat and death, the Wei Si disciples Dan Chen 單臣 and Fu Zhen 傅鎮 continued the movement, calling themselves "generals" (*jiang* 將, HHS 18.694). Only with their execution did the Wei Si saga come to an end.

Other groups similarly made use of symbols later associated with the Celestial Masters and the Yellow Turbans. **Zhang Bolu** 張伯路, for instance, and his followers called themselves "emissaries" (*shizhe* 使者). Epigraphic evidence allows us to identify this title with *tiandi shizhe* 天帝使者, "emissary sent by Lord Heaven," which became the main credential of the Celestial Master of the late second century (Fang 1993, 8; Qian 1990). The histories state that Zhang Bolu's men saw their mission as one of eliminating all higher officials and burning all official buildings. In 109, they raided the coastal regions but were forced to withdraw out to sea. They returned again a year later. From 155 on, there were continuous

uprisings. The rebels produced seals and talismans, performed sacrifices to a well deity (*jing* 祭井) and called their leaders Taishang huang(di) 太上皇(帝) or "Highest sovereign (emperor)." On this evidence, Anna Seidel concluded that such movements were forerunners of the Yellow Turbans in that they "assumed the dignity of the emperor and instituted an administration" while also issuing talimans and using religious means to establish their authority (1969b, 220).

YELLOW TURBANS. The short account of the Yellow Turban Rebellion in the annals of the *Hou Hanshu* reads much like other accounts of first- and second-century uprisings: "**Zhang Jue** came from Julu 鉅鹿 [in Hebei], called himself Yellow Heaven and divided his army into thirty-six groups, each equivalent to a platoon of about ten thousand men who all wore yellow headbands and arose on the same day" (8.348). At first glance the Yellow Turbans appear to have much in common with the earlier movements, including their military organization and shamanic techniques, and having a leader who was an adherent of Huang-Lao 黃老 and was able to heal diseases (HHS 71.2299). However, there are also points of qualitative difference which make the Yellow Turbans more than just another regional uprising. They were not subdued until the political elite had united their forces against them, which indicates not only the rapid disintegration of the social and political system at the time but also the movement's size, vigor and coherence. The organizational skills of the rebels must have been outstanding. Their program of mass stimulation and control was refined, containing a remarkable mixture of social and religious elements. To sanctify social reforms with religious arguments was in itself not new; it had been customary among the educated at least since the first century B.C.E. However, if we can trust the sources, it was a novelty in the context of a mass movement.

Another important difference is that, according to the histories, Zhang Jue possessed a scripture on Great Peace which had been compiled by a critical, reform-oriented scholar from Langye, where the Yellow Turbans had much support, and had been publicized at the imperial court by a faction of like-minded officials (HHS 30B.1084). This link between a religious practitioner turned rebel and a group of scholar-officials, unlikely as it may have been, was taken seriously: the *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government; 58.1864) calls Zhang Jue's message "The Dao of Great Peace," and there are indeed parallels between his agenda and the thoughts outlined in the transmitted text of the *Tai ping jing*.

In addition, the movement also had adherents among the officials in the capital, so that high functionaries were accused of "studying the teachings of the Yellow Turbans" (*Zizhi tongjian* 58.1868). There is no mention of written material produced by the rebels, and we do not know what the

"high functionaries" could have studied except for the scripture on Great Peace that Zhang Jue possessed and perhaps distributed. Officials tolerated Zhang for political reasons. While people joined his movement by the ten thousands, to the point of repeatedly causing traffic congestions, the authorities did not get involved because Zhang Jue was only "educating" people (*Qizhi tongjian* 58.1864). Reports describing the situation as serious and suggesting early measures of repression went unheeded due to factional controversies at court. After the eunuchs instigated a proscription (*danggu* 黨錮) in 169, career officials were largely expelled from power and could only hope that an uproar would weaken the eunuchs' position. This hope was fulfilled when the proscription was lifted at the end of 184.

After about ten years of missionary activity the movement covered much of eastern China, including parts of modern Hebei, Shandong, Anhui, Jiangsu, Hubei, Jiangxi and Zhejiang. For calendrical reasons, an uprising had been planned for the *jiazi* 甲子 year of 184, when a new sixty-year cycle began. When this plan was leaked, the rebels were forced to strike earlier than expected and not in unison, but they nevertheless gained initial victories to an extent that frightened the authorities; "in ten days' time the whole world knew about them" (HHS 71.2300). While their main forces were defeated in less than six months, uprisings under the name of Yellow Turbans continued for years in various locations. Zhang Jue died before the rebels' military defeat, but his two younger brothers with whom he had shared the leadership of the movement were executed by Huangfu Song, who had led the victorious government troops (HHS 71.2302).

CELESTIAL MASTERS. The movement of the Yellow Turbans was ideologically as well as organizationally indebted to a long tradition of popular uprisings, but also had much in common with the Celestial Masters who developed simultaneously in Sichuan. Geographically isolated and with the strong support of the local population, including also a large number of non-Han people (Stein 1963, 22), the Celestial Masters and their followers managed for several decades to run an independent theocratic state. After their practices had spread throughout the country, they came to be hailed as the founders of religious Daoism.

To gain an understanding of their history, we can for the moment ignore the hagiographical accounts and rely on the story told by the historical sources. We learn that Zhang Ling, respectfully referred to as **Zhang Daoling** 張道陵, moved from Bei in north-western Jiangsu to Sichuan to set up a religious group in the Heming mountains 鶴鳴山 west of Chengdu, where he also produced texts to propagate his doctrine. It has been speculated that among these texts could have been the *Xiang'er* 想爾 commentary to the *Laozi* (Bokenkamp 1997, 59). Zhang Ling asked his followers for contributions or taxes in the form of millet or "rice," leading to the appellation "Way of Five Pecks of Rice" (Wudoumi dao 五斗米道)

for the movement, the name "masters of the five pecks" for its officers (*Sanguo zhi* 三國志 8.265; *Zizhi tongjian* 58.1872) and the rather denigrating "rice rebels" (*mizai* 米賊) for the members at large (HHS 75.2435). Other forms of taxes included fabrics and practical utensils, in particular the writing materials which played a big role in the services rendered by libationers (*jijiu* 祭酒) and other religious practitioners (Eichhorn 1955, 318). The alternative interpretation of Wudoumi dao as "the Way of the Great Dipper of the Mi family" is difficult to sustain because it presupposes more information about the life of the Sichuan aborigines during the Han period than we have (Wang J. 1987, 158-59). A stele in Sichuan, dated 173 C.E., has a list of libationers as proof of the thriving of Zhang Ling's movement (Stein 1963, 43).

