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CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

DAOIST RITUAL TODAY

KENNETH DEAN

DESCRIPTION

Daoist ritual can be described as an elaborate and overpowering oratorio, combining singing, chanting, recitation and dance to the accompaniment of drums, gongs, cymbals, strings and woodwinds. The rich costumes, altar hangings, ritual implements, oil lamps and incense burners set the stage for intricate symbolic actions. These actions range from solemn court audiences to highly dramatic exorcisms complete with sword dances, to moments of sheer farce. Daoist rituals can be performed by a solitary ritual specialist or by a troupe led by a Master of High Merit (*gaogong* 高功). The troupe can vary in size, but often includes a chief cantor and an assistant cantor, a keeper of the incense, and a leader of the dance. In the Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) tradition widespread in north China, Daoist priests perform rites in Daoist monasteries. In the southern Celestial Master (Tianshi 天師) tradition, the ritual specialists maintain altars in their residences, and are hired by community representatives or individuals to perform Daoist rites in local temples dedicated to popular gods, or in private homes.

Rituals can last for days on end, with brief rests between rites, so that time, sleep, and dream meld with cosmic rhythms. The community is represented by headsmen, usually male, selected by divination or rotation, and led by a Master of the Incense Burner (*luzhu* 爐主). These representatives follow the instructions of the Daoist ritual specialists, bowing and offering incense when instructed to do so. The Daoist rites take place inside the local temple, dedicated to any one of the numerous local gods. Ritual practitioners set up a portable altar, set out the Five True Talismans (*wu zhenfu* 五真符) to establish the sacred space and hang up scrolls representing the Three Pure Ones (Sanqing 三清), anthropomorhic emanations of the Dao, Zhang Daoling 張道陵, Xuantian shangdi 玄天上帝 (Supreme Emperor of the Dark Heavens) as well as gods and spirit soldiers of the heavens, the earth, and the waters. Ritual implements include the Daoist master's Five Thunder Seal, his buffalo or metal horn, his sword, incense burner, bowl of water, container of rice with a ruler, a mirror and a pair of scissors, his

audience tablet, and various offerings of tea, wine and rice. They are placed on the central altar. The community responds to the order of the rites by preparing offerings in the courtyard between the temple and the stage, where the Master of High Merit will "present the memorial" to Heaven to announce the success of the ritual to the gods (and to the assembled crowd).

Daoist ritual covers a vast range of repetitive, symbolic, and transformative actions including collective rites of offering, sacrifice and thanksgiving, initiation, prayers for rain, exorcisms of disease-bearing demonic forces, requiems for deceased family members and individual rites featuring meditation and visualization. Its **origins** can be traced back to the meditations and healing rites of the Zhengyi Tianshi 正一 天師 movement (Orthodox Unity, Celestial Masters) in Sichuan in the Han dynasty. Major innovations in later Daoist ritual include the ritual aftereffects of the rise of a meditative/visionary tradition in the Shangqing 上清 revelations (Highest Clarity; 4th c. C.E.), and the composition of liturgies for the deceased and for communal thanksgiving in the Lingbao 靈寶 ritual tradition (Numinous Treasure; 5th c.). Many of these riteual traditions were merged and codified between the fifth and ninth centuries. Tang versions of many rites composed by Zhang Wanfu 張萬福 (fl. 712) and Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933) show remarkable structural similarities with contemporary Daoist rituals practiced in many parts of China. Song ritual compendia provide even more elaborate versions of Daoist rituals, often surpassing contemporary rites in complexity. Rival schools of liturgy in the Song criticized one another vigorously, as new revelations and new Daoist movements generated new rituals and new pantheons. Northern and Southern schools of Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) Daoism elaborated their own monastic regulations and ritual codes; they have preserved a separate ritual tradition to this day.

New movements in south China, such as the Shenxiao 神霄 (Divine Empyrean), Tongchu 童初 (Youthful Incipience), Tianxin 天心 (Heavenly Heart), Jingming 淨明 (Pure Brightness), and Qingwei 清微 (Clear Subtlety) movements, all have left a lasting imprint on contemporary Daoist ritual. Hybrid formations of popular, shamanistic cults and Daoist ritual traditions such as the Sannai 三奶 (Lüshan 閭山) movement generated new pantheons and ritual forms, many of which were not gathered into the Daoist canon, which are still widely practiced across southern China and among communities of Yao and other minorities in south China, Southeast Asia.

French sinologists such as Edouard Chavannes and Henri Maspero (1967; 1981) made **detailed studies** of Daoist ritual texts. Chavannes' "Le jet des dragons" (1919) is still the only full translation of a Daoist liturgy. The contemporary study of Daoist ritual began with the discovery by Kristofer Schipper in the 1960's that Daoist rites in Taiwan preserved many

elements of traditional Daoist liturgy as found in the Daoist canon, even though the ritual specialists there were not aware of the existence of the canon (see Schipper 1975b). Schipper's research demonstrated that a multitude of lines of descent within distinct regional ritual traditions linked contemporary Daoist ritual practice to the great traditions of medieval and late imperial Daoist ritual. The comparative study of contemporary Daoist ritual traditions therefore requires an extensive gathering of liturgical manuscripts along with a precise documentation of ritual traditions across China and in overseas Chinese communities. The importance of such sources was already suggested by the Daoist manuscripts found in the Dunhuang caves, and edited by Ôfuchi Ninji (1978; 1979). Ôfuchi has also edited the liturgical manuscripts of Daoist Master Chen Rongsheng 陳榮盛, of Tainan 臺南, Taiwan (1983). Michael Saso edited and reproduced the liturgical manuscripts of Daoist Masters from Xinzhu 新竹, Taiwan (1975). Recently, Prof. Wang Ch'iu-kui of Tsinghua University in Taiwan has begun editing and publishing a set of reproductions of the complete liturgical manuscripts of several Daoist altars from across southern China, accompanied by thorough documentation on the ritual practice of the Daoist masters (1998-). Important research on Daoist rituals of the Yao, the Zhuang, and the Hakka Chinese has been done by Shiratori Yoshire, Jacques Lemoine, David Holm and John Lagerwey. Detailed descriptions of specific Daoist rituals in Fujian, Zhejiang, Taiwan and Hong Kong have been written by Liu Chih-wan, Li Xianzhang, Tanaka Issei, Li Fengmao, Kristofer Schipper, John Lagerwey, Kenneth Dean and others.

