CHAPTER TEN

THE SOUTHERN CELESTIAL MASTERS

PETER NICKERSON

DESCRIPTION

The term southern Celestial Masters refers to the groups and individuals who were connected with the Way of the Celestial Master (Tianshi dao 天師道) as it was practiced in the Jiangnan region of southeastern China during the early medieval period (especially the fourth to sixth centuries). As opposed to the "theocracy" of the contemporaneous Celestial Masters in the north (see Mather 1979), the southern Celestial Masters never had a genuinely centralized ecclesiastical organization, and their history and composition are accordingly more complex and more difficult to determine with exactitude.

The "southern Celestial Masters" might in fact be considered under several, sometimes overlapping, rubrics:

1. groups and individuals who had historical connections, and explicitly affiliated themselves, with the Way of the Celestial Master that began in second century Shu and Hanzhong 漢中 (modern Sichuan and southern Shaanxi);
2. Daoists who, though their primary affiliations might have been with other, often ostensibly superior, scriptural traditions, such as Shangqing, continued to engage in practices of the Celestial Masters;
3. incorporators of Celestial Master traditions within a larger Daoist synthesis, especially Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 and his successors during and after the fifth century; and
4. popular practitioners and their clients who availed themselves of Celestial Master ritual techniques, such as sending up petitions (*shangzhang* 上章) to Celestial Officials (*tianguan* 天官) for the remedying of illness or other maladies, but who may have had little or no conscious identification with the Way of the Celestial Master *per se*.

History

The best known and best documented portion of southern Celestial Master history concerns the **importation** of the movement to the south by the northern émigré elite after the fall of Luoyang to non-Chinese invaders in 311 and the establishment of the remnants of the Luoyang court and the Jin ruling house as the Eastern Jin dynasty in Jiankang 建康 (modern Nanjing) in 317. As is explained elsewhere in this volume, the Way of the Celestial Master had become well established among certain of the northern great families, such as the Wangs of Langye 琅邪王, whose most illustrious scion was the calligrapher Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (309-c. 365). When these northerners fled south they brought the Way of the Celestial Master—as well as the Libationers (*jijiu* 祭酒) who served their ritual needs—with them (Miyakawa 1964; Strickmann 1977, 1981). This was the sole manner, some have insisted (see, e.g., Kobayashi 1990, 1992), through which the Way of the Celestial Master entered Jiangnan. Supporters of this view also point to the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (CT 1185), written by the southerner Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-343) and substantially completed before the arrival of the northerners, which appears to make no mention of the Celestial Masters.

However, other evidence points to multiple modes of the **diffusion** of the Way of the Celestial Master to the south after the ostensibly third Celestial Master Zhang Lu's 張魯 surrender to Cao Cao in 215, which led to the relocation of thousands of Daoist families to cities in north China such as Chang'an, Luoyang and Ye and the removal of the central organization of the Celestial Masters from Hanzhong to what would become the Cao family's Wei capital at Luoyang. At the same time, a number of those not so relocated are likely to have continued to practice their religion independently from the centralized Dao-ocracy (cf. Bokenkamp 1997, 1-2, 149-50). As part of the larger diaspora, it is not difficult to imagine the Celestial Masters making their way downriver from their bases in Sichuan, and elsewhere around the system of rivers that fed the Yangzi, directly to Jiangnan, thus avoiding the stopover in Luoyang and the ensuing, century-long delay there that would be ended only by the force of foreign invasion. Though indisputable archaeological evidence comes only much later, in the fifth and sixth centuries (see Nickerson 1996a, 175-96), much has been written about the propagation of Daoism by water routes, not only by sea (Chen 1992), but also via networks of lakes and rivers (Miyakawa 1971; 1979); we shall return to this hypothesis presently. As Eichhorn has claimed: "There existed a prominent stronghold of the Wu-tou-mi-tao [i.e., the Celestial Masters] in Kiangsu and Chekiang, especially in the area of Kuei-chi during the Later Han dynasty, and it remained so during the ensuing periods" (1954, 329 n. 12). Emerging archaeological finds from the Guang-

dong region further support this notion of early diffusion by means of multiple routes (see, e.g., Lin 1985).

Such a hypothesis also allows one to make more sense of the later history of the Way of the Celestial Master in the south. There is first the continued practice of Celestial Master Daoism by some of the former northern elite—as seen in various anecdotes in the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (New Accounts of Tales of the World)—e.g., that about Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (344-388; 1.23, no. 39; see also *Jinshu* 2106; Mather 1976, 19). Also well documented is the adoption of the Way of the Celestial Master by some members of the old southern aristocracy, resulting ultimately in the creative synthesis that would produce Yang Xi's Shangqing revelations in the 360s.

However, other very significant texts, such as the *Zhao Sheng koujue* and the *Nüqing guilü*, both from around 400, as well as contemporaneous scriptures on the margins of the Celestial Master movement, like the *Dongyuan shenzhou jing* (see below), attest to a much broader diffusion of the Way of the Celestial Master than can effectively be accounted for by the single-route theory. All of these scriptures show the existence, by the end of the fourth century, of relatively large-scale, popular, messianic movements that were based around the Way of the Celestial Master and whose social origins were far from the northern, émigré elites. Nor is it likely that they had much to do with the southern aristocrats who subsequently turned to the Way of the Celestial Master—as a kind of spiritual social-climbing—and then created the Shangqing revelations in an act of religious one-upmanship (Strickmann 1977).

The combination of geographic (north to south) and "downward" social diffusion (elite to popular) necessary to allow for the appearance of such popular movements seems unimaginably rapid. As a result, one can assume that the Way of the Celestial Master was already established in the south well before the fall of the Western Jin. This is not contradicted by the relatively late appearance of scriptures. After all, few genuinely early Celestial Master writings have survived, and these are ritual documents and tables, not scriptures. Also, the mid- to late fourth century was for all Daoist movements only the beginning of the medieval scriptural efflorescence, and it would have been precisely the involvement just discussed of relatively high-status, literate individuals in these movements that would have made scriptural production possible.

The **rebellion of Sun En** 孫恩, a bloody, religiously-motivated insurrection that began in 399, stands perhaps as a further piece of evidence for the independence of some elements of the Way of the Celestial Master in the south from the religion of the emigrants from the north. The course of the rebellion (see Eichhorn 1954)—ultimately suppressed by the general Liu Yu 劉裕 (356-422), founder of the Liu-Song dynasty (420-478)—is less interesting for our purposes than its origins in and relations with the Way

of the Celestial Master. Sun promised his followers "life everlasting" (*changsheng* 長生) and appears to have engaged in a number of practices typical of the communitarian Celestial Masters. Most significantly, his knowledge of Daoism came through his uncle, Sun Tai 孫泰 ,who in turn was the disciple of one Du Jiong 杜炅, a Celestial Master priest and a renowned thaumaturge who was active in the late fourth century in the Qiantang area (modern Hangzhou).

Du's Daoism seems to have come through a family tradition that went back to his clan's origins in Sichuan, prior to their emigration to the southeast (Strickmann 1977, 18), while later hagiographies claim that his master was Chen Wenzi 陳文子 of Yuhang in modern Zhejiang (see, e.g., *Yunji qiqian* 111.7a). In any event, since we know that Du Jiong was active around 360, and presumably his master was significantly older, again we are confronted with an example of a southern Way of the Celestial Master that at the very least was roughly contemporaneous with, rather than significantly subsequent to, the great northern emigration. For that matter, Li Dong 李東, the Celestial Master Libationer who served the Xu 許 family, the patrons of the Shangqing medium Yang Xi 楊羲, was himself a native of Qu'a 曲阿 in Jiangsu. He transmitted a Daoist talisman to Xu Mai 許邁 in 322 and was also capable of writing petitions in the classic Celestial Master style—a remarkably quick study if all of his learning came in the wake of the fall of the north.