Zhang Ling's missionary success lay in treating the ill. He was perhaps followed by his son, Zhang Heng 張衡, and certainly followed by his grandson **Zhang Lu** 張魯, which gives the Celestial Masters a trinity comparable to that of Zhang Jue and his two brothers. Zhang Lu also incorporated a group led by Zhang Xiu 張修 (no relation), who had assembled followers through his healing techniques, and in the *jiazi* year of 184, almost simultaneously with the Yellow Turbans, staged a local uprising. In 190, Zhang Xiu and Zhang Lu were together coopted by Liu Yan 劉焉, governor of Yi 益 province (Sichuan), to safeguard Hanzhong 漢中. Both received the official rank of "major" (*sima* 司馬; *Sanguo zhi* 8.283; de Crespigny 1990, 358-60), and we may assume that this amounted to an acknowledgment of their role as local leaders.

It seems that Zhang Lu's mother also played a role in establishing contact with the governor (HHS 75.2432). Thanks to her beauty and knowledge of magical techniques (*guidao* 鬼道), she had free access to the governor's home. At this stage the movement had become large enough to invite fights over its leadership, and by eliminating Zhang Xiu, Zhang Lu set himself up as Celestial Master (*Sanguo zhi* 8.263). His relations to the provincial government remained cordial until after Zhang Yan's death in 194. The latter's son and successor demanded a higher degree of submission and killed Zhang Lu's mother and relatives who had remained in the provincial capital. Only then did Zhang Lu take further steps towards independence. He changed the name of Hanzhong to Hanning 漢寧, and the central government gave him the title "Gentleman of the Household in Charge of Protecting the People," thus making him governor of Hanning, an honor he acknowledged by sending presents (*Sanguo zhi* 8.263-64).

In the free-for-all of the declining Han, Zhang moreover was in conflict with his neighbors and was thus drawn into various alliances and military activities. The survival of his reign must to some extent be ascribed to the self-restraint advised by the *Laozi*. When numerous refugees from troubled areas turned to his terrain for peace and security, and an auspicious jade

seal was found in the ground, he was urged to accept the title "king" and enlarge his territory, but he refrained from following this advice (*Sanguo zhi* 8.264). Zhang was not an independent ruler in a formal sense; he did not set up officials of high rank and did not produce his own seals—at least, the histories do not mention that he did. Nevertheless, the population seems to have followed his libationers' instructions and rules willingly, giving him considerable power (*Sanguo zhi* 8.263).

In 215, he handed his rule over to Cao Cao 曹操 in a carefully orchestrated ceremony that stretched out over months and served his purposes well. The move was criticized both by Zhang Lu's followers, who felt that he had surrendered, and by Cao Cao's party, who attacked the honorable terms of the take-over (*Sanguo zhi* 8.264). Zhang Lu survived the occasion for only a few years. He probably settled as marquis of Langzhong, situated about 100 miles south of Hanzhong, with ten thousand households as his fief. His five sons were accepted into Cao Cao's entourage on remarkably good terms. His followers, however, were made to resettle in different parts of China, carrying with them a new form of religious belief and organization (see Mather 1979).

The above is only one of several possible histories which the historical sources allow us to construct. If we were to take hagiographic material into consideration, there would be even more. On all accounts, however, Zhang Lu is the central figure of the period. The saga of Zhang Daoling and Zhang Heng could well be his invention, and so might be the confusion in regard to Zhang Xiu's historical role (Eichhorn 1955, 317; de Crespigny 1990, 356-58). The tradition of the Way of the Celestial Master resulted from Zhang Lu's political skills; later Daoists were able to identify with a small community of believers surviving troubled times in an orderly fashion. On the other hand, they did not find Zhang Jue and his violent movement exemplary, "Daoist" as it might have been. It can be argued that later "Daoism" became identified with the movement of the Celestial Masters and not with Great Peace due to political rather than doctrinal factors.

LATER DAOIST MOVEMENTS, despite their considerable political relevance, had less impact on the development of the religion. When Sun En 孫恩 started an uprising in 399 which lasted for over ten years, the Celestial Master style of Daoism to which he adhered served as a tool for mass control, more advanced and attractive than other Daoist and non-Daoist sets of magical practices. His movement contributed little to their development. To describe its history briefly, the Sun family had moved south from the old Daoist stronghold of Langye, and Sun En's uncle Sun Tai 孫泰 had studied with Du Jiong 杜炆, zi Zigong 子恭. The latter was a shaman and Daoist of southern descent whose fame was such that even the calligrapher Wang Xizhi 王羲之 relied on his services when ill (Chen G. 1963, 2: 461). His particular expertise was the control of powerful local

deities which, until the arrival of Daoism, had been under shamanic management (Miyakawa 1979, 100).

Beyond this powerful magician, Sun Tai also had friends in high places, including Sima Yuanxian 司馬源先, a relative of the Jin Emperor and son of Sima Daozi 司馬道子, the head of government. Sun Tai was local strongman in the Sanwu region, southeast of the Jin capital in modern Nanjing, and he became actively involved in military upheavals. Accused of spreading prophecies of the approaching end of the dynasty, he was executed in 398 together with his five sons, leaving it to his nephew Sun En to reorganize the movement. Sun then found wide support in the region of Guaiji 會稽 (near Hangzhou) for his outright opposition to Sima rule, whose socio-economic policies had antagonized many large landholders. Another source of support for Sun was the general hatred among the local, southern population for all government representatives who often were northerners (Miyakawa 1979, 100). Conforming to this hatred, Sun En seems to have made it his policy to maltreat or exterminate all officials he could catch. Among them were well-known adherents of Daoism like Wang Ningzhi 王凝之, son of Wang Xizhi and governor of Guaiji 王羲之, who had in vain attempted to develop magical devices against the rebels (*Jinshu* 96.2516).

For several years Sun En's men raided the region but never settled down in a Celestial Master type of community. When forced to retreat, they would return to their base of Yuzhou 郁洲—probably an island south of Lianyung in northern Jiangsu (Miyakawa 1983, 218)—then reappear in their large multi-storied boats for the next onslaught. In 401, Liu Yu 劉裕, the future founder of the Liu-Song dynasty, attacked this stronghold with an overwhelming force. At the same time, other events were also working against Sun En, in particular a severe famine in the regions concerned and a change of power at the Jin court, where the politicians of the Sima family were ousted. They had been responsible for Sun Tai's execution and were the main object of Sun En's wrath. In 402 Sun En died, either by execution or by suicide through drowning (Eichhorn 1954a, 351). The rebellious movement was continued and, as Miyakawa suggests, placed on a more solid organizational footing by Lu Xun 盧循, Sun En's brother-in-law who went to Guangdong to rebuild the army. Miyakawa argues that his social background was more respectable than that of Sun En and that he was a better soldier and less ruthless in his treatment of officials (1983, 200). He launched an attack on Yangzhou 揚州 in 410 C.E. which was defeated and led to his execution in 411—the year that marks the end of the rebellion.

Sun En's insurrection of the early fifth century contributed to the general power struggle which occurred between the Jin and the Song dynasties—at least that is how the histories describe it when they set up Liu Yu as a major opponent of Sun En and Lu Xun (*Jinshu* 100.2633, 2635-36).

However, the rebels were minor figures, whose lowly family background and limited connections would normally have disqualified them as imperial contenders from the start. These deficiencies were supplemented by their knowledge of the magic arts, which proved to be a significant political force, providing the rebels with social as well as military and propagandistic advantages.