In general, one can discern **two major ritual traditions** in contemporary Daoism, the Quanzhen school and the various offshoots of the Zhengyi Lingbao traditions. The former are predominant in northern China, although they made substantial inroads into southern China (Zhejiang, Guangdong, Hong Kong, Fujian) in the late imperial period. Yoshioka has described the workings of the Quanzhen monastery Baiyun guan 白雲觀 in Beijing prior toWorld War II (1979). It is now the center of a Daoist academy and the headquarters of the Daoist Association of China, which publishes a journal. Quanzhen rituals there have recently been videotaped and Quanzhen Daoist music has been outlined by Cao Benye [Ts'ao Pen-yeh] and his colleagues. Further study is necessary to bring out variations between the various branches of Quanzhen in the different parts of China.

The Zhengyi ritual tradition, by contrast, is passed down primarily from father to son within individual families or through master-disciple networks. Most such Daoist ritual troupes work out of their homes. Although ostensibly headquartered in the hereditary home of the descendants of Zhang Daoling at Mount Longhu 龍虎山 (Jiangxi), the many localized ritual traditions of Zhengyi Daoism have developed significant variations over time.

The **range and diversity** of Daoist ritual traditions still practiced in China and in overseas Chinese communities is just beginning to be documented. The most research to date has been done on the Daoist ritual traditions of Taiwan (Schipper 1975; 1985a; Saso 1972; Liu 1983; Ôfuchi 1983; Lagerwey 1987; Li 1993; Maruyama 1995). In Taiwan, major differences have been found between the ritual traditions of the north and the south of the island. Southern Taiwanese Daoists perform communal sacrifices and individual rites as well as requiems, while northern Daoists generally do not perform services for the dead. These Taiwanese Daoist ritual traditions have been traced back to their respective points of origin in Fujian (Dean 1988; Lagerwey 1988). As a result of the concentration of research in the area, the Daoist ritual traditions of the Fujian Minnan region have taken on a somewhat paradigmatic role in Daoist studies (see Schipper 1985a). In this model, the classical, cultures, literary rite of the "black hat" Daoists inside the temple finds its complementary opposite in the vernacular, marital, oral rites of the "red hat" *fashi* (ritual master) outside the temple.

Further research is ongoing into Daoist ritual traditions around China (see Wang 1998-). It may well present differences from the Minnan model of Daoist ritual, and come to reveal various complex mixtures of popular Buddhist, Daoist and shamanic ritual traditions. Nevertheless, in general terms, it is possible even at this stage to bring out the key elements of contemporary Daoist ritual, though aspects of this analysis may change with new ethnographic findings from other areas of China. Many of these key elements can be traced through the layers of accumulations of Daoist ritual (see Maruyama 1995; 2000).

Contemporary Zhengyi ritual as practiced in Quanzhou 泉州 and Zhangzhou 漳州 (Fujian), as well as in southern Taiwan, consists of three major categories: *jiao* 醮 (communal sacrifices), *gongde* 功德 (requiem services) and *xiaofa* 小法 (exorcistic minor rites). Most rituals begin with the creation of a sacred space by placing the Five True Talismans of the Lingbao tradition around the altar and at the central altar. Then the purification and sealing of the altar occur, followed by the invitation of the Daoist gods, the offering of incense and tea, and the enactment of an audience with the gods. The ritual culminates in the presentation of a memorial explaining its purpose and usually listing the names of the sponsors. The remainder involves the reverse process of feasting the gods, an announcement of the success of the ritual, an expression of thanks and a sending-off of the gods, leading eventually to the deconstruction of the altar.

Alongside this general structural framework is the inner visualization of the Master of High Merit. In these visualizations, accompanied by spells, finger movements and pacing out patterns associated with the Daoist stars,

the hexagrams of the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes), and other mantic diagrams, the Daoist master goes on an inner journey, traveling simultaneously in separate spheres (diagrams on the ground, within the body and in the heavens). He visualizes a voyage through his own body to the cranium (containing the astral palaces of the highest emanations of the Dao), where he presents the memorial. In the process of this voyage, he may regress in time to the state of infancy, as in certain inner alchemical processes, only to age anew upon returning to the altar. Contemporary Daoist ritual preserves aspects of the three elements of early Daoist ritual, a preparatory fast and purification, the carrying out of the Dao and the announcement of merit. The final stage is represented in contemporary Daoist ritual by the *jinbiao* 進表 (presentation of the memorial), during which the Daoist master ascends a stage (usually set up across the courtyard and facing the temple) and acts out the presentation of the memorial to the Jade Emperor 玉皇. Community representatives are sometimes invited onto the stage after the memorial has been delivered. These acts serve to represent the recreation of an alliance between the gods and the community. According to the Daoist master's texts, this renewed covenant elevates the status of the entire community, bringing them ever closer to salvation.