It was the northern emigration and the establishment of the Eastern Jin that made it socially respectable for the southern aristocracy to take up the Way of the Celestial Master and make it their own. The relatively low social status of the Celestial Masters in the south prior to 317 is enough to account for Ge Hong's apparent ignorance, or his misportrayal of them as the "Way of the Li House" (Lijia dao 李家道; Wang 1985, 9:173f.). Although knowledge of Zhang Daoling as an immortal/alchemist may not indicate knowledge of Zhang as Celestial Master, it still may be significant that Ge possibly included him in his *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Biographies of Spirit Immortals; very early citations include Zhang's hagiography). Moreover, Zhang is given a place in the lineage connected with the *Lingbao wufuxu* 靈寶五符序 (Explanation of the Five Numinous Treasure Talismans, CT 388), some of which, if not all, goes back to Ge's own Taiqing 太清 (Great Clarity) tradition. So, in fact, Ge may have been less ignorant of the Celestial Masters than is normally imagined (Robert Campany, personal communication; see also Wang 1998).

Thus, by the establishment of the Liu-Song, the Way of the Celestial Master was entangled in an extremely complex, and not very comfortable, socio-historical web. Elite Celestial Master devotees had been subjects of Sun En's attacks (see, e.g., *Jinshu* 2102-3), and of course Liu Yu himself had had direct and personal experience of the fact that Daoists could be dan-

gerous rebels. (Later on, should anyone forget, the Buddhists were always willing to remind people of this fact; see, e.g., the *Bianhuo lun* 辨惑論, T. 2102, 52.48a-49c). The Celestial Masters needed to retrench, if they were to survive the establishment in the south of relatively stable, and militarily powerful, imperial regimes like the Liu-Song. Thus even apocalyptic, messianic movements like that represented by the *Dongyuan shenzhou jing* worked (possibly new) material into their scriptures to show, not that the apocalypse was imminent, but that it had already occurred and that the world had been saved by the house of Liu, or at least that the Liu-Song emperors were performing a positive role and preparing the world for the even better one that was to come. On a higher social level, a whole genre of apologetic literature appeared, among whose many aims was to show not only that Daoists were good, upstanding citizens of the Liu-Song state who would assist, rather than detract from, the new order, but also that the house of Liu itself had received favorable portents proving its links to the original Liu rulers of the Han dynasty, demonstrating that the "new" Liu line similarly enjoyed "the trust of the Most High [Laozi]" (*Santian neijie jing* 1.9a).

It is against this background that the *Daomen kelue* 道門科略 (Abridged Codes for the Daoist Community; see below) of **Lu Xiujing** 陸修靜 should be read. While the messianic tone is muted and placed largely in the past, the emphasis is on the basically orderly and socially beneficial nature of the Way of the Celestial Master—provided Zhang Daoling's original institutions of registers, parishes and the like are properly restored. One might speculate that this text was written less for Daoists themselves, and more for the Liu-Song rulers.

With Lu Xiujing, we can also end our history of the Southern Celestial Masters. As is well known, Lu is renowned not so much for the above text as for his cataloging of the Lingbao scriptures and his association with the Three Caverns (*san dong* 三洞) scheme for the organization of the larger body of Daoist scriptural revelation—which, interestingly, left out the Celestial Master texts themselves. From this time onward, in particular as far as the organized, usually state-supported, Daoist organization was concerned, the texts and ritual documents of the Way of the Celestial Master were merely early, if essential, steps in a graded series of texts, registers and offices to which the Daoist priest-adept could aspire (Schipper 1985). At the same time, in their own, largely anonymous and mostly historiographically invisible way, less august Celestial Master and related Daoist practitioners continued the ancient tradition of a priesthood among the people.

Texts

A number of Daoist texts have been identified as emanating from Southern Dynasties Jiangnan, but the most solid attributions concern the scriptures

associated with the Shangqing and Lingbao revelations. Attributing Celestial Master texts to the same place and period is much more difficult, though it has been done with some frequency (see Kobayashi 1990), if not always on the strongest grounds. Here I will mostly limit myself to a relatively smaller number of texts whose dates and provenances are somewhat less open to doubt, focusing on materials dating from after Three Kingdoms Wu and before the Tang that are strongly affiliated with Celestial Master Daoism and were composed south of the Yangzi. Many of these are extensively discussed in other sections of this chapter, and their descriptions and summaries here will not replicate points covered elsewhere. These texts may be placed under several convenient, if merely heuristic, rubrics.

APOLOGETIC AND DIDACTIC TEXTS. ***Santian neijie jing*** 三天內解經 (Scripture of the Inner Explanations of the Three Heavens, CT 1205, 2 j.), mid-5th c., attr. to one "Disciple of the Three Heavens, Mr. Xu 徐氏" (see Bokenkamp 1997, 186-229, with trl. of j. 1) Despite the fact that the text presents itself as a "scripture" (*jing* 經) whose transmission should be restricted to worthy Daoists only (1.2a), Bokenkamp contends with reason that one of its intended audiences was the Liu-Song throne. Much content of this important text—important especially because of its unabashedly pro-Liu-Song stance and thus its relatively certain date—is discussed below: the cosmology of the Three Heavens and the role of humankind, and especially people's religious behavior, in determining cosmic stability. Other important themes introduced in the first scroll concern Laozi as an avatar reborn throughout history in order to aid humans, especially their rulers, and at one point also to be born in the West to introduce Buddhism (1.3a-4b); Laozi's ultimate failure, through both his own assistance and that of his agents such as Dongfang Shuo 東方朔, to get the Han emperors to follow his Way; and hence his turning over of the custodianship of the Dao and its institutions to the people and their representatives, the Celestial Masters (1.4b-5b, 8a-9a). Also notable is the text's criticism of Buddhism (among other "deviant ways"). It presents Buddhism as in a sense complementary to Daoism—as right is to left—but also clearly inferior: as death is to life (1.9b-10a; cf. Zürcher 1980).

The second scroll is concerned more with moral injunctions and philosophical pronouncements, e.g., that the Way is equivalent to *wu* 無 ("nonbeing"; 2.1b), as well as more practical dictates concerning fasting and purification ceremonies (*zhai* 齋; 2.2b-3a). The last sections are given over to a discussion of the differences between the "Greater" and "Lesser Vehicles." Initially the contrast seems to be between a "purer" Daoist practice concerned only with inner, meditative self-cultivation and eventual immortality, versus a more materialistic version that desires all sorts of personal benefits from Daoist ritual. Then the text's anti-Buddhist tendencies resurface, and the Lesser Vehicle is identified with the Buddhists, who meditate

only by counting their breaths, while the Greater Vehicle, Daoism, pursues the far loftier practice of the visualization of deities, their forms, clothing and accouterments (2.3a-5a).

Lu xiansheng daomen kelue 陸先生道門科略 (Abridged Codes of Master Lu for the Daoist Community, CT 1127, 9 pp.), by Lu Xiujing (trl. Nickerson 1996b; see also Nickerson 1996a, 3-30, 613-18). The text begins—in a dark and almost apocalyptic tone—with a description of the dismal situation that had inspired Laozi to reveal the Daoist religion: people are worshipping the spirits of dead generals, falsely believing them to be deities; in turn they are only being exploited, deprived of their material goods and afflicted with illness (1ab). The implication is that Lu's own times are none too different. The tract moves on to an extensive discussion of contemporaneous Daoist ideology and practice, for which see below.