TEXTS

There are two major documents and one minor text that contain early materials on these two Daoist movements. The first is the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (Scripture on Great Peace, CT 1101, ed. Wang M. 1979; modern Chinese trl. Luo 1996), transmitted in fifty-seven chapters. These seem more or less complete judging from a table of contents of the original text in 170 chapters, preserved in Dunhuang (S. 4226) and matching the transmitted text. The abridged version, known as *Taiping jingchao* 太平經鈔, survives in nine out of its ten parts. It was written by Lüqiu Fangyuan 閻丘方遠 (d. 937) to make the ancient text more readable and allows us to arrive at a picture of the whole of the original *Taiping jing*. The text found entry into the Song-dynasty Daoist canon, possibly with all its ten parts (following the ten stems), 170 chapters and 366 subdivisions. The editors of the Ming canon mention the *Taiping jing* as being damaged and reduced in comparison to previous versions (Wang M. 1979, 750).

The transmitted text consists of at least three layers, called A, B and C (see Xiong 1962; Takahashi 1988; Penny 1990; Petersen 1990a). Forty-four chapters consist largely of layer-A texts, depicting conferences between a "celestial master" and his disciples, a group of "perfected." Layer-B texts are characterized by frequent use of the particle *wei* 惟 and include dialogues between a Heavenly Lord (*tianjun* 天君), a Great Spirit (*dashen* 大神) and a student (*sheng* 生); parts of chapters 110-12 and 114 belong to this layer (Hendrischke 1991). The rest of the text (layer C) is too diverse to identify properly. It contains no dialogues but has large sections of charts and talismans with little supplementary written text.

Regarding the date of the *Taiping jing*, the Dunhuang manuscript from the late sixth century can serve as *terminus ante quem* which renders earlier speculation about a Tang origin obsolete (Mansvelt-Beck 1980, 168-69). The transmitted version, moreover, is identical with the text "found" by Tao Hongjing's disciples Huan Kai 桓開 and Zhou Zhixiang 周智響 in the sixth century. Yoshioka argues that the Shangqing tradition shares with the *Taiping jing* a missionary approach, represented by Lord Goldtower (Jinque dijun 金闕帝君), who in the Dunhuang *Taiping jing* is linked to the origin of the text (1970, 88). This would explain why Shangqing adherents edited

and supplemented, if not created, the text. Their edition proved to be popular and was distributed widely enough to have reached Dunhuang in the course of a few decades.

The transmitted text cannot be traced further back than the sixth century, but it is clearly not from this period; nor is it a Shangqing text. Its language, style and contents all point to a much earlier and quite different origin (Kaltenmark 1979, 48-49). However, there is no early citation or parallel text and no definite bibliographical evidence, unless we accept as such either the *Taiping jing* in 50 *juan* or the *Jiayi jing* 甲乙經 (Scripture Arranged in Cyclical Characters) in 170, which are listed in the bibliographical chapter of the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (Wang M. 1979, 747). Another possible reference could be a *Shenshu* 神書 (Divine Book) in 170 *juan* mentioned in the Buddhist *Mouzi lihuo lun* 牟子理惑論 (Mouzi's Correction of Errors, T. 2102, 52.1a-7a; see Wang M. 1979, 747).

Both the title and the number of chapters of the transmitted text bring it into the neighborhood of the *Taiping qingling shu* 太平清領書, which Xiang Kai 襄楷 presented to Emperor Huan in 166 C.E. (HHS 30B). He intended to draw imperial attention to the "divine book" Gong Chong 宮崇 had received from his teacher Gan Ji 干吉 or Yu Ji 于吉 and had in vain attempted to present at court (HHS 30B.1080; Petersen 1989; De Crespigny 1976). Nothing solid is known of the supposed author of the book, but there are two further figures known as either Gan Ji or Yu Ji, with whose legends he may have been connected in later ages. One of them lived early in the third century and was a shamanic practitioner in the service of Sun Ce's 孫策 army; the other lived in the mid-third century and had a healing relationship with the Daoist Bo He 帛和 (see Petersen 1989; 1990a). Xiang Kai, like other Confucian scholars propagating the text, came from Langye in Shandong, as also did the promoters of an earlier Great Peace text, known as the *Tianguan li baoyuan taiping jing* 天官歷包元太平經 (Scripture on the Keeping of the Original Mandate and Great Peace According to the Calendar Revealed by the Officers of Heaven). The latter was presented first to Emperor Cheng (r. 32-7 B.C.E.) and then again to Emperor Ai (r. 7 B.C.E.-1 C.E.). On both occasions the text was found unacceptable, but we know it was kept in the imperial library because Wang Mang quoted it and implemented a reform of the clepsydra as the text had suggested (Petersen 1992).

There is no need to doubt Fan Ye's remark that Zhang Jue, the leader of the Yellow Turbans, had seen and made use of the second-century Great Peace text (HHS 30B.1084). What we know about the contents of this "Book in Blue" agrees with the transmitted text of the *Taiping jing*. But whether the two are at least in part identical is another and hitherto unresolved matter. The hagiographical tradition, as well as scholars, such as Maxime Kaltenmark, Ofuchi Ninji, Takahashi Tadahiko, Hachiya

Kunio and others who have analysed the *Taiping jing*'s contents, usually treat it as if it were a text of the second century. The fact that references to social and political circumstances relate to a Han environment, and that there are few if any traces of Buddhist practices and terminology, can be seen as supporting their position. Yoshioka Yoshitoyo and other religious historians place it firmly within the Shangqing tradition (Mansvelt-Beck 1980, 173), and evidence for an early date can indeed be considered inadequate.

Linguistic research on the text is as yet meager (Yu 1997), but it is quite obvious that the different textual layers show specific characteristics. The language used in the large layer-A section seems to be unparalleled, either during the Han or later. Auxiliaries and verbal complements are used frequently, two- and even three-character lexical compounds abound, only a limited range of characters is put to use and the sentence structure is clumsy and simplistic. The argument between the "celestial master" and his disciples is carried on in a repetitive and often careless manner. Comparison with the well-written and tidy *Taiping jingchao* shows clearly how far layer-A materials differ from standard classical Chinese prose. It can be argued that layer-B materials are written in less colloquial and slightly more standard language.

Attempts to date the text are usually undertaken on the basis of contents. Takahashi, for instance, considers B-layer texts as the earliest (1984, 328). The belief in salvation through self-accusation expressed in this layer was indeed an element of the early Daoist movements, but the concern with society at large in the layer-A texts can also be placed in the context of Han political thought. Petersen attempts to reconstruct a full 50-juan *Taiping jing* as mentioned in the *Baopuzi* from layer-B and C texts and argues that layer-A texts go back to the fifth century at the earliest (1990a, 198). This interpretation is unacceptable to scholars who take the text's message seriously, and there seems to be no evidence for such a late date.