History

TIANSHI ZHENGYI ritual, founded by Zhang Lu (fl. 191-215 C.E.), can be said to draw upon Han imperial court ritual as well as shamanistic and mantic traditions of the common religion of the pre-imperial period. There may also have been influence from Buddhism, which was beginning to spread in China in the period of the formation of Daoism. The early Tianshi tradition distinguished itself from the practices of popular cult worship by rejecting blood sacrifices and payment for rites, while adapting bureaucratic and ritual procedures from imperial court audiences to address a newly revealed pantheon of anthropomorphic emanations of the Dao. These newly revealed gods of the Three Heavens 三天 maintained control over the lowly popularly worshiped gods, now revealed to be "demons" 鬼, the stale energies of the lowest Six Heavens. Early texts claim that Lord Laozi himself provided Zhang Daoling (Zhang Lu's grandfather) with registers of gods and demons that would be at his command in 142 C.E. Communication with the gods was carried out in bureaucratic form, with documents in triplicate addressed to the Sanguan 三官 (Three Offices) of the heavens, earth, and water (abode of the underworld) by burning, burying and sinking (see Kobayashi 1991). The "inferior" gods of the popular cults were enlisted as generals and administrators of the dead.

Zhengyi ritual centered on meditation and the confession of sins in a *jingshi* 靜室, a chamber of tranquility or oratory (see Yoshikawa 1987; 1998). As evident from a reconstruction based on the fifth-century Shangqing text *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 (Secret Instructions on the Ascent to Perfection, CT 421; Cedzich 1987), procedures involving this oratory included key ritual sequences such as the ***Falu*** 發爐, lighting the incense burner (of the body). This involved the visualization of the body gods (*cunshen* 存神) and the absorption of cosmic forces into the body, which enabled the adept to ascend to the gods and present a memorial to them. It was followed by a further irrigation of the body of the adept by cosmic powers, and concluded with the ***Fulu*** 復爐, the return of the body gods and the covering up of the incense burner. Other rites outlined in the *Dengzhen yinjue* include the *chuguan* 出官, the exteriorization of the gods listed on the adept's *lu* 籙 register and prayers for aid to the officers in charge of specific illnesses accompanied by confessions and followed (after the cure) by rites of ***Yangong*** 言功, the report of merit. Still more early Daoist ritual practices can be gleaned from the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (Scripture of Great Peace, ed. Wang 1960), the *Xiang'er* 想爾 commentary to the *Daode jing* (see Rao 1992; Bokenkamp 1997) and the *Zhengyi fawen* 正一法文 (Ritual Compendium of Orthodox Unity). The latter was once a veritable canon of Zhengyi ritual in the middle ages, but is now scattered in the Daoist canon and Dunhuang manuscripts in short texts, fragments and citations. Scholars are currently working to restore and edit some twenty texts of this movements, which will greatly assist the study of early Daoist ritual traditions.

The significant emphasis the Celestial Masters placed on **faith-healing** was based on the assumption that illness was largely self-inflicted and due to the commission of sins (see Kobayashi 1992; Tsuchiya 2000), but could also be the result of resentful actions of the wronged dead, including one's own relatives and ancestors (see Nickerson 1996a). Cure from disease accordingly required confession of both one's own and one's ancestors' transgressions, which was then transmitted to the otherworld in formal memorials, accompanied by petitions for pardon. The latter required the intercession of **ritual masters** who worked by meditation in the oratories. Known as energy dispersing ritual masters (*sanqi* 散氣), they were at the pinnacle of the early Celestial Masters hierarchy, which also included ritual administrators called libationers (*jijiu* 祭酒), lesser managers known as demon soldiers (*guizu* 鬼卒) and commoners referred to as demons (*gui* 鬼). The ritual masters used processes of visualization to summon their body gods, and with their aid transmitted the memorials to the higher gods of the newly revealed Daoist pantheon. They also healed with talismans or consecrated water (*fushui* 符水), which contained the ashes of talismans. The Zhengyi theocracy appears also to have instituted **graded initiations** involving the investiture of the initiate with registers of the body gods at

their command. These rites may have included sexual rites of union and merging of body gods, as indicated in the later Shangqing work *Huangshu guodu yi* 黃書過度儀 (Rites of Salvation of the Yellow Writings of Highest Clarity, CT 1294). They were later attacked by Buddhists and were eventually partially suppressed by Daoist reformers.

In the **fourth and fifth centuries** Zhengyi ritual practice diversified as it absorbed elements of the Shangqing and Lingbao traditions. The visualization of body gods played a stronger role, there were more specific rites of purification and self-protection, the presentation of memorials and petitions was increasingly structured, and rites of transmission and ordination ranks were formalized and standardized. Also, as Daoist practitioners came to play a larger role among the common people, "popular" Celestial Master ritualists began to merge the communal kitchen feasts (*chu* 廚) with the celebration of *jiao* sacrifical offerings (see Nickerson 1996).

In the **Tang dynasty**, for the first time *jiao* sacrificial offerings were undertaken after the presentation of certain memorials; however, the main communal feasts of the Celestial Master were still the so-called kitchens. Also, as evident from the *Chisongzi zhangli* 赤松子章曆(Master Red-Pine's Almanac of Petitions, CT 615), there were larger numbers and more specialized formats of memorials, indicating the broad range of needs addressed in Daoist rituals (see Nickerson 1997). Certain memorials concern plaints brought by a parishioner to be adjudicated in the otherworld. These required the mediation of the local tutelary spirit, to whom infractions were first reported and who conducted formal *kaozhao* 考召, interrogations and investigations, to verify the charges, prior to their presentation to the high gods. All rites had to take place on auspicious days and at blessed times, and several texts of the Tang present the importance of calendrical observances and taboos to Daoist ritual. In this, the Celestial Master continued a tradition that reaches back to the *rishu* 日書(almanacs) of the pre-Qin period (see Loewe 1988). Another early tradition continued in Zhengyi ritual is the exorcism and dispersal of demons, undertaken with the use of the correct talisman and by calling out the demon's name, causing it to revert to its true form and be captured by the ritual master. Lists of demons are equally contained among early manuscripts (see Harper 1985) and in medieval Daoist texts, notably in the *Nüqing guilü* 女青鬼律 (Demon Statutes of Nüqing, CT 790). The best general description of all these ritual forms is found in the *Wushang biyao* 無上秘要 (Secret Essentials of the Most High, CT 1138; Lagerwey 1981) and the *Lingbao wugan wen* 靈寶五感文 (Five Correspondences of Numinous Treasure, CT 1278).