The text also includes a commentary, which the extant *Daozang* version distinguishes from—but also sometimes merges with—the main text through use of different character sizes. It is anonymous, but in content and style it seems close to the main text; Lu himself may even have written it (Maeda 1985, 420). It is further likely that Lu's "Codes" were "abridged" for reading by the Liu-Song throne and that the redactor, if it was not Lu himself, may have been a disciple one or two generations later who also appended the commentary.

Laojun shuo yibai bashi jie 老君說一百八十戒 (The 180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao, in CT 786, 2a-20b; other versions in *Yunji qiqian* 39.1a-14b; CT 463, 5.14a-19b; and Dunhuang mss. P. 4562 and 4731), dat. around 350, including a preface partly from the same time and partly from about 550 (see Penny 1996; Maeda 1985; trl. Hendrischke and Penny 1996). As is suggested by its terminology, this set of rules for Libationers may originally have had no direct connections with the Celestial Masters (Schipper 1994; Penny 1996, 15); yet it was soon adopted by various Daoist lineages. There is a Lingbao version (CT 456, 21b-31a), and there is a statement in the *Daomen kelue* that makes clear that it also became important among the Celestial Masters: "Therefore the Scripture [which scripture is not clear] says, 'If the priest does not receive the *180 Precepts of Lord Lao*, he is without virtue'" (7b).

Following the preface, which narrates the history of the transmission of the text, the precepts—as they are all phrased in the negative (*bu de* 不得), perhaps "proscriptions" is as good a term—cover a variety of topics. Some suggest a kind of Daoist proto-environmentalism: forbidden are setting fire to fields or forests (14), cutting down trees or picking flowers without reason (18-19), polluting water (36), destructively excavating the earth or riverbanks (no. 47), draining rivers or marshes (53) and the like. Other proscriptions concern the proper life of Daoists in society: not keeping too many servants or slave trading (1, 27, 104), not being excessively concerned with

wealth (e.g. 22, 25), not meddling in marriages or people's other affairs (e.g., 2, 28), not becoming excessively involved in political life (either directly or through marriage connections; 20), as well as a number of more general moral injunctions. As Benjamin Penny (1996) has demonstrated, these rules were in part inspired by Buddhist standards of religious professionalism—reflected especially by the *Prâtimokśa sûtra* of the Mahâsânghika school, which was translated into Chinese in 251. The Buddhist influence may be seen both in broad rules against stealing, killing, lying, eating meat or drinking alcohol and so forth, as well as far more specific ones, such as not urinating in a standing position (no. 66). However, the complete celibacy and avoidance of financial dealings that are features of Buddhist monastic life are not enjoined. Contrariwise, other prohibitions—like those against divination, geomancy (e.g., 16, 77-8, 114) and popular, sacrificial cults (113, 118)—reflect concerns that were especially important to the southern Celestial Masters. Indeed, the rules are specifically addressed to Libationers (e.g., 153)—a title essential to Celestial Master organisation—and Orthodox Unity (*Zhengyi* 正一) is itself mentioned (144). Thus the text may be closer to the Way of the Celestial Master than others have surmised.

The production of rules and codes for both layfolk and male and female Daoist priests continued throughout the period, as reflected in the ***Xuandu lüwen*** 玄都律文 (Statutes of the Mysterious Capital, CT 188, 22 pp.; see Kobayashi 1990, 206-7; Ren and Zhong 1991, 137; Noguchi et al. 1994, 132; Robinet 1984, 2:280). This text, or at least some version of it, is cited in a number of seventh-century works and must be earlier than that. Kobayashi has placed the date as early as 500. However, there are discrepancies between the work as extant and as cited: CT 1139 says it has 9 j., but only 22 pp. are to be found in the *Daozang*; Southern Dynasties administrative terminology is not present where one would expect to find it (i.e., there is no *jun* 郡 ["commandery"] mentioned where a parishioner is to identify his residence when having a petition sent on his behalf, 18b); a Daoist institution is mentioned that existed only in the Northern Dynasties or later in the Tang, the *guan* 觀 or "abbey" (17b). Nonetheless, the rules for kitchen-feasts, sending petitions, conducting assemblies, making donations and so forth—as well as those against sacrificing to popular gods—that occupy the latter sections of the text (11a-22a) are consistent with earlier, southern texts. Similarly, the various regulations and codes that comprise the first half of the work—"Statutes of Good and Evil, [Beginning with] Emptiness and Nonbeing" (1a-3a), "Statutes on Precepts and Chanting" (3a-5a), "Statutes of the Hundred Medicinal [Virtues]" (5a-8a), and "Statutes of the Hundred [Moral] Illnesses"—testify to a proliferation of precepts for both lay and religious that might be predicted in light of earlier developments, such as the specification of reductions in lifespan for breaking any given one of that ever-increasing number of injunctions. Again one might consider as a factor

inspiration from the *Vinaya* (cf. Penny 1996). The *Xuandu lüwen* already reflects the development of a high degree of Daoist religious professionalism: one virtue mentioned in the first section is "to expel one's wife and leave one's children, journeying alone with the Way" (1a). All this leads one to suspect, first, that these statutes are to some degree representative of the larger—and relatively late—southern Daoist synthesis discussed above, and, further, that the extant text may well date from the Tang and not be connected in a direct way with the southern Celestial Masters. Zhang Daoling's establishment of the Way of Orthodox Unity is mentioned only near the very end of the text (19a), seeming largely an afterthought found necessary merely to preface a set of rules on sending petitions.

POPULAR, APOCALYPTIC AND/OR SECTARIAN TEXTS. ***Zhengyi tianshi gao Zhao Sheng koujue*** 正一天師告趙昇口訣 (Oral Instructions Declared by the Celestial Master of Orthodox Unity to Zhao Sheng, CT 1273, 5 pp.), date about 400. The scripture is presented as the final instructions from Zhang Daoling to his chief disciple, Zhao Sheng, just prior to the former's ascension. It refers to the Jin dynasty as the Metal Horse (*jinma* 金馬), based on the ruling family's name, Sima, as well as the fact that the dynasty ruled by virtue of the element *metal* of the five phases. As it further points to a *jiazi* 甲子 year within that dynasty as an important date within a rather complex apocalyptic calendar, at least a significant stratum of the text may have been composed prior to 364. The preponderance of terms characteristic of later Southern Celestial Master texts makes 304, the other *jiazi* year that occurred during the Jin, an unlikely choice. In fact, the next *jiazi* year *after* 364, 424, is perhaps an even better match, as the author(s) of the text might well not have predicted the founding of the Liu-Song in 420. This later dating renders affinity in terminology with Liu-Song texts (Nine Heavens, Six Heavens, Three Ways, Three Heavens) more explicable. In addition, the text uses several other dates from the sexagesimal cycle, for example the often seen *jiashen* 甲申 (324 or 384) year for a catastrophic flood, or the years *renchen-guisi* 壬辰癸巳 (332-33, 392-93) as alternatives or additions to the *jiazi* year. All this suggests a composite text that includes readjustments to its apocalyptic calendar, perhaps as predicted events failed to materialize (a common phenomenon in apocalyptic writings in many traditions).

In any event, the principal import of the text is clear. When the sociocosmic order had been endangered in the second century, the Most High had revealed to the Celestial Master the Way of Orthodox Unity and the Covenant with the Powers (*zhengyi mengwei zhi dao* 正一盟威之道), and in particular registers of office (*zhilu* 職籙) and the Red Register of Huang-Lao (Huang-Lao chilu 黃老赤籙; this latter is connected with sexual rites, *huangchi* 黃赤, which are further advocated at 2b10). Now the times are critical again, and a savior named Lord Li—connected to, if not identical

with, Li Hong 李弘 (see Seidel 1969-70)—is due to descend to govern the earth's people. At the same time, the demons of the Three Offices and Six Heavens of the underworld, together with plagues and fierce beasts, will be released to harass humankind (1ab).