Further linguistic analysis can be expected to arrive at more solid conclusions. As things stand, we must consider the *Taiping jing* to be a text edited in the sixth century from earlier, most likely second-century material of different sources. While layer-B materials could come from one source, layer-A texts contain enough internal contradictions to make it possible—although not necessary—that it goes back to several sources. We cannot even speculate as to whether a certain Gan Ji wrote parts of the text, but there is no need to completely separate the transmitted text from the Langye tradition of Great Peace texts.

The *Xiang'er* 想爾 (Thinking of You; see Bokenkamp 1997, 61; trl. Bokenkamp 1997, 78-148; index Mugitani 1985a) is a commentary to the *Laozi*, written in standard *xiaogu* 訓詁 style. It has been marginalized by the Daoist tradition to the extent that it has only been preserved in a Dunhuang manuscript (S. 6825) written around 600 C.E. The manuscript contains

only the first of two parts, annotating sections 3 to 37 of the *Daode jing*. It has been edited and discussed in Rao 1991.

In dating the text, a first criterion is the edition of the *Laozi*, on which the commentary is based. The *Xiang'er* annotates a pre-Heshang gong version, a fact made clear because its text is not divided into sections (Chen S. 1957, 46) and has more in common with the Mawangdui manuscripts than with the transmitted text (Boltz 1982, 109). It is also close to the "Five Thousand Character" edition, which has a preface by Ge Xuan 葛玄 (fl. 200 C.E.; see Ôfuchi 1991, 250).

In regard to terms and contents, twenty-seven precepts have been extracted from the *Xiang'er* and edited as a separate text (in CT 786; see Rao 1964). These have eclipsed in popularity the *Xiang'er* from which they were derived (Bokenkamp 1997, 59). The precepts are cited in the *Dadao jia lingjie* 大道家令戒 (Commands and Admonitions for the Families of the Great Dao, in CT 789; trl. Bokenkamp 1997, 165-85), a text allegedly released in the year 255. They also contain the expression *xiang'er*, possibly in reference to the text (Bokenkamp 1997, 59-60).

Citations in other early materials similarly suggest a Han-dynasty date and so do, it can be argued, the work's similarities to the *Taiping jing* (Rao 1964; 1991). Bibliographical evidence of the Six Dynasties points to Zhang Lu as the text's author, a notion also corroborated by Lu Deming 陸德明 (ca. 550-630) in his *Jingdian shiwen* 經典釋文 (Explanations to the Classics), although he replaces the character *er* 爾 in the title with *yu* 余, which caused William Boltz (1982) to doubt whether Lu actually ever saw the text. Other Tang-dynasty authors credited Zhang Daoling instead of Zhang Lu (Bokenkamp 1997, 75).

While Rao, Boltz, Bokenkamp and others accept an early date and even the authorship of Zhang Lu, Kobayashi has held against it the use of certain terms—including some shared with the *Taiping jing*—and the criticism directed against other Daoist groups in regard to sexual and sacrificial practices. He concludes that the text is a product of the southern tradition of the fifth century (1987; 1990, 317). Mugitani, too, wishes to place the text in the fifth century, but in a northern environment, basing his argument on the role of the underworld known as *taiyin* 太陰 (great yin) in the text's longevity beliefs and its conception of *qi* 氣 (1985b).

The commentary provides a community-oriented interpretation of the *Laozi*, integrating the generally accepted moral code into a religion-based system of rewards and punishments. The title "thinking of you" suggests the frequently uttered promise that the Dao, if you keep it in mind, will keep you in mind, which will be reflected in the length of your life. It remains distant from the concepts of the *Laozi*, not so much in socio-political matters but by discussing behavioral issues like sexual hygiene and other longevity practices.

The *Laozi bianhua jing* 老子變化經 (Scripture of Laozi's Transformations, S. 2295; trl. Seidel 1969a, 60-73) is preserved in fragmentary form in a Dunhuang manuscript, which was written in 612. Internal evidence suggests that the text was put together after 185 C.E., thirty years after the last noted descent of Laozi, and before the end of the Han dynasty, of whose overthrow it speaks. The date of composition is supported also by the *Laozi ming* 老子銘 (Inscription for Laozi), which was written on a stele at Bozhou shortly after 165 (Seidel 1969a, 45-50, 121-28). Both texts match the worldview of the Daoist mass movements and show the deep veneration felt for the divinized Laozi in different segments of the population (Seidel 1969a, 73-78). In form, the texts contain stylized prose that describes the cosmic origins and powers of Laozi. The *Bianhua jing* also specifies his descents under various ancient dynasties as well as in Sichuan in the second century. It encourages believers to practice as the deity tells them, so they can be saved.

WORLDVIEW

An account of the worldview of groups of early medieval rebellious peasants must necessarily be speculative if not fictitious. Instead of attempting such an account, the worldview expressed in the *Taiping jing* and *Xiang'er* will be outlined, with reference to the Daoist movements when feasible. While it is impossible to prove that the rebels shared the views expressed in these texts, it is also difficult to argue that they were not to some extent influenced by them.

Authors and audience of these texts saw the world through several interpretative frameworks, one superimposed on the other. In the first place, they were under the impact of the worldview developed and promoted in scholarly circles, at court and among the leading bureaucrats, from the beginnings of the Han. However, styles and contents of the texts suggest that their authors came from a less glamorous social and educational background and remained even closer to the ideas and rituals of popular religion than their highly educated contemporaries, who also were attracted to some of those rituals (Harper 1982, 88). Finally, the values they held were "Daoist" in the sense of the ancient Daoist philosophers and the newly emerging religious beliefs.

The outlook of the texts encompassed all three layers, perhaps to varying degrees. The *Taiping jing* authors were more radically "Daoist" in their values and political aims, but the *Xiang'er* may have had a more lasting effect on the development of the religion. Due to the unequal lengths of the texts, much of the following will be based on the *Taiping jing*. I will attempt to give a full account of the authors' views, not just of the points where they

differed from more widely accepted opinions. Their worldview was comprehensive and as such cohered in an internal logic, with the concept of life or destiny (*ming* 命) at its center. Life permeated the whole of society through the flow of *qi*-vapors, goods and information which had to fluctuate and mix in order to protect the continuity and strength of life. To achieve this, early Daoism produced a new set of values and an accompanying set of rules for personal behavior and political management. In this respect the concept of life held the same function within the Daoist system of thought as did ritual propriety (*li* 禮) in Confucian doctrine.

THE WORLD was divided into three layers of a dominating heaven, a supportive earth and the realm of human beings, who were the creation of heaven and earth and also the basis for their existence. Heaven was simultaneously seen as a person who expressed and enforced his will, and as a principle that prevailed in the world. It was not unlike an order of nature, except that it was moral as well as physical. As principle, heaven authorized all expressions of "celestial will," and was at once the supreme ruler and this ruler's authorization (Hendrichske 1985, 85). Heaven's rules, therefore, were binding and if they were not followed, disasters would occur that heaven could not prevent. It could provide warnings. Heaven was also the physical sky and by its movements could inform human beings about the propriety of their actions. All planetary irregularities, solar and lunar eclipses in particular, were caused by human action, because in nature as such there was no such disorder (Wang M. 1979, 92.366; Hendrichske 1985). But astronomy and astrology demanded learning and expertise, and the *Taiping jing* authors also relied on more direct messages. In particular, there was a widespread fascination with mysteriously discovered objects and texts of supposedly heavenly origin (see Seidel 1983).