SHANGQING, LINGBAO AND OTHERS. The **Shangqing** movement greatly expanded the store of meditations and individual visualizations of the Daoist adept, drawing upon the southern occult traditions of the Jiangnan region represented by Ge Hong 葛洪 and others (see Strickmann

1981; Robinet 1984). It also populated the stars and the underworld with palaces and officials, greatly expanding the Daoist pantheon, and elaborated the practices of visualizing the body gods. Many meditative, visionary practices would remain central to subsequent Daoist ritual.

The **Lingbao** school, by contrast, focused more on communal rites which became the principal *raison d'être* for later Daoist ritual. Its earliest scriptures and liturgies borrowed many elements from Buddhism, such as the universal salvation of all beings, the circumambulation of the altar, figures of the Buddhist pantheon and the emphasis on the recitation of revealed scripture (see Ōfuchi 1974; Zürcher 1980; Bokenkamp 1983; 1997). Rites for the deliverance of the dead, such as those found in the *Mingzhen ke* 明真科 (Rules for the Luminous Perfected, CT 1411), outline a Buddhicized version of the Zhengyi presentation of memorials, with the emphasis on the illumination and salvation of the denizens of the nine realms of the underworld (*jiuyou* 九幽). Yet the Lingbao tradition also retained certain ancient Chinese ritual elements such as the laying out or exposing of talismans on the altar to attract the cosmic powers to the sacred space. As Buddhist elements became increasingly prominent, they were grafted onto an idealized version of Han imperial ritual and an even earlier strata of "hamanic" visionary meditaton. The Buddhist cult of the sacred text and the importance of recitation of scriptures can be seen in various Lingbao texts such as the *Duren jing* 度人經 (Scripture of Universal Salvation, CT 1; see Bokenkamp 1997) and the *Lingbao wufuxu* 靈寶五符序 (Explanation of the Five Lingbao Talismans, CT 388). These talismans (sometimes invisible) still play a major role in the establishment of contemporary Daoist altars in Taiwan.

Other localized traditions of the Six Dynasties period were tied to millenarian beliefs and special communities. An example is found in the texts and practices around the demon-quelling scripture *Shenzhou jing* 神咒經 (Scripture of Divine Incantations, CT 335; see Mollier 1990; Li 1993). Some of these beliefs and practices underlay popular religious uprisings in this period, but they also suggest the survival of Daoist communities in various parts of China. However, by the fifth and sixth centuries, competition from the increasingly powerful Buddhist orders led to pressures for the unification and codification of Daoist ritual. Encyclopedias of Daoist beliefs and practices such as the writings of Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406-477) and the *Wushang biyao* characterize this period. These sources outline a set of nineteen *zhai* 齋 rites (see "The Lingbao School" and "Daoist Ordination"). In general, the division was between Yellow Register rites 黃籙齋 for the diseased, Gold Register Rites 金籙齋 for the living and Jade Register Rites 玉籙齋 for the imperial court.

The TANG DYNASTY supported the Daoist religion, claiming that Laozi was an ancestor of their imperial family. Materials from the Dun-

huang caves confirm the continuity of the Daoist initiation rites and the transmission of a hierarchy of registers, scriptures, liturgies, seals and talismans in this time (see Schipper, 1985b; Benn 1991). Other Tang dynasty Daoist sources point to the growing involvement of Daoism in the expanded requiem services that arose in part in response to Buddhist notions of purgatory. For example, the *Yinyuan jing* 因缘经 (Scripture of Karmic Retribution, CT 336; see Kohn 1998) is one of the first texts to outline the cycle of Daoist rites to be performed during the period of mourning and is addressed to the psychopomp Jiuku tianzun 救苦天尊, the Heavenly Worthy Who Saves from Distress.

Tang imperially mandated ritual compendia add a few Daoist rites to the expanding list of ***zhai* ceremonies**. Several texts claim that there were twenty-four *zhai*, other have as many as forty-two, fifty-six or seventy-two *jiao* liturgies. During the Tang, the *zhai* fast or purification was firmly linked to the *jiao* sacrificial offering, but eventually the latter became an independent ritual form in its own right. Zhang Zehong suggests that the *jiao* texts were linked to an early and rich genre of Zhengyi sacrifices to the stars at lamp altars (1998). The term *zhai* is still used in southeast China for requiems, while *jiao* is now the term that designates communal sacrificial rites. The oldest surviving extended liturgies for Daoist *jiao* include several works by Zhang Wanfu's 張萬福 (fl. 711; see Benn 1991). His *Jiao sandong licheng yi* 醮三洞立成儀 (Observances to Establish Sacirifical Rites to the Three Caverns, CT 1212) outlines the key elements:

1. Establishing the altar and the seats of the gods 設檀坐位
2. Purification of the altar 潔檀解穢
3. Formula of entry 入戶咒 (and meditation on the masters)
4. Lighting the burner 發爐
5. Exteriorization of the body gods 出靈官
6. Invitation of the officers of the register 請官啓 (with a reading of the memorial and three offerings of incense and broth
7. Sending off of the gods 送神
8. Commanding the minor clerks (body and also earth gods) to return to their posts 敕小吏神
9. Interiorization of the officers 內官
10. Extinction of the burner 復爐
11. Hymn to send off the gods 送神頌
12. Exit formula 出戶咒

In other texts, Zhang describes ritual vestments and investitures of registers, drawing on his personal experience as a priest involved in the initiation of two Tang princesses at Ruizong's court (see Benn 1991; "Daoist Ordination").