Altogether, 240,000 will be chosen as "seed people" (*zhongmin* 種民 or "elect") who will survive these catastrophes and see the new age. While some have already been chosen, immortals and jade maidens are still circling the earth in order to fill out their number. The *jiazi* year of the Jin is set as a deadline, after which no further elect will be admitted. In the *jiashen* year, terrible floods will occur (1b-2a), and all corrupt Daoists will be wiped out. These include all those who "carry on copious correspondence with the Hundred Demons of the Three Offices" and care only for accumulating Daoist posts and their registers, as well as amassing material goods in exchange for their ritual services. All these people will be branded corrupt thieves and consigned to the Three [evil] Paths (*san tu* 三塗) in the afterlife (2ab). This caricature of what more or less resembles ordinary Celestial Master practice, together with the creation of an alternative Daoist lineage—one that passes directly from the first Celestial Master to his disciple Zhao Sheng, rather than to Zhang Daoling's descendants—suggests that the text belongs to a kind of sectarian or dissenting movement within the Celestial Masters.

Now, to identify the truly elect, a new talisman is to be issued: the *Taixuan jiuguang wancheng fu* 太玄九光萬稱符 (Talisman of the Nine Radiances and Myriad Correspondences of the Great Mystery). When the time of Great Peace is imminent, the Sage Lord Li will order the world's demon generals and troops, together with the hundred kinds of noxious creatures, to protect the elect so that they may survive the demise of the Jin and live into the new, millennial age (3a). Zhang himself, however, has decided to bypass the entire, messy process and has compounded an elixir that will allow him to ascend directly to the heavens in broad daylight (cf. the *Shenxian zhuan*'s portrayal of Zhang as an alchemist, above). Hence he has deputed Zhao Sheng to carry on his work (3b).

The scripture then proceeds to detail several types of afterlife fates. Those who do not directly ascend to heaven, but who possess the "Talisman," can after death enter Households of the Soil (*tuhu* 土戶), where their bodies will undergo ten smeltings and nine cycles of purification (cf. Bokenkamp 1989; 1990). Their names will be entered in the Purple Books of the Great Mystery (*taixuan zibu* 太玄紫簿) and their *hun* 魂 and *po* 魄 souls will ascend to join the Sagely Lord. When the Great Peace arrives, they will achieve bodily resurrection as well: "White bones will arise again, blood and *qi* will flow again." But those without the newly revealed "Talisman" have a far worse fate awaiting them: their flesh will rot, while their souls (*hunpo*) will be

given over to the Three Offices to endure unspeakably painful punishments (4a).

The rest of the text is devoted to a detailed discussion of the new "Talisman." It has the power not only to protect the living in emergencies, but even, if conferred posthumously, to restore the dead to life when the Great Peace arrives. For one to receive it is a rare and blessed event—hence its inestimable value (4b-5b).

Nüqing guilü 女青鬼律 (Demon Statutes of Nüqing, CT 790, 6 j.), c. late 4th. cent. The text begins with a version of the world-historical account typical of many Southern Dynasties texts. When heaven and earth began, the primordial *qi* circulated evenly, and the myriad deities dispersed them; there were no evil demons; men were filial and woman chaste. Only after the inception of the mythical era of Tianhuang 天皇 (Celestial Sovereign) did things begin to take a turn for the worse: people lost their faith in the Way; all sorts of evil demons, pestilences, and dangerous beasts emerged; and people perished in countless numbers. Taishang dadao 太上大道 (the Most High Great Way), being unable to tolerate such a horrible situation, revealed the *Nüqing guilü*, which in its original version appears to have included eight, rather than the current six scrolls (1.1a).

The text then turns to its principal concern of demonography. The *Nüqing guilü* was given to the first Celestial Master—who should then transmit it to qualified faithful—so that people might know the names of all the world's spirits, be able to control them and thus prevent them from doing harm. This follows ancient demonographic practice (see Harper 1985). The first scroll principally consists of a long list of demons and their names: those responsible for processing the newly deceased and reporting on and recording the behavior of the living (all based at Mt. Tai 泰山), astral demons, baleful deities of the five directions, and (especially emphasized) the demons respectively associated with each of the sixty binomes of the sexagesimal cycle. Armed with this special knowledge, as well as associated talismans and techniques, the faithful may recite the name of the appropriate demon on any given day and receive protection. Alternatively, echoing the *Zhao Sheng koujue*, the People of Heaven 天人 (i.e., elect Daoists) even if they die will live again.

The second scroll continues with the preceding demographic focus, though it is initially portrayed as orders from the Most High of the Upper Three Heavens of Grand Clarity, the Dark, and the Primordial to rulers of the Three Offices of Heaven, Earth and Water. It briefly recapitulates the history that opened the first scroll and, since it mentions the Three Heavens 三天, this implies a Southern Dynasties date for at least some portions of the text. In order that the gods of the "three and five" may govern the demons, the malevolent spirits of mountains and seas must be listed in exhaustive detail. Particular emphasis is given to nature sprites (*jing* 精), such

as those of hills, trees, rocks, tigers, snakes and foxes. Knowledge of their true names will cause them to return to their original forms so that they can no longer cause harm. Recitation of the demons' names can also be used as part of more complex ritual procedures in order to cure illness.

The third scroll takes a different tack: the statutes are directed towards humans, not demons, and include a list of twenty-two moral injunctions. Headed "*Daolü jinji*" 道律禁忌 (Prohibitions and Taboos in the Daoist Statutes), this section lists a number of proscriptions governing the behavior of Daoist parishioners, from expected prohibitions of general misdeeds—e.g., duplicitous speech, disrespect for the aged and insufficient filiality—to injunctions against participation in medium cults and a number of types of sexual behavior. The latter include copulating in the open air, which offends the sun, moon and stars (presumably depending on the time of day) and especially the misuse of the Celestial Masters' ritual of "uniting *qi*" (*heqi* 合氣). (Nonetheless, that rite—often referred to in terms of the sexual rhythms of the "three, five, seven and nine"—is in general enthusiastically encouraged throughout the text as a practice suitable for the elect.) Those who fail to heed these rules will be cut down, but if one follows the dictates of the Most High, one is sure to survive the "three disasters and nine calamities" and see the days of Great Peace, at which point one might either ascend to become a celestial immortal or remain on earth as a terrestrial immortal.

Scroll 4 continues the demonography, providing the names, customary habitats and activities of various malefic spirits, including demons of roads and travel, of houses and tombs, seizures and menstrual blood. It also details simple ritual means of controlling or dispelling them. The most significant part of this section is perhaps the first line, which states that "the Celestial Master kowtows and dares to accept the Way of the Former Kings, *governing the people and controlling demons*" (4.1a). This authority, not only over spirits but also over humans, recalls the early Celestial Master Dao-ocracy in western China, and confirms that, while the extant version is later, certain parts of the text go back to the very beginnings of the movement. The above statement contrasts strongly, for instance, with Lu Xiujing's comment that Daoist priests govern (only) the yin world just as government officials govern the yang sphere (*Daomen kelue* 2a).