The whole world was thought to be physically coherent, and human beings were in the central position of being responsible for the welfare of all. It was in line with this belief that Zhang Jue and his two brothers chose the titles "General for the Lords of Heaven, Earth and Humanity" when they became leaders of the Taiping movement. From similar considerations the Celestial Masters adhered to the traditional seasonal rules (*yueling* 月令; see Major 1993), that guided agricultural production and all other routines of daily life. All human action had cosmic repercussions. Yin-oriented actions among men, such as the consumption of wine (*yin*) in the marketplace (also *yin*), would give distress to the *yang* element and cause social disturbances (Wang M. 1979, chao 214).

However, **yin-yang** and **five-phases** theories were still in a formative stage, and the *Taiping jing* modified them to serve specific social aims. The need was proclaimed to always pair one unit of *yang*-quality with two units of *yin*-quality, because *yang* represented the odd number and *yin* the even. *Yin*, therefore, needed full support to allow it to grow to the right size. In

practical terms, this meant the prohibition of female infanticide and the mating of each man with two women (Wang M. 1979, 34-35.37). Similarly, the clearing of hills by fire was prohibited because it would assemble too much yang (Wang M. 1979, 118.668). These measures, irrespective of their socio-political merits, were authorized by the claim to properly integrate human activities into the forces of the cosmos. The performance of large rituals, through which the imperial court attempted to symbolically safeguard cosmic harmony and cooperation, were not within the power of the rebel leaders. Instead, they proposed direct measures that could be implemented by individuals and small communities.

MORAL NORMS. How did a Han dynasty person know how to act, in private as well as in public life? The moral norms were those propagated by Confucius and his followers, and were to be learned from classical scriptures. In other words, all action was guided by moral considerations that were to be learned through education. Speculation about heaven and the five phases, together with other prognostic techniques, were not meant to compete with or oppose this basic orientation, but rather to support it. Laozi and Zhuangzi had criticized moral values and argued that evil came from the attempt to be good. However, the *Xiang'er* sided with the *Huainanzi* and the intellectual mainstream when it attributed a new meaning to Laozi's programmatic statement that heaven and earth were not benevolent (ch. 5): here heaven and earth "are benevolent to all those who are good and not benevolent to those who are bad." Similarly, in stressing the virtue of quietude as control over emotions and desires, the text also promoted conventional moral thinking (see also Bokenkamp 1997, 53). To interpret the demand for *wuwei* as a warning against deceit and fabrications (Bokenkamp 1997, 51) again turns Laozi's sayings back to conventional morality. This is echoed in Zhang Lu's attempt to make business transactions honest (*Sanguo zhi* 8.263; *Huayang guozhi* 華陽國志 2.72). Still, both major texts also had an alternative value system, oriented towards the cyclical course of nature and the natural organism of living creatures rather than the socio-cultural traditions that had informed Confucian as well as early quietist thought.

While not taking issue with the well-known parameters of moral conduct, the *Taiping jing* proposed significant modifications. Filial piety, for instance, was not understood as strict obedience and punctual service, but as providing one's father and mother with recipes for longevity (Wang M. 1979, 47.134). The main virtue to be propagated and adhered to was "life," or the preservation and prolongation of life and its qualities, namely flexibility, softness, mobility as well as pervasiveness and penetrability. In a formal sense the concept of life as virtue and behavioral norm is comparable to the ritual propriety of the Confucians, which refers to a state of things, a set of actions and also to the attitude behind these actions. The

term "pervading the extremes" (*dongji* 洞極) points to the value of life and "Scripture of Complete Pervasion" (*Dongji jing* 洞極經) served as the title for a book whose history has much in common with the *Taiping jing* (Kaltenmark 1979, 25).

Heqi 和氣, the harmonization of energies in ritual sexual intercourse, was a related concept of great practical relevance (Maspero 1981, 533-36; Kobayashi 1992). Arguments in its favor can be found in the *Xiang'er* (Bokenkamp 1997, 46) as well as in the *Taiping jing* (Hendrichske 1992, 67), presenting it as a way to create general pervasiveness and prevent blockage (Wang M. 1979, 86.317; Hendrichske 1992, 77). The individual, therefore, carried the responsibility for causing a standstill of natural cycles and processes, thus interrupting the link between heaven and humanity and precipitating the end of humankind. In this respect, the most important human duty was to produce offspring and be sexually active—the *Taiping jing* makes no distinction between the two but contains violent attacks against chastity as a crime against heaven and earth (Wang M. 1979, 117.658). The *Xiang'er's* attacks against *coitus interruptus* can also be seen in this light because the practice would block the proper flow of *qi*. Intercourse must, the text says, take place "at the right time" and, as in cultivating a field, go into the right soil. If not, the *qi* of heaven and earth will suffer an interruption (Wang M. 1979, 733; Eichhorn 1954b, 473-74).

POLITICS AND SOCIETY. In the political realm, the *Taiping jing* authors demanded that life be promoted by guaranteeing wide-ranging communication. Information must flow freely in all directions, particularly news of inauspicious omens and complaints from the people, but also all types of suggestions, ideas and teachings; to receive instruction and not to pass it on was considered evil (Hendrichske 1992, 74-75). Communication happened mainly as a distribution of texts; from below, suggestions would reach the leaders, who would scrutinize them and issue a selection as new guidelines. Even contact with deities and spirits was upheld through the written word.

The need for open fluctuation was general and encompassing. If society was to represent life, it had to remain in a state of constant flux that included everyone and everything. This meant that commodities must not be hoarded but always circulated, that everyone consuming goods should also participate in their production. All were expected to contribute to social order and coherence from their particular point in the social hierarchy. This "contribution" could also contain individual anger and protest, so that the suffering of incarcerated prisoners or of mothers whose newborn girls were not permitted to live had an impact on society as a whole because heaven took note of it and turned their distress back on society (Wang M. 1979, 35.36). It was, therefore, only reasonable to expect political leaders to take note of these things and show concern. Similarly, popular discontent

was a serious issue, and the government had to safeguard the people's peace of mind as much as their need to eat, dress and have children.

SELF CULTIVATION. Social peace was seen as the condition for individual longevity, as Wang Mang had claimed when he said that the quality of his reign caused life-prolonging mushrooms to sprout (HHS 99A.4050). Celestial rewards and punishments, be they for communal or individual actions, consisted mainly in prolonging or shortening life. The criterion for distinguishing right from wrong action was the promotion as opposed to the obstruction of life. While the agenda of the *Taiping jing* was mainly communal, individuals were also expected to directly prolong their own life. The text contains extensive information on dietary practices, medical substances and treatment, magical talismans and the movement of *qi* and winds—all techniques shamanic practitioners would have employed (Kaltenmark 1979, 42-43). Behavioral rectitude also played a role, because it was closely watched by a person's body gods who controlled illness and good health (Miyakawa 1983, 489; Seidel 1969a, 71; Wang M. 1979, chao 719).