Du Guangting (850-933) was a court Daoist who reassembled the pieces of the Daoist tradition after the collapse of the dynasty (see Verellen 1989). His ritual texts became the basis for many standard liturgical collections of the Song. Other late Tang souces such as those associated with the school of Pure Brightness (see Akizuki 1970; Schipper 1985c) reveal the increasing propensity for Daoism to merge with local or regional cults, generating in the process new ritual forms.

In the SONG DYNASTY, Daoist ritual reached its most elaborate extremes, yet also underwent a conservative backlash that postulated simplicity and the reestablishment of traditional models. Several major schools can be distinguished at the time, and each have important liturgical compendia. Among them, the mainstream Lingbao ritual tradition, which follows earlier rites as set out by Lu Xiujing, Zhang Wanfu and Du Guangting, is represented in the *Huanglu dazhai yi* 黃籙大齋儀 (Observances for the Great Yellow Register Rites, CT 508), a work based on the teachings of Liu Yongguang 留用光 (1134-1206), and edited by Jiang Shuyu 蔣叔輿 (1156-1217). It places great emphasis on the ritual application of sacred diagrams and talismans, but also provides detailed descriptions of ritual items, modes of financing and sample petitions). Another representative work of this school, notably of its Tiantai branch, is the *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 (Great Rites of Highest Clarity and Numinous Treasure, CT 1221), by Ning Benli 寧本立 (1101-1181). It reflects the influence of the ritual innovations of the school of Divine Empyrean, such as the greater emphasis placed on interior visualizations, and provides complex versions of *liandu* rites. A retreat to greater simplicity and earlier ritual forms within the Lingbao school is represented in the work of Jin Yunzhong 金允中 (fl. 1223-1225), also named *Shangqing lingbao dafa* (CT 1223). After outlining a brief history of Lingbao liturgy, he criticizes the excesses of his time, such as the extensive use of talismans.

The Shenxiao (Divine Empyrean) ritual tradition goes back to Lin Lingsu 林靈素 (1076-1120), who transmitted specific new revelations to Emperor Huizong, who was revealed as the incarnation of a Shenxiao diety (see Strickmann 1978). The school is characterized by its use of talismans, diagrams, lamps, seals and pennants, as well as its inner visualizations in *liandu* rites (see Boltz 1986). It also developed new therapeutic rites of the Five Thunders (*wulei* 五雷).

The Tongchu (Youthful Incipience) movement was begun by Yang Xizhen 楊希真 (1101-1124), who is reported to have discovered sacred texts in a cavern on Maoshan.

The Tianxin (Heavenly Heart) tradition, which goes back to the tenth century, represents a form of ritual that continues ancient Shangqing practice combined with exorcistic and therapeutic liturgies. The spiritual headquarters of the powers revealed here was the Quxie yuan 去邪院 (Bureau

for Exorcising Deviant Forces), and a key exorcistic spirit was Tianpeng 天蓬. Tianxin rites made use mainly of three talismans, representing the Sanguang 三光 (sun, moon, stars), Zhenwu 真武 (Perfect Warrior), and Tiangang 天綱 (Dipper spirits).

The Qingwei (Clear Tenuity) ritual tradition traces itself back to a late-Tang woman named Zu Shu 祖舒 (889-904). She allegedly sought to merge earlier Daoist liturgical traditions and combined Thunder Rites with Tantric Buddhist mandalas (see *Qingwei shenlie bifa* 清微神烈秘法, CT 222). This reflects a general tendency already found in the Tang (see Strickmann 1996).

Under the MING DYNASTY, Qingwei rites are well represented in the key compendium *Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元 (A Corpus of Daoist Ritual, CT 320; see van der Loon 1979), which also contains a wide range of thunder and *liandu* rites of various traditions and provenance. Many of them are edited by Zhao Yichen 趙宜真 (d. 1382), a major syncretist who had been cured of a threatening disease by Qingwei rites. Aside from the tendency to integrate and synthecize traditions, this period is characterized by an increasingly apparent diversity in regional ritual forms and the integration of various local and popular cults into mainstream Daoism. One of them is the southern Zichen 紫宸 school, which is represented in the *Fahai yizhu* 法海遺珠 (Select Pearls from a Sea of Rituals, CT 1166), edited by Zhang Shunlie 章舜烈 in 1344. The rites described here were designed to cure a wave of tuberculosis that was ravaging Fuzhou 撫州 county in Jiangxi province. Another set of regional ritual texts are those associated with the Xu brothers, whose temple is south of Fuzhou 撫州 in Fujian province (see Davis 1985; 2000). Dean suggests a series of stages in the process of reworking local cult legends into scriptures and liturgies in the Daoist canon (1993).

Daoist ritual of the Qing dynasty has hardly been studied at all to date. Main sources include the recently compiled *Zangwai daoshu* 藏外道書 (Daoist Texts Outside the Canon), which allows scholars to follow the development of certain ritual traditions, as well as specific collections, such as the set of nineteenth-century Daoist liturgies from the Zhangzhou region which survives in the British Museum.