The fifth scroll is mostly comprised of an apocalyptic narrative very similar to that of the *Zhao Sheng koujue*, except that it is mostly in seven-character verse. Its pronouncements are issued in the words of the deified Way: the world is confused and benighted, human society in disarray. The rulers of the Three Offices have picked out 18,000 elect, though that number has yet to be filled. This rather small figure may evince the original existence of a very small, sectarian community that used this scripture. The elect will be recognized by the Dao's talismans or "contract-tallies" (*quanqi*

券契), which they will carry on their persons. The economic situation is already dismal, with starving old men wandering the roads, but the really serious disasters and wars are yet to come, in the *gengzi* 庚子 year (most likely 400). Only the elect will survive to see the new age of Great Peace and join Li Hong. The specific reference not only to Zhao Sheng but also also to Wang Chang 王長 as elect and original disciples of Zhang Daoling (5.4b; cf. *Yunji qiqian* 8.11a) again suggests that Zhao, and perhaps Wang also, represent a separate filiation that allowed more popularly and apocalyptically oriented (and hence often anti-establishment) Celestial Master groups to distinguish themselves from the Zhang Lu line that had surrendered to the authorities and settled in Luoyang. The section ends with a set of fourteen moral injunctions, mostly proscribing popular god-cults, which, as is typical, are portrayed as forms of demon-worship.

The last scroll combines the apocalyptic and demonographic strains, this time placing the narrative in the mouth of the Celestial Master. In addition to the usual descriptions of various types of demons and apotropaic techniques, this section adds an interesting variation: the Celestial Master has also sent out five rulers of demons, each leading a myriad underlings, who are to protect the good and destroy evil. In exchange for their services to the Way, they will have their names inscribed on the registers of life (*shenglu* 生錄) and themselves join the elect. Knowing their names and the diseases they are capable of curing, others among the elect may call out their names and be healed.

The meaning of the term *nüqing* itself for early Daoists has yet to be fully ascertained. *nüqing* is listed in the *materia medica* as a malodorous medicinal and demonifurge plant (Stewart 1987, 299). It might actually be read as *nüjing* 女精, "female essence" (Strickmann 1987; cf. *Peiwen yunfu* 1198.2). In the *Nüqing guilü*, the term seems to refer to the revealer of a book of statutes, perhaps the "Demon Statutes" themselves (5.4a), while elsewhere (2.5b) it appears to be associated with the star Tianyi 天一 (Celestial One), which has been identified as the "spirit of the Celestial Emperor." A Lingbao scripture names Nüqing as the one who has established the otherworldly offices that keep the records on good and evil behavior (CT 456, 2b, *passim*). In later Daoist cosmology, it is the name of a hell.

Taishang dongyuan shenzhou jing 太上洞淵神咒經 (The Most High's Spirit-Spells of the Abyss, CT 335, 20 j.), j. 1-10 early 5th cent., j. 11-20 principally late Tang, edited by Du Guangting 杜光庭 (see Mollier 1990). Strictly speaking, this important scripture does not belong in this section: the members of the movement connected with the scripture were ordered to keep clear of the Celestial Masters (10.8ab). Still, it contains a number of features that in many respects are similar to, and may have derived from, Celestial Master practice. Such features include the process of graded initiation demarcated by the reception of registers (*lu* 籙); the

transmission of esoteric scriptures; the presentation of pledge-offerings; the holding of collective ritual meals; initiation rituals involving the provision of five pecks of rice; three annual assemblies; an emphasis on healing, healing ritual and penitence; and a hierarchized organization overseen by "ritual masters of the Three Caverns."

In particular, its apocalyptic vision differs little from the two scriptures examined above. A great cosmic cycle is coming to an end, and calamities of all types—bandits, invasions, social and political corruption, natural disasters—will increase, and will climax in the all-important *jiashen* 甲申 year. Again, people only make things worse by adhering to the debased rites of blood-sacrifices demanded by the deities of the popular cults (and their mediums). Only the elect will survive: those who have joined the religious community centered around the scripture and who follow its dictates. On the other hand, the not infrequent references to the Liu-Song rulers, their legitimate descent from the house of Han, and their role in restoring order and even re-establishing rule over central China from Chang'an (e.g., 1.3b-4a, 1.9b, 20.12b-13a) again associate the text with more conservative elements within the Celestial Masters, such as the author of the *Santian neijie jing*, who also was eager to curry favor with the Liu-Song rulers. These references place early strata of the text in the first part of the fifth century.

RITUAL TEXTS. Despite the importance of community, healing and other rites to the Way of the Celestial Master, few ritual texts of purely Southern Dynasties provenance survive, and the best general study of Celestial Master ritual practice of the period is based largely on Tang compilations that preserve some early material (Chen 1963, 2:308-69; an exception is Cedzich 1987, which is more deeply rooted in earlier sources). While some of the texts discussed below also contain portions of later date, Southern Dynasties writings and practices predominate, and thus these works may still be taken as representative.

Chisongzi zhangli 赤松子章曆 (Master Red-Pine's Almanac of Petitions, CT 615, 6 j.), ed. c. late Tang, but containing much early material (see Nickerson 1997; Maruyama 1986; Cedzich 1987; Kalinowski 1989-90; Seidel 1987, 233). Some sections of the text clearly draw on the *Dengzhen yinjue*, while later ritual innovations, such as the provision of bathhouses for souls needing salvation (5.14a), make clear that at least some of the text is quite late indeed (Nickerson 1996a, 287-89). The first scroll explains the text's title, describing the compilation as information granted to the immortal Master Red-Pine by the Celestial Elder (Tianlao 天老), a subordinate and adviser of Huangdi. It also contains a brief historical account of the Most High's revelation of the Way of Orthodox Unity: in particular, 120 talismans and registers; the *Qian erbai guan zhangyi* 千二百官儀 (Protocols of the 1,200 Officials, see below); and the texts of 300 major petitions.

The bulk of the first two scrolls, however, concerns the rules and regulations governing the process of sending up petitions to celestial officials. These instructions cover all facets of the rite. Rules are given for the appropriate pledge-offerings (*xin* 信) to be made, sometimes depending on the status of the supplicant (1.18); the appropriate times for sending petitions—times at which heaven's gates are open—or particularly auspicious or inauspicious days for sending them (1.19a-20a., 22a-26b; 2.8a-10a); the precise way to write talismans and petitions (2.1a-3a); the directions to be faced while petitioning; the officials and offices to be addressed in accordance with the month and day (2.5b-7b); the names of the celestial officials to be called upon in accordance with specific illnesses or other situations; how to seal petitions (2.22b); pollution taboos (2.23ab); procedures of visualization for delivering petitions to the celestial courts (2.23b-24b); the storage and disposal of used petition texts (2.26b-27a); and so forth.

The last four scrolls contain the actual texts of petitions. They represent models of the documents used by medieval Daoists during petitioning rituals: names and other particulars are left as "so-and-so" or "such-and-such" (*mou* 某), to be filled in appropriately on each ritual occasion. The petitions cover a variety of topics, from ending drought to taking up office, but the primary issue is death and demonic infestation. The text is replete with remedies for problems of this nature, including petitions for "propitiating [ancestors in] the five tombs" (4.7a-9b), "dispersing [demonic afflictions from] the five tombs" (4.9b-11a), "propitiating deceased ancestors" (4.11a-12a), "eliminating the registers of death at Mount Tai" (5.5ab), "[eliminating] sepulchral plaints" (two versions, 5.19a-23b, 5.23b-34b), and "on behalf of the departed confessing repentance, redeeming sins and gaining release from punishment" (6.11a-12b). As even this small sampling suggests, the ritual of petitioning was from early times mainly a rite for the settling of the dead and the expulsion of the baneful influences of death and tombs.

Zhengyi fawen taishang wailu yi 正一法文太上外籙儀 (Protocols for Outer Registers of the Most High from the Ritual Texts of Orthodox Unity, CT 1243, 30 pp.), around 500. Much of this text is consistent with Lu Xiujing's prescriptions for the conferral of "outer" registers on Daoist laypeople (e.g., 11a, 18b, 5b-9b). The text also sets out a similar system for advancement based on the accumulation of virtues and merits. In some ways, it seems to anticipate later developments within Daoism, such as the ordination of celibate women (1ab), while at other points it still reflects the practices of the early Celestial Masters, as with its reference to the sexual rite of the "three, five, seven and nine" and the connection of that ritual to salvation and membership among the elect (21a). The frequency with which the text's petitions dictate that the supplicant identify herself or himself as a resident of such-and-such commandery shows that at least the bulk of the text is pre-Tang.