Meditation was seen as another way of achieving physical health, with the *Xiang'er* propagating spiritual concentration as a means to quietude and lack of desires, not unlike the ways described in the "Xinshu" 心術 (Arts of the Heart) and other chapters of the *Guanzi* 管子 (Bokenkamp 1997, 41; see also Roth 1999). The *Taiping jing*, on the other hand, in line with the *Laozi bianhua jing* (Seidel 1969a, 71), introduced more technical practices that involved the visualizing of colors and body gods (*shouyi* 守一; Kaltenmark 1979, 41-42). In addition, both texts claimed that meditation served to alleviate any faults committed and thus was an essential step towards producing a confession that would recover health.

The sequence of good and bad times formed the overall framework for moral and political decision-making. In accordance with dominant Han thinking, it was seen in terms of a golden age of Great Peace, followed by a period of decadence, flowing along in extended cycles. While early Daoists agreed with this in principle, they had also a more linear conception of time, seeing the general deterioration reach a point of no return and the end of humankind (Petersen 1990b). This gave more urgency to their programs than more traditionally oriented reformers could muster. The *Taiping jing* conceptualized this view of history by introducing the term "inherited evil" (*chengfu* 承負). This meant that for many generations, through communal and individual malpractices, evil had been collectively accumulated and would soon lead to natural disasters and epidemics that would stifle all life (Hendrichs 1992). The imminent danger of extinction demanded new ways of information and missionary mobilization; it could also have been behind the proposed need for mass organization, anti-government propaganda, armed uprisings and resistance, secession and

even the replacement of the emperor as they became manifest in the Later Han movements. Numerical speculation provided additional arguments for the urgency of reforms, and the rebels' use of the *jiazi* year makes sense in this context, although in the *Taiping jing* the date given for the introduction of reforms is the less prominent *xuanjia* 玄甲 (Wang M. 1979, 102.495).

The concept of **inherited evil** was central; it was the result of actions which caused blockages of various kinds and lead to loss of life:

Since the beginning of heaven and earth, unfavorable evil influences have never been eliminated: when they were eliminated they arose again. Why is this? Now, longevity is the most valuable celestial treasure, which is a special gift to the virtuous; it cannot be obtained by pretense. If you want to know something about this treasure: when the myriad beings of heaven and earth, in all six directions and the eight distances, have not a single reason for hidden resentment and are very happy, only then will you gain longevity. (Wang M. 1979, 11.22)

Inherited evil made the fate of the individual depend on that of humankind and further connected individual actions to the fate of future generations. This was of greater relevance than individual afterlife, which the *Taiping jing* only mentions in criticisms of fancy and expensive burial rites. This followed the general trend among intellectuals but also put forward new arguments based on the Daoist value of life. To serve the dead to the material detriment of the living was evil and to spoil the spirits of the dead with luxurious offerings would draw them back into the world of the living where they did not belong (Wang M. 1979, 36.49).

PRACTICES

Daoist movements grew out of a tradition of mass movements and shared with them elements of military organization, religious activity and rituals for political authorization. In some ways they were more mass movements than Daoist; their causes, formation, development and rituals were largely within the parameters of previous movements, which used the supernatural for legitimization and contained a touch of millenarianism. It is impossible to say how original the Daoist practices were that the texts describe for the outgoing second century C.E., because there is no equivalent information about other movements. As it stands, one may argue that the Daoists produced alternative institutions and organizations that seriously contended for political and ideological dominance. However, we cannot conclude that the Red Eyebrows, who had an extended and successful movement, had nothing of that sort simply because the sources choose not to speak about it (Bielienstein 1954, 144).

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS. One characteristic practice of the early movements was their missionary activity. Zhang Jue sent eight

disciples out into the world to convert people to the true doctrine and gradually take over the world (HHS 71.2299; Eichhorn 1955, 298). In doing so he was imitating both Wang Mang (HHS 99.4066; Dubs 1955, 184) and the sage-ruler Shun 舜 (*Shiji* 1.35). Similarly, the *Taiping jing* has six disciples of the Celestial Master go everywhere and convert political power holders (Wang M. 1979, 86.320), spreading the good word in the manner of the bad, which tends to travel very fast as ten messengers each inform ten others (Wang M. 1979, 37.58). In addition, heaven had issued texts for the benefit of the Celestial Master to hand to his disciples, who in turn should present them to an enlightened political ruler for implementation (Wang M. 1979, 96.422), or find and authorize yet others to do the task for them (Wang M. 1979, 67.255). This transmission was accompanied by oral instruction, as the heavenly texts were brief and cryptic, instruction given by the Celestial Master to his followers, whom he addressed as "perfected" and invited to raise questions and comments. These, in the *Taiping jing*, were followed by short dialogues leading up to a long speech interrupted only by voices of approval, which contained threats as well as promises to oblige the audience to do as they were told. Nothing prevents us from imagining that Zhang Jue or Zhang Ling had similar talks with their disciples to prepare them for missionary work, which they undertook in obedience to heavenly command and initiative.

CONFESSION OF SINS. Shamanic and exorcistic skills also played an important role in the movements. Practitioners learned the Yellow Emperor's teachings on the human body and memorized Laozi's lines on the cycle of nature and the value of life, and were thus equipped for spiritual medical practice. Zhang Jue is said to have called himself "great physician" (HHS 24.290) and to have carried the staff with nine knots, a shamanist tool, which he raised when issuing a magic talisman (*Dianlu*, *Sanguo zhizhu* 8.264). All harm came from the spirits, and accordingly the talismans, written in complex, artistic and highly symbolic characters, were addressed to otherworld officials begging for protection and support. Some talismans also depicted constellations (Wang Y. 1996, 270). They would be burnt to provide patients with "talisman water" (*fushui* 符水), which they would receive respectfully and swallow as if it were medicine (Strickmann 1985, 191-92). If healed in a short time, the patient was promoted into the ranks of the "believers." Illnesses and other troubles were often assumed to be caused by ghosts of deceased family members. Therefore, grave-securing writs (*zhemmu wen* 鎮墓文) were issued: "Let the odium of the soil be driven off, with the desire that evil be kept from propagating. Once these orders have been transmitted, the civil servants of the earth shall be bound and are not to trouble the Zhang household again. Quickly, quickly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances!" (Nickerson 1997, 244).