Texts

From the earliest Zhengyi Tianshi communities to the Qing dynasty, a number of important ritual texts survive both in the Daoist canon and elsewhere. Many of them are discussed in contibutions to this volume (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
Texts on Daoist Ritual Discussed in Other Contributions

Longevity Techniques	*Baopuzi*
Early Daoist Movements	*Xiang'er*; *Taiping jing*
Shangqing	*Dengzhen yinjue*
Lingbao School	*Lingbao wufuxu*; *Wugan wen*
Southern Celestial Masters	*Daomen kelue*; *Shenzhou jing*; *Xuandu liüwen*; *Nüqing guilü*
Northern Celestial Masters	*Wushang biyao*
Daoist Ordination	*Yaoxiu keyi*; *Fengdao kejie*; works by Zhang Wanfu
Tang Dynasty	*Yinyuan jing*
Song Dynasty	*Shangqing lingbao dafa*; *Tianxin zhengfa*; *Yutang dafa*; *Qingwei shenlie bifa*; *Jiumin zongzhen biyao*; *Shenxiao shouqing shi*; *Duren miaojing futu*; *Shenxiao zishu dafa*; *Huanglu dazhai yi*

As regards modern sources, one can distinguish those originating in Taiwan and those from the mainland. Taiwanese sources for the study of Daoist ritual include Saso's collection of Xinzhu Daoist scriptures and liturgies (1975) as well as Ôfuchi Ninji's presentation of master Chen Rongsheng's ritual corpus (1983). Daoism among the Yao (Zhuang 1991) and other minorities of south and southwest China provides another important point of reference for the understanding of Daoist ritual today, particularly since the tradition of communal initiation and the transmission of registers and investitures of gods of the body has survived in many Yao communities.

Contemporary mainland collections of Daoist liturgies and studies include Ye on Minxi Lushan Daoist ritual (1998), Hu on pacings and mudras in use in Sichuan rites (2000), and Xu on Zhejiang ritual traditions (1999). Comparative ritual programs for Daoist rituals in Zhejiang and Fujian have been recorded by John Lagerwey in a series of articles (esp. 1996; see also Dean 1986; 1988; 1989; Ye 1998; Xu 1999). Daoist ritual programs in Hong Kong and Taiwan have been recorded by Liu (1983b), Tanaka (1993b), Chan (1986; 1989) and Choi (1990). Several Daoist scriptures and liturgies from the New Territories have been collected in the Oral History Project of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (see also Ôfuchi, 1983).

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Key characteristics. Early Daoist ritual texts regularly reject blood sacrifices and the acceptance of money for ritual services, and even today

offerings to the gods are primarily vegetarian and include tea and wine (see Asano, forthcoming). Despite their denunciation of blood sacrifices, Daoists seem to have engaged in them, which is partly due to the fact that even in the middle ages the reality of religion and ritual deviated from the prescriptions (see *Daomen kelue*, CT 1127). But there are also some texts that suggest meat offerings were part of the Daoist program; certain central Lingbao rites involved the sacrifice of a goose, and meat offerings formed part of the Sanhuang 三皇 rites. Then again, as Daoist rites became more closely integrated into the worship of popular deities in rural religion, the importance of blood sacrifices in popular religion could not be denied and plays an accordingly large role today. In some cases, I have observed the Daoist priests blessing the sacrificial animals or the butcher's knife, while the actual killing is done by someone else. The sacrifice of victims and the celebratory consumption of meat during the closing feasts play a central role in the overall ritual ensemble today. This might be seen as one way in which Daoist ritual accepts contradictory representations of spiritual power.

Kristofer Schipper has argued that a key aspect of Daoist ritual is the sacrifice of writings and scriptures (1995). There is no doubt that many documents are composed and burned in the course of the ritual, including the Five True Writs that establish the sacred space of the Dao (*daochang* 道場), and that certain rituals call for the burning of entire texts. Others scholars have contested the interpretation of these actions as sacrificial acts, but they remain a key feature of Daoist ritual.

Another important characteristic of Daoist ritual is that it involves complex **transformations of the body** of the ritualist (*bianshen* 變身), resulting in radically different experiences of space and time. Note that the altar is a conflation of two spaces: the meditation or purification hall, and the outer three tiered altar of sacrifice. Both these spaces are enfolded within the altar: the altar is a mountain with an inner grotto or cavern. The altar is charged with cosmic force by symbolic actions such as the laying out of five talismans in the four directions and in the center. The altar is thus a palimpsest constructed with layer after layer of cosmological symbols that transduce coded fields of force: these include the arrangement of the Daoist divinities mentioned above, the five talismans of spiritual power, the astral realm of the sun, moon, and the constellations, the *bagua*, the hexagrams of the *Yijing*, and the magic squares of Chinese numerology, the *Luoshu* 洛書 and the *Hetu* 河圖.

But the most important space of the Daoist altar is the inner landscape of the Daoist priest. His body is also a mountain with a cavern within. Actually three caverns: these are the three elixir fields of the nine-chambered Niwan 泥丸 palaces within the head, the Scarlet Palace 絳宮 of the heart, and the cinnabar elixir field 丹田 of the abdomen. Many of the coded fields of force mentioned above are brought to bear on the space

of the altar through internal visualization of processes within the body of the Daoist master, whose body is connected in a kind of Möbius strip reaching to the cosmos and folding its forces into the space of the altar.