Most of the work is concerned with mundane matters: it sets out numerous petitions and prescriptions for the conferral and care of registers (11b), as well as other matters concerned with those registers and the deities connected with them. A particular worry is the loss of one's registers and the extensive procedures necessary both to avoid punishment for this lapse and to receive replacements (e.g., 29ab). Certainly the most interesting portion of the text is the opening section, which concerns the ordination of the "five kinds of women"—virgins, unmarried hermits, married women, widows and women who have returned to their natal families—as well as of foreigners (1a-5a). While distanced and not particularly sympathetic in tone, the text does evince a certain sensitivity to the plight of many women in early medieval China: for instance, those who might not wish to marry, but who could be forced into matrimony by senior family members or by powerful (and non-Daoist) families seeking brides (2b).

RELEVANT SHANGQING TEXTS. ***Wei Furen zhuan*** 魏夫人傳 (Biography of Lady Wei, in 3.5b-27a of *Dengzhen yinjue*, CT 421), ed. Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536) about 500, based on a text of Yang Xi of about 360 (see Cedzich 1987; Robinet 1984, 2:C.11). This text is presented as a revelation from Zhang Daoling to Lady Wei Huacun 魏華存 (251-334) during her time as a Libationer of the Way of the Celestial Master. It thus claims to have been transmitted prior to her "corpse liberation" and service as Yang Xi's immortal instructor.

In content, it is mostly a version of the *Qian erbai guan zhangyi*, the early Celestial Masters' liturgical guide that told the Libationer which celestial officials to invoke for assistance in curing various illnesses or remedying other situations. Tao Hongjing's commentary further reproduces extensive quotations from a manuscript copy Tao had of the *Zhangyi*. Tao's version is believed to date back to the early days of the Celestial Masters (Cedzich 1987, 35-41; Seidel 1988, 199). The *Zhangyi* also served as the basis for an independent work, the *Zhengyi fawen jing zhangguan pin* 正一法文經章官品 (Section on Petitions and [Celestial] Officials from the Ritual Scriptures of Orthodox Unity), whose redaction is much later and of lesser quality.

The *Wei Furen zhuan* thus contains the most detailed extant account of the early Celestial Master's petitioning ritual. It is significant not only in its own right, but also because it evinces the way in which those involved with other scriptural movements, such as Shangqing, embraced Celestial Master rituals as central components of their religious practice.

Zhen'gao 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected, CT 1016, 20 j.), ed. and annotated by Tao Hongjing. Scrolls 7-8 contain some of the most personal and concrete information on the actual use of the Celestial Masters' petitioning rite during the Southern Dynasties. They record several ongoing exchanges between Yang Xi and the Perfected about the Xus' bouts with illness, nightmares and the spirits of the dead and provide much informa-

tion about Yang's efforts during the 360s of priestly mediation in the manner of the Celestial Masters (e.g., 7.6ab; see also Nickerson 1997).

WORLDVIEW

Given the enormous diversity of Celestial Master movements and texts during the Southern Dynasties, it would be misleading to attempt to render a single, coherent outlook on the world as *the* Celestial Master worldview. As the above account of individual scriptures and the movements connected with them has been fairly extensive, this section will be correspondingly brief.

COSMOLOGY AND COSMOGONY. The most complete southern Celestial Master account of the emergence of the present universe is set out in the *Santian neijie jing*, which was influenced by both the Shangqing and the Lingbao revelations, as well as the early third century Celestial Masters of Luoyang (Bokenkamp 1997, 159-60, 188-94). The text's cosmogony follows that of the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 and other early writings. The world as it exists is the result of the separating out of light and heavy, yang and yin elements from a primordial chaos, leaving heaven above, earth below and humankind in between. However, the *Santian neijie jing* elaborates greatly on this basic scheme and, characteristically, accords a central role to the cosmic, deified Laozi. Out of the original void, even before the emergence of the primordial *qi*, there were produced the Elder of the Way and its Power—a "hypostasis of the cosmic Laozi"—the Limitless Great Way of the Supreme Three Heavens of Grand Clarity, the Dark and the Primordial, as well as the entire pantheon of the Celestial Masters, from Laozi all the way down to the Twelve Hundred Lord Officials.

Then a second, parallel set of events occurs, with the Three *Qi* (dark, primordial, and inaugural 玄元始) emerging from empty darkness and transforming to produce the Jade Woman of Mystery and Wonder 玄妙玉女, who again gives birth to Laozi himself. Laozi then transforms his own body, once more generating the universe, such that the three *Qi* are transformed into heaven (dark), earth (inaugural) and water (primordial): the cosmological triad that goes back to the beginning of the Celestial Masters movement. The stars take their place in the heavens, and Laozi installs on the earth nine kingdoms with human beings to inhabit them (1.2a-3a). All in all this is a highly complex cosmogenesis, described with great cogency as a "movement from one to three-in-one to three ones back to three-in-one and to the One who will disperse the three" (Bokenkamp 1997, 192).

Despite these elaborations, humankind is left in much the same situation as it had been in Han cosmology—as the middle level of a triad, with heaven above and earth below. More than before, though, the people

collectively, rather merely the ruler alone, are responsible for the maintenance of the cosmic order through preserving moral behavior. If the human realm is in disorder, this will cause disturbances in the heavens and on the earth, leading to eclipses, earthquakes, odd planetary movements and all manner of disasters. Special opprobrium is reserved for popular, sacrificial cults to the local deities of minor temples overseen by spirit-mediums or 'shamans' (*wu* 巫): "Since people do not know where the calamities are coming from, they slaughter and boil the six sacrificial animals, praying to nothingness [the Daoist portrayal of popular gods]. Wailing, drumming and dancing—what they seek is wine and meat [shared in sacrificial meals]" 謠歌鼓舞酒肉是求 (*Santian neijie jing* 1.1b-2a).

The more socially conservative of the Celestial Master texts tend to portray such situations as the inspiration for the initial revelation of the Daoist religion. Lu Xiujing describes this pivotal event:

> The Most High [Laozi] was appalled that things were like this and therefore [in the year 142] gave to the Celestial Master the Way of Orthodox Unity and the Covenant with the Powers, with its prohibitions, vows, statutes and codes, in order to regulate and instruct the myriad people. . . . He set up twenty-four parishes and thirty-six chapels, with female and male priests numbering 2,400. He sent down ten thousand sets of the petitions to the 1,200 [celestial] officials, together with talismans of punishment for attacking temples [of the popular god-cults]. (*Daomen kelue* 1ab)

The antidote for the ills induced by the excesses of popular religion was bureaucratization. In place of sacrificial cults, Celestial Master Daoism offered a religion of organizational statutes, moral codes and precepts, and a priestly hierarchy whose principal function was to send up petitions to celestial officials. These petitions were documents modeled after officials' communications to the monarch, and they were dispatched by priests in precisely choreographed rituals involving the transfer of the document to the Celestial Offices.

Moreover, individual misbehavior would also be punished by the celestial and subterrestrial administrations. In particular, one's own or one's ancestors' misbehavior could result in illness, impoverishment, or all other sorts of misfortune. Even the aggrieved dead could file suit in the courts of the underworld (*zhongsong* 冢訟 or "sepulchral plaints"), either directly against the living, or against already deceased ancestors—in which case the living again could suffer, owing to the Chinese judicial principle of collective responsibility of kin. This notion of a bureaucratized, underworld magistracy was broadly shared, described in Daoist texts of all lineages as well as in Buddhist literature of the time.