PERSONAL PRACTICES. While spirits and demons were responsible for sending diseases, they would normally not act on their own account. The underlying causes were trespasses committed by the patient, for which he was punished by illness. Therefore, the sick were expected to confess their wrong doings in order to be healed. The histories report in great detail on this form of diagnosis (see HHS 71.2299, 75.2435; *Sanguo zhi* 8.263; *Dianlue*, *Sanguo zhizhu* 264). While confession was also a Buddhist practice this does not necessarily mean that the Daoists borrowed it from them (Stein 1963, 35), although their practitioners did possess a range of insignia from different backgrounds to impress their audience, and certain Buddhist rituals were popular. Yu Ji, or Gan Ji, for example, was a famous healer who handled talismans in the form of a spate as tokens of his shamanic inheritance, and burned incense (which shows that he had met with Buddhists). Daoist hagiography promoted him to the ranks of the immortals after Sun Ce had him executed (*Sanguo zhi* 46.1110; Miyakawa 1964, 98; Petersen 1989).

The integration of confessions into medical treatments is mentioned for both Daoist movements, but if we are to trust the historians, confession was given more prominence among the Celestial Masters. The latter expected the sick to withdraw to so-called "chambers of quietude" or "oratories" (*jingshi* 靜室; see *Dianlue*, *Sanguo zhizhu* 8.264; HHS 75.2436; Yoshikawa 1987), where they were to meditate on their mistakes while a "libationer in charge of controlling evil" (*jianling jiju* 奸令祭酒; *Sanguo zhi* 264) presided over the communal recital of the "Text in Five Thousand Words" in a ceremony called "controlling the evil." Once the patient had made a confession, the "demon official" (*guaili* 鬼吏) would write down all offenses, together with the patient's name, and send both in form of a petition (*zhang* 章) to the Three Bureaus of heaven (by exposure on a mountain), earth (by interment) and water (by submerging) (*Dianlue*, *Sanguo zhizhu* 8.264; see Tsuchiya 1994).

Even if this practice of confession was an adaptation of Buddhist practices, it became specifically Daoist through this bureaucratic procedure (Zürcher 1980, 135-36). It was not only reserved for the sick, but was a form of "self examination" (*ziyin* 自隱) that had to be undertaken by everyone. For retribution, people were sent to repair roads, working on a hundred feet to make up for a small offense (*guo* 過), which was not yet a sin (*zui* 罪). Only after three violations of the divine law (*fanya* 反法) would someone be subjugated to formal punishment (*Sanguo zhi* 8.263; HHS 75.2436). With this, early Daoists laid the foundation for a long tradition of wide-ranging religious precepts for enforcing moral norms through announcing punishments and rewards to be meted out by a spiritual bureaucracy. This can be seen in the *Tai ping jing* and in the *Xiang'er* lists of precepts (Bokenkamp 1993; 1997, 49-52). These precepts differed from the more

narrowly defined secular penal code, with its focus on social order rather than moral improvement, and offered the religious community some protection against it.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION. To treat and heal diseases was the economic and social basis of the movements, not only because those who were healed were expected to pay the practitioner's services but also because healing created a cohesive, inclusive society. When outlaws endangered security, for example, a locality was expected to organize communal gatherings which involved everyone, even the local villains. All were assembled, seated according to their social position, given wine and addressed by a person in charge to help the authorities to track down the bandits (Kaltenmark 1979, 32; Wang M.1979, 35.39-42). Similarly, to improve the society, all regions were covered by a network of suggestion boxes, which were regularly emptied and their contents evaluated and selectively made public to arrive at political guidelines (Hendrichs 1992, 79). The official Han system of guest houses for the poor, distributed along the roads at regular distances, was kept intact and expanded (Stein 1963, 64). Travellers were provided with food and its distribution was controlled by religious precepts: those who took more than they needed would fall ill (HHS 75.2435; *Sanguo zhi* 8.263).

Social justice was also an issue—the rich who hoarded valuables were called “rats in the granary” in an allusion to the *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of Songs); those able-bodied but not working were not to eat; punishments were evil because they caused resentment and excluded individuals from the flux of society and the cycle of reproduction (Wang M.1979, 67.243-247; 47.144; 39.68). The Daoists also adhered to generally accepted calendar rules, avoiding killing in spring and summer and prohibiting the slaughter of animals and the consumption of alcohol (*Dianlue*, *Sanguo zhi* 8.264; Wang M. 1979, chao 214; see Seidel 1969a, 71).

Administration. It is difficult to know how the movements were administered, but we gain some idea from institutional terminology which they used, especially since it was customary to advertise political intentions through newly designed administrative terms (this had been practised by Qin Shihuang, Wang Mang and others).

First, the territory reigned over by the Celestial Masters consisted of twenty-four commanderies or parishes (*zhi* 治; HHS 8.349) to be governed and “healed” (*zhi* 治). Each had an altar platform (*tan* 壇) for religious services at its center (Stein 1963, 15). The number twenty-four was of speculative value, twice the twelve of the branches and months, and also representing the twenty-four two-week periods of the agricultural year. Among the Yellow Turbans, the figure was thirty-six, which had a long tradition in that Qin Shihuang had redesigned China as an empire consisting of thirty-six commanderies (*jun* 郡), and the *Hanshu* counts thirty-

six countries to China's west (*Shiji* 6.239; *Hanshu* 96A.3871). Beyond its speculative and historical role, this number was also linked to other Taiping institutions, in that thirty-six "generals" (*jiangjun* 將軍) would protect Zhang Jue and his eight emissaries in each of the four directions (Eichhorn 1955, 298).

There was no clear-cut distinction between the names for administrative personnel and the units or places to be administered. While *fang* 方, as a non-technical term, means "region," the "ten thousand *fang*" of the *Shijing* 書經 (Book of History) were the overseers of regions (Eichhorn 1955, 298; Legge 1960, 184-85). In the Yellow Turban environment such ambiguity may well have been intentional (see *Sanguo zhi* 46.1094). Under Zhang Jue, a "great *fang*" was a general in charge of at least ten thousand people, a small *fang* controlled six or seven thousand, and each *fang* installed his own chiefs (*qushi* 渠師; HHS 71.2299). This points to a structural decentralization that is in line not only with the *Laozi* and *Huainanzi*, but also with the administrative policies suggested in the *Taiping jing*. It also represents a highly practicable approach for the movements to employ.

The administrative terms used by the Taiping and the Celestial Masters followed patterns that had been established in earlier movements. The Red Eyebrows, for example, had installed thirty "camps" (*yings* 營), each with ten thousand men and led by a "leader" (*juren* 巨人) who was assisted by an "attendant" (*congshi* 從事). In addition, they had senior officers known as the "thrice venerable" (*santalao* 三老), "libationers" (*jijiu* 祭酒) and "clerks" (*zushi* 卒史; HHS 11.479; *Hanshu* 99C.4171; see Dubs 1955, 416). The *Hanshu* pointed out that these titles, except for *juren*, referred to local officials and represented a gross understatement in that the numbers commanded were much larger than the titles suggested. While *juren* was not an official title, it was a customary appellation of leading personalities, as in the *juzi* of the Mohists and the *jushi* of the Yellow Turbans. The rebels also addressed each other with this appellation (HHS 11.478).