The space of the altar is first prepared through rites of purification which involve the summoning of generals and spiritual troops in a reconfirmation of the pact between Zhang Daoling and Lord Lao. Lord Lao gave Zhang a list of the gods and powers that would be under his command and ordered him to drive away stale breaths of the lower realms in his name. Thus the purification rites are primarily exorcistic, but the demonic forces are in fact usually captured rather than driven off, and thus enlisted into the cosmic forces at play within the altar. The laying out of the five talismans to attract pure cosmic forces to the altar is the main action of the central rite; this is done only after all light has been extinguished, and a flame from the outside is brought in to light first one lamp, then two, then three lamps, and finally the ten thousand lamps (enacting lines from the *Daode jing*). Then the gods and spiritual and cosmic forces are invoked by various methods, such as burning further talismans, or visualizations, and these deities are brought down to the altar where they are offered wine and incense. Under the watchful eyes of these celestial powers, various scriptures are re-revealed, that is they are exposed on the altar like the talismans and recited aloud, completing an immense cosmic cycle—since the scriptures are only supposed to be transmitted once in many tens of thousands of years. This acceleration of cosmic cycles within the charged field of the altar is said to generate merit for the Daoist master and the entire sponsoring community. This merit is then announced outside on the stage where theater is performed each day in honor of the gods. The gods are sent off, the talismans are burned, and the altar is deconstructed.

The basic underlying schema of Daoist ritual unfolds a theatrical representation of **cosmogenesis**, the re-creation of the universe, and the completion of a cycle of revelation with a cosmically charged space. This version of time as an upwards spiral of revelation and merit making, leading to the progressive deliverance of all beings (or at least the sponsors), and the transmutation of the dusty world into the realm of the immortals, is matched by a regressive current of time that takes place within the body of the Daoist master. The inner rite is a series of infoldings of cosmic forces into the body of Daoist master, who then exfoliates these coded forces and spheres into the ritual time-space. These processes of infolding and unfolding include the infolding of the powers of the sun, moon, Dipper stars, Three Terraces asterism, the lunar palaces, the five directions and the four heraldic animals, the eight hexagrams, the net of heaven and the web of earth. The priest visualizes these forces joining with his body. He externalizes the energies within his body into the incense burner and into the purificatory water that he spits out over his sword to purify the altar. He sum-

mons the gods and attendants within his own body to merge with their counterparts in the astral palaces. He transforms his body into the cosmic body of the Most High Laozi to summon spiritual armies to purify the altar. He transforms the space around him into the Land of the Way. But his most important meditation involves the reversal of time: he visualizes himself as an infant, escorted on a long voyage through his microcosmic body to the cranium, the palace of the Jade Emperor, where he presents a memorial outlining the purposes of the ritual. Upon his descent back into his abdomen, the inner infant ages again. Thus time only goes forward by going backwards as well.

The regressive movement of time is everywhere in the *Daode jing*, and underlies many Daoist inner alchemical traditions. Daoist ritual as it is practiced today in Fujian and Taiwan is not nearly so elaborate as the meditations on the gods of the body of the *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Yellow Court Scripture), the astral travel visualizations of the Shangqing revelations, or the ninefold inner alchemical cyclic transformations leading to the birth of the immortal embryo in Song dynasty Daoist meditation texts. Nonetheless, in all these meditation systems and liturgical practices time is stretched between reverse flows and accelerated forward cycles. Time is stretched and twisted into a recursive feedback loop. These recursive, self-organizing transformations of spatiality and temporality are central contributions of Daoist ritual to a theory of ritual.

This sketch of some of the central aspects and processes of Daoist ritual would have to be extended to the relationship between the rite and the community. It was noted above that the altar was superimposed on the **space of the temple**. The temporal structure of the Daoist ritual also imposes an order on the principal moments of communal participation. The Daoist rite as performed in Taiwan takes place for the most part inside a locked temple, before a select audience of community representatives. The Daoist master and his troupe emerge from the temple on certain key moments—in the initial purification, in the announcement and summons to the generals, in the raising of the banner, in the presentation of the memorial on the last day, and in the concluding rite of the universal deliverance of hungry ghosts. For the presentation of the memorial and the deliverance rite they go on stage. In the presentation, the stage is turned into a representation of the Astral Court of the Jade Emperor. The Daoist priests carry umbrellas symbolizing the heavens, and hop from star to star of the Big Dipper to make their theatrical ascent of the stairway to heaven. Upon reaching the stage, the Daoist master prostrates himself in front of the Emperor, and conducts an inner meditation, returning to infancy, and delivering the memorial. The Daoist master wears a large number of talismans representing his bodily transformations and externalizations of energy

on his cap during his ascent to the heavenly stage.These are distributed upon his return to members of the crowd.

The **community**, composed of lineage groups and neighborhood groups, send representatives of each household to set out offerings timed to correspond with significant moments in the Daoist ritual. Thus offerings are set out on tables to the gods for the presentation of the memorial facing the stage, while offerings to departed ancestors are set facing east for the feast altar for the deliverance of hungry ghosts on the last day of the rite. Other tables of offerings are set out for the Noon Offerings, or to greet visiting delegations and processions from neighboring, allied communities. All kinds of bloody sacrifices are prepared by the community, and presented to the gods in tangent with the Daoist rites.

The community organizes its own procession which circles the territory of the village to recharge its space with cosmic force and to replenish the camps of the Spirit Soldiers of the Five Directions that protect the village from demonic attack. The return of the procession to the temple is often a moment for the irruption of spirit possession, when mediums are possessed by the gods of the temple, and speak in their voices. Sometimes they get so excited that they charge into the temple, right into the midst of the Daoist ritual. The Daoist priests tend to ignore the mediums, but do not deny the validity of their possession. There is a taboo on contradiction, a refusal to deny any manifestation of supernatural power. This can be described as a form of positive unconcious which characterizes the ritual-event (Dean 1998). The role of Daoist rites within community festivities will vary, but it will always be one important magnetic node in a complex self-organizing process. But the extraordinary sensory overload of Daoist ritual and of the community celebrations that surround these rites also has transformative effects on the bodies of the communal participants. Daoist rituals self-consciously seek to restore contact with the undifferentiated Dao and to reactivate cosmogonic processes, generating diverse experiences and emergent communities in the process. Daoist rites appear to operate with an acceptance of multiple, even contradictory, representations of supernatural power, including the shamanic possession of mediums by local gods (*fushen* 附身). Some Daoist ritual traditions are more closely connected to shamanic traditions than others, where the emphasis is on the controlled modulation of the body, and the absorption of and merger with cosmic counterparts to the gods of the body. The range of contemporary Daoist ritual traditions remains largely unexplored, as do the consequences of the study of Daoist ritual for ritual studies as a whole.