ESCHATOLOGY. Southern Celestial Master texts emanating from more popular social levels often depict the world-historical situation in far darker hues than relatively sanguine texts such as the *Santian neijie jing* or the

Daomen kelue. The former are less interested in the initial revelation to Zhang Daoling and the reform of the Daoist community along similar lines; instead they focus on the dangerous present and an even more threatening future. Disaster is imminent (perhaps 364 or 424 for the *Zhao Sheng koujue*, 400 for the *Nüqing guilü*), and the foremost concern of the Daoist must be *survival*. The natural disasters and plagues of the present are mere foreshadowings of what is to come, and only the faithful—who have been armed with the necessary talismans, registers, and other protective items—will survive into the next age. In some formulations, Lord Li (or Li Hong), representing the forces of the good Three Heavens, will descend to take charge and protect the faithful, who may be recognized by their talismans. Those deemed unworthy will be dispatched *via* the plagues and other disasters unleashed by the Six Heavens and their rulers in the underworld administration. The apocalypse will be accompanied by darkness, failed crops, political corruption and chaos, foreign invasions and multitudes of demons.

It is striking how such apocalyptic notions, under different historical and social circumstances, can be redirected to support—rather than undermine—the ruling authorities. While the *Zhao Sheng kuo jue* looked for the demise of the Jin dynasty, even the popularly-oriented *Dongyuan shenzhou jing*, at least in certain strata of the text, sought to portray Liu Yu and his Song dynasty as the inaugurators of the new Great Peace. As already mentioned, other texts, such as the *Santian neijie jing*, carry this line of thinking even further, regarding the resurgence of the house of Liu itself as a sign of the resurgence of the Way. Of course, all of this would culminate with the establishment of the Tang, who regarded themselves as lineal kin of Laozi himself. By the end of the Six Dynasties, the Way of the Celestial Master had been established, not only as the foundation of the larger organized Daoist movement, but also as a supporter of the imperial order.

Practices

Much is often made of Lu Xiujing's rules for the Celestial Master organization in the south, and we will begin by sketching out the blueprint put forth in his *Daomen kelue*. However, Lu's tract is prescriptive, not descriptive, and his dictates relate directly to his complaints that numerous Daoist practitioners are not doing as they are supposed to and frequently engage in practices to which Lu is fervently opposed. In fact, Lu is perhaps a better guide to Southern Dynasties Daoism precisely because of his willingness to criticize—in great and exasperated detail—what he regards as deviations from the original Celestial Master institutions.

ORGANIZATION. Lu's vision of the Celestial Master community closely parallels that of the state for its own subjects. Daoist adherents had to be

affiliated with specified administrative units or parishes (*zhi* 治), and parishioners were to be registered and in effect taxed—though such imposts were considered "pledge offerings" (*guixin* 貴信) or "destiny-pledges" (*mingxin* 命信). In addition to individual registers, a "household register" (*zhailu* 宅錄/籙) was also required. The head of each household presented this document at each of the annual Three Assemblies (*sanhui* 三會), when his Master would update it, adding the names of new family members (including newly married-in brides), deleting the deceased and married-out daughters and passing on the corrected records to the otherworldly administration, whose representatives would also assemble at the various parishes on those days and update their own files accordingly (2ab).

Changes in household composition, other than those due to death, which of course had its own rites, were to be celebrated by holding a ritual meal known as the kitchen-feast (*chu* 廚; see Stein 1971). It was of superior quality for the first-month birthdays of boys and the taking of new brides, and of medium quality for the first-month rites of girls. Superior kitchen-feasts were likewise to be held to celebrate the safety and wellbeing of one's family during the Assembly of the tenth month, except when a death had occurred. At the same time, members had to donate their families' annual destiny-pledges, a continuation of the ancient Five Pecks of Rice (3a-4a).

According to Lu, each Daoist household was to possess a *jingshe* 靜舍 (also *jingshi* 靜室/靖室, or *qingshe* 清舍), a "cottage of quiescence" or oratory. This was a small, detached wooden hut where Daoists could perform daily offices or dispatch petitions. Lu demanded that the oratory be kept immaculately clean and contain only the items necessary for ritual communication with the otherworldly bureaucracy. These were restricted to "an incense burner, an incense lamp, a petition table and a scholar's knife" (4b; see Yoshikawa 1987). Lu also gives extensive instructions concerning Daoist officiants' ritual vestments (5ab).

In even greater detail he discusses the stages through which the Daoist may pass as she or he ascends the ladder of individual investiture, from novice (*luli* 籙吏) potentially all the way to the pinnacle: appointment as priest of one of the parishes of the Three *Qi*: Yangping, Lutang ("Deer Hall"), or Heming ("Crane-call") 陽平鹿堂鶴鳴. Lu also spells out the succession of registers Daoist laypeople received, a practice that blurred the distinction between ordinary people and clerics. Layfolk could be given a simple register that gave them command over a single spirit-general, then ten, and, by steps, finally 150. Beyond this, dedicated, talented and morally fit practitioners could obtain a series of priestly offices connected with specific parishes. By Lu's time, these parishes had lost much of their specific geographic associations with Sichuan, Hanzhong and nearby locations; parish affiliation was becoming purely astral and horoscopic, depending on date and time of birth, rather than actual residence. Still, documents from

Dunhuang show that the system of ordination described by Lu was maintained, at least in some places, in essentially the same form well into the Tang (Schipper 1985).

SEXUAL RITES. An important practice of the early Celestial Masters not mentioned by Lu— who may have been trying to present a gentrified Daoism that would be less shocking to outsiders and especially to his imperial or otherwise upper-class audience—was the sexual rite of "uniting *qi*" (*heqi* 合氣). We know from other sources that *heqi* persisted into the medieval period. The *Shangqing huangshu guodu yi* 上清黃書過度儀 (Rites of Salvation of the Yellow Writings of Highest Clarity, CT 1294) gives elaborate instructions for its performance (see Schipper 1993, 148-52). Practiced even among the earliest groups (see Stein 1963; Kobayashi 1991; Bokenkamp 1997, 43-46), ritual intercourse differed greatly from the sexual vampirism—absorbing one's partner's sexual essences while retaining one's own—that is often popularly portrayed as the "Dao of sex" (see Wile 1992). In the early Way of the Celestial Master, the highest level of ordination was conferred upon married couples, rather than individuals, and it culminated in the *heqi* rite, overseen by a Daoist master. The couple united not only their bodies but also their registers. The ritual included preliminary fasting and meditation, as well as the invocation of the invisible forces of the cosmos, in particular the deities of the sexagenary cycle, by means of breathing and visualization. Only then did they remove their clothes, unbind their hair and engage in an elaborately choreographed set of movements—both individual and in partnership, sitting, standing and lying down—all according to a highly complex and varied numerological patterning of space, time and motion, and always accompanied by specific meditations.

Seen from this angle, Lu's work is important not only for what it prescribes but also for what it leaves out. That the sexual rite persisted through the Northern and Southern Dynasties period is apparent not only from attacks on it that came (predictably) from Buddhists (see Kohn 1995, 147-50), but also from Daoists themselves who—like the followers of Shangqing—belonged to higher social strata and were trying to distance themselves from practices they regarded as vulgar (see, e.g., *Zhen'gao* 2.1ab; Strickmann 1981, 181-91). Lu's omission of the rite is thus part of a larger Southern Dynasties phenomenon, much influenced by Buddhism. It points to a common notion of what was appropriate behavior for elite religious professionals that cut across religious traditions and often included not only celibacy but also vegetarianism (Strickmann 1978). That the ritual was liable to misuse is clear from strictures set out in the *Nüqing guilü*, like that against deflowering a virgin girl on the pretext of transmitting the Way to her (3.2ab).

RESTRICTIONS ON POPULAR PRACTICE. Lu's *Daomen kelue* enjoins or seeks to restrict not only certain traditional Celestial Master prac-

tices, but also a number of popular practices. Along with monetary payments to Daoist masters, blood sacrifices to popular divinities were prohibited. Ordinary people were to sacrifice to their ancestors only five times annually, on the Five La days (*wula* 五臘), in the first, fifth, seventh, tenth and twelfth months, and to the Earth God and the Stove God only on the appropriate days in the second and eighth months. To exceed such sacrificial restrictions was to be guilty of giving "licentious cult" (*yinci* 淫祠, *yinsi* 淫祀). Entirely forbidden were the use of medicines, acupuncture, or moxibustion for the healing of illness, the penitential petitioning of celestial officials being sufficient (1b-2a). Lu similarly prohibited divination—in particular geomancy and hemerology (8ab).

POPULAR CELESTIAL MASTER PRACTICE. One suspects that the purists of Lu's sort were in the minority. Basing one's view on Lu's criticisms of his contemporaries, rather than his prescriptions for them, the picture changes rather radically. Daoist parishioners were lax in attending the Three Assemblies; lacking sufficient zeal to travel the distances necessary to attend Assemblies at their proper parishes, they went to other Masters closer by (2b). Failure to attend led to their registers becoming out of date, so that the celestial authorities would no longer know whom to protect and assist (3b-4a). Many followers also failed to construct *jingshe* (oratories) and, if they did have them, they did not maintain them properly, using them instead to store miscellaneous household items or allowing domestic animals to wander in and out. Others—likely influenced by Buddhism—abandoned the austere aesthetic of the ancient oratory and filled theirs with altars, icons, banners and other ornaments (4b-5a). Many among both parishioners and priests, Lu would have us believe, were attracted to Daoism and its rites for entirely the wrong reasons: the copious wine and meat that accompanied the kitchen-feasts and other rituals.

Certainly the priests were no better than the layfolk, according to Lu. They wore vestments inappropriate to their ranks or in improper combination. They received registers and the parish offices without proper personal qualifications or from unauthorized members, some priests even creating them on their own initiative. Lu takes a decidedly dismal view of the majority of priests of his day:

> They let free their covetous natures, drowning themselves in wine and lusting after food. [Commentary:] When they propagate the Rituals of the Way, they do not look for merit and virtue. When they perform healing rituals, they lack any compassionate or humane intent. They hope only for gain, and their thoughts are all on wine and meat. Never do they instruct the people in the Codes and Prohibitions. They only collect substantial offerings and seek for good food—dishes flavored with the five pungent roots, and the meat of the six kinds of domestic animals. The things that in the Way are most tabooed, they eat! Then, having violated the prohibitions themselves, they go on to butcher chickens, pigs, geese and ducks. They drink wine until they are awash

> in it, and in that condition go to send up petitions. Then they end up sleeping on the oratory's altar and vomiting beside the petition table. There are always those of this sort. (7b-8a)

Putting Lu's emotions and negative characterizations aside, one sees in these descriptions the emergence of a new type of Daoism—or perhaps simply the perpetuation of something that had existed for some time. It was a kind of Daoism that would in future—as it remains today—be the norm for, rather than a corruption of, Daoist practice. Priests no longer were the politico-religious leaders of well-defined religious communities of registered parishioners. Instead, they were largely free-lancers who "travel[ed] among the villages" (8b3), independent practitioners providing ritual services to communities, households and individuals whenever asked. They competed with other such practitioners—spirit-mediums, Buddhist monks and nuns, diviners, geomancers and the like—on the basis of perceived ritual efficacy.

PETITIONS. Submitting petitions to celestial officials was indeed the distinguishing feature of Celestial Master ritual. It played a key role in Daoist healing ritual and thus in Daoist service to society. According to the *Weifuren zhuan*, edited by Tao Hongjing based on a text "revealed" to Yang Xi (see Cedzich 1987; Seidel 1988), petitions had to be dispatched from the priest's oratory. The process began with the rite of "Entering the Oratory" (*rujing* 入靜), or the "Audience in the Oratory" (*chaojing* 朝靜), a series of prayers to each of the four quarters and their resident deities; these were chanted aloud to accompanying visualizations. After each prayer the priest kowtowed and slapped his own face several times, a standard gesture of penitence. Tao adds that, if the situation was serious enough, one might tear off one's turban and weep (3.9b).

The priest then wrote the petition, whose contents were to be limited to three subjects: the supplicant's malady and its assumed cause; repentance of his or her sins; and, finally, the request for aid from the relevant celestial officials. Next he selected the appropriate celestial functionaries—perhaps by consulting the Celestial Masters' liturgical guide, the *Qian erbai guan zhangyi*—and checked the written text over once again. The actual sending followed, a multifaceted procedure that involved several distinct means of ensuring the arrival of the petition at the Celestial Offices. First, the priest read the text aloud in a soft voice. Second, he used visualization to materialize several messenger spirits from his own body—for example the *gongcao shizhe* 功曹使者, or "Envoy of the Merit Bureau"—and called on them to deliver the petition to the proper celestial address.

Lastly, following an additional rite called the Sealing of the Petition (*feng zhang* 封章), the priest himself through visualization undertook the journey to the Celestial Offices. After paying respects to Zhang Daoling, the priest was conducted into the presence of the Taiyi 太一, Great One and lord of the northern pole, and the Most High himself. When the written assent of

the Most High had been appended to the petition, the messenger spirits were sent off to deliver the petition to the appropriate subordinate office. His business concluded, the priest again paid his respects to the Most High and Zhang Daoling and then visualized his return to the oratory, now accompanied by the spirits of his own body that he had materialized earlier (*Chisongzi zhangli* 2.23b-24b). Following this rite, there were ceremonies to conclude the audience, such as the Covering of the Incense Burner after which the priest could leave the oratory.

Two additional aspects of the petitioning process deserve mention: the pledge-offerings and the ceremony of thanksgiving, or Statement of Merit (*yangong* 言功). While the early Celestial Masters prohibited both sacrifices to the gods and payments to masters, "pure" (i.e., vegetarian) offerings were permitted, and the ritual codes give long lists of the offerings to be made along with each type of petition. In addition to grain, these might include oil, silk and other objects useful to priests, such as brushes, ink and paper, as well as more valuable items like gold rings and coins (Strickmann 1977, 15-30). The pledges were tallied, and presumably displayed, when the initial petition was dispatched. But they were actually offered only subsequently, if and when the petition had proven efficacious. The pledge-offerings ostensibly were given to requite the clerks, soldiers and other subordinate members of the invisible hierarchy that had provided assistance (see, e.g., *Zhen'gao* 7.6b-7a). Daoist masters could take for their own use only three tenths of the offerings. They were to distribute the rest to recluses or the poor, themselves and their ancestors being subject to serious otherworldly sanctions if they took more (*Yaoxiu keyi* 要修科儀, CT 463, 11.9b-10a; *Dengzhen yinjue* 3.21a). If the petition had been successful, a "Statement of Merit" ceremony would be held. It served to ask the celestial authorities to promote all assisting divine officials in accordance with the severity of the situation remedied.

That the petitioning rite could have been perceived as powerfully efficacious is a strong indication of the centrality of bureaucratic forms in Chinese ritual, society and culture. Two additional points should be made. First, one must again make the distinction between prescriptive and descriptive texts. It is reasonable to suppose that many Daoist priests may have used different—and probably more simple and direct—methods of petitioning. Second, it is highly significant that the best early description we have of the petitioning rite comes from an early Shangqing text. Before the end of the fourth