The hierarchy. In both movements the leader was known as the "master" (*shi* 師). Thus Zhang Jue was called the "great sage and good master" (*daxian liangshi* 大賢良師; HHS 71.2299). This designated his role as a dynastic teacher, similar to the "Celestial Master" of the *Taiping jing*, and to Laozi as the teacher of dynasties in the *Bianhua jing* (Seidel 1969b, 221; 1969a, 53). Zhang Lu chose the title "Lord Master" (*shijun* 師君) for himself.

Next, the leader of a commandery was called a "commandery head and great libationer" (*zhitou da jijiu* 治頭大祭酒; *Sanguo zhi* 8.263) or also a "village head" (*litou* 里頭; HHS 75.2435). The title of libationer was granted to all followers of the Celestial Masters who were proven believers, while new entrants were referred to as "demon soldiers" (*guizu* 鬼卒), as if they owed corvée service to the demons (Stein 1963, 42). The title "libationer"

in the Han had been reserved for a respected local leader of high moral impact who also functioned as master of ceremonies at communal gatherings (Stein 1963, 53-55). He (there is no hint of women libationers in the second-century movements) was in charge of the "houses of righteousness" (*yishe* 義舍). These served as centers of communal life and, depending on their location, might also have doubled as chambers of quietude (Stein 1963, 65-66). Libationers fulfilled all administrative duties, replacing the local chiefs and clerks of the secular state (*Sanguo zhi* 8.263). Among the Celestial Masters even minor officials were literate and their religious functions involved writing.

Spiritual and administrative leadership was united in one person, an innovation that can be described as a form of theocracy. Before the Daoists, armies had always been accompanied by shamanic practitioners for the sake of spiritual protection, but they were never identical with army leaders or officers, not even in a rebellious army like that of the Red Eyebrows. Gan Ji followed the army as a shaman but was treated by officers as their superior. Sun Ce was outraged by this and had him executed in order to reestablish the traditional division of labor and rank (*Jiang biao zhuan*; *Sanguo zhi* 46.1110). When Marxist scholars have interpreted such controversies as instances of class conflict they have a point, in that the background and social network of a religious practitioner might have differed from that of a regular official (Harrison 1970, 168). When historians see Zhang Lu's political success as closely linked to the libationers' activities, they give due credit to the movement's administrative innovativeness (*Sanguo zhi* 8.263).

The titles used under Sun En tell a different story. When he refers to his followers as "the long-lived," he stresses the movement's focus on individual salvation, independent of social surroundings (*Jinshu* 100.2632). Sun En announced political ambitions by calling himself the "general who subjugates the east," to which Lu Xun added "general pacifying the south" (*Jinshu* 100.2632, 2634). Sun Tai, moreover, was seen as a deity and given property and children in exchange for the obtaining of good fortune. This is different from the early movements, where leaders had been divinely appointed messengers but were not themselves gods (but see Mugitani 1977, 46).

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES. The Pantheon. While Zhang Jue certainly believed in Heaven, the historians' phrase "he called himself the Great Peace of Yellow Heaven" is a polemical inaccuracy (*Sanguo zhi* 46.1094; HHS 8.348). However, the rebel leader proclaimed the need to achieve Great Peace through promoting Heaven's original intentions which, he asserted, had so often been misunderstood. In their petitions to the celestial powers, the Yellow Turbans used specifically "petitions in the Yue style directed to the Yellow Divine" (*huangshen yuezhang* 黃神越章; Liu 1996, 125). Their garb was yellow, and it was expected that the new Yellow

Heaven would replace the bluish heaven of old (Liu 1996, 130; Fang 1993, 10). The fact that the two colors can be seen as opposites (*Mozi* 2/3/1) adds additional relevance to their use by Zhang Jue. In short, he felt the need to set up a new "Yellow Heaven" (HHS 71. 2299), just as he transformed the well-established deity Taiyi (the Great One) into Zhonghuang taiyi 中黃太一, the Great One of the Central Yellow (*Sanguo zhi* 1.10; Seidel 1969a, 58). The deity was thereby linked to the Yellow Emperor and to Huanglao jun, the Yellow Venerable Lord and an incorporation of Laozi.

The *Laozi bianhua jing* states that this deity created the world and continued to appear in manifestations to advise its rulers—among them the Yellow Emperor. On nine different occasions, the last in 155 C.E., he had transformed himself into a human being in order to save humankind from ruin, and had promised his believers that he would open prisons, heal the ill and overthrow the Han dynasty (Seidel 1969a, 73). Laozi also played a prominent role in the saga of Zhang Lu's grandfather, Zhang Ling or Daoling (Kleeman 1998, 66-68). In 142, the deified Laozi installed him as the first Celestial Master by appearing to him in person and concluding the "Covenant of Orthodox Unity." This event is first mentioned in the *Dadao jia lingjie*, possibly as early as 255 (Bokenkamp 1997, 171). The event later came to be celebrated as the foundation of Daoism as an organized religion. The veneration of Laozi centered on the "Text in Five Thousand Words" (Seidel 1969b, 222), the recitation of which was believed to bring magical powers, heal diseases, grant longevity and allow visions of the deity. In conjunction with the *Xiang'er* commentary, the scripture also provided a set of basic behavioral rules (Kohn 1998b).

Ritual practices. Some practices, allegedly performed by Zhang Lu's non-Chinese followers, anticipate later Daoist rituals. These included things such as rolling in mud and soot, smearing one's face with yellow soil, and self-flagellation (Eichhorn 1955, 319). There were also orgies of fertility or life energy that involved the consumption of alcohol and sexual intercourse, and in which men were encouraged to strengthen their yang energy through interrupted sex with a number of women (Maspero 1981, 535-38). This became a characteristic of Sun En's movement.

The *Hou Hanshu* claims that the Yellow Turbans killed human beings as sacrifices to Heaven, at least when Zhang Jue installed himself and his brothers as "generals." This practice is difficult to link to the rest of the Yellow Turban program and has perhaps for this reason not been accepted into the *Zizhi tongjian* account. The remark could refer to executions that were called "sacrifices" (*ci* 祠), or perhaps to offerings of human figurines made from lead or other materials (*qianren* 鉛人). Such figurines were sent to the world of the dead to take the place of a deceased family member who might be atoning for wrongs done while alive. This custom may have been part of early Daoist rituals (Zhang 1996, 265).

From the beginnings of the Celestial Master movement, regular assemblies featuring ritual activities, communal meals and matters of practical concern were held (Stein 1979, 70-71). The "three assemblies" (*sanhui* 三會) took place on the seventh day of the first month (shortly after New Year), on the seventh day of the seventh month (at the beginning of autumn) and on the fifth day of the tenth month (after the harvest). The first served to inform the deities of changes in the congregations, the second to propagate precepts and regulations and the third was the time of the payment of taxes (Ôfuchi 1991, 407). These three assemblies may have corresponded to the three otherworldly bureaus (*sanguan* 三官) of heaven, earth and water (Ôfuchi 1991, 408-9). Later, the three major assemblies were held to honor the Three Primes (*sanyuan* 三元); they superseded the *sanhui* and occurred on the fifteenth of the first, seventh and tenth months (Stein 1979, 70-71).

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