Scholarly studies. Daoist ritual presents many interesting issues for the study of ritual and its relation to culture and society. The documentary richness of the sources opens the way to a historical analysis of the evolution of contemporary ritual traditions (see Murayama 1995). A great deal of

scholarly work on Daoist ritual can be found in the Daoist canon itself. It is worth emphasizing the bureaucratic and scholastic nature of Daoist ritual, which requires the preparation of very large numbers of different documents of ritual purposes, often in triplicate.

The extraordinary complexity and attendant redundancy and repetitiveness of contemporary Daoist ritual has also elicited a formal analysis of ritual acts. This mode of study has been applied to Hindi rites by Fritz Staal (1983) and to Daoist rites by Kristofer Schipper (1984-86).

Not following this approach, other scholars insist that rituals must be studied for their inherent meaning or for the meanings they have for their participants such as the ritual masters, community representatives and the sponsoring community (Hymes 1997; Katz 1995). Opinions vary considerably on the proper methodology for the study of Daoist ritual. Several scholars have pointed to the importance of a clear grasp of the specific social and historical context for an understanding of the meaning of Daoist ritual within communal celebrations (Faure 1986, Dean 1998).

Practices

A typical ***jiao*** as performed in Southern Taiwan is made up of some twenty to thirty discrete rites, and can last between one and seven days. John Lagerwey provides a detailed description of the ritual processes involved, as observed in contemporary Tainan (1987). The following is a greatly simplified accound of the main rites:

Day One:
1. Burning oil to drive away filth
2. Starting up the drum 起鼓)
3. Announcement (*fabiao aigu* 發表哀歌)
4. Invocation (*qibai* 啓白)
5. Raising the flag (*yangqi* 揚旗)
6. Noon Offering (*wugong* 午供)
7. Division of the lamps (*fendeng* 分燈)

Day Two:
8. Land of the Way (*daochang* 道場)
9. Noon Offering
10. Floating water lamps (*fang shuideng* 放水燈)
11. Invocation of the masters and the saints (*qi shisheng* 啓師聖)
12. Sealing the altar (*jintan* 禁壇)
13. Evening overture (*suqi* 宿啓)
14. Renewed invocation (*chongbai* 重拜)

15. Scripture recitation (*nianjing* 念經)
16. Noon Offering
17. Orthodox Offering (*zhengjiao* 正醮)
18. Universal Deliverance (*pudu* 普度)

A more formal rite would also have included the following:
1. Morning audience (*zaochao* 早朝; Day One)
2. Noon audience (*wuchao* 午朝; Day Two)
3. Evening audience (*wanchao* 晚朝; Day Three)
4. Recitation of the Scripture of the Jade Sovereign (*Yuhuang jing* 玉皇經; Day Three)

A typical two-day **requiem service** (*gongde* 功德) is made up of more than twenty rites as well. Lagerwey describes one he observed in Tainan (1987; see also Maruyama, forthcoming). It consisted of:

Day 1:
1. Announcement
2. Invocation
3. Scripture recitation
4. Opening a road in the darkness (*kaitong minglu* 開通冥路)
5. Recitation of litanies (*baichan* 拜懺)
6. Dispatching the Writ of Pardon (*fang shema* 放赦馬)
7. Attack on hell (*dacheng* 打城)
8. Division of the lamps

Day 2:
9. Land of the Way
10. Recitation of Litanies
11. Noon Offering
12. Scripture recitation
13. Exorcism
14. Uniting the talismans (*hefu* 合符)
15. Bathing (*muyu* 沐浴)
16. Worshiping the Three Treasures (*bai sanbao* 拜三寶)
17. Untying the knots (*jiejie* 解结)
18. Recitation of litanies
19. Filling the treasury (*tianku* 添庫)
20. Crossing the bridge (*guoqiao* 過橋)

In this sequence of contemporary Daoist ritual, certain elements inherited from ancient ritual patterns as described above still play a key role. They

are the setting out of the Five True Talismans, the visualizations known as the lighting of the incense burner and the exteriorization of the body gods as well as the presentation of the memorial. These are commonly followed by offerings to the high gods and the sending off of the gods and the re-absorption of the gods of the body and the extinguishing of the burner. They play a part today especially in the rites of Announcement, Land of the Way, and the various audience rites. Then again, many elements of contemporary Daoist ritual can be traced back to earlier texts and periods, notably the Song and Yuan dynasties (see Lagerwey 1987; Maruyama 1995; 2000). There is, for example, a strong continuity between the Daoist altar and earlier altars of pre-imperial China.

The various key rites are performed by the Master of High Merit, while the other ritualists perform dances or sing hymns. The Master keeps a secret manuscript with the visualizations, spells, pacings, mudras and talismans needed to ensure the success of the rite, while the less esoteric liturgical manuscripts of the outer rites are placed on the Daoist altar throughout the performance. A complete listing of minor rites performed by Daoist ritual specialists would be impossible, but some of them are available in the literature today. For example, the text of a *Lüshan fachang* rite, the exorcism of a personal illness, as performed in northern Taiwan has recently been published (Hsü 1998; see also Lagerwey 1988; Ôfuchi 1983). For detailed descriptions of Lüshan rites in Minxi, with full textual documentation, see Ye (1999).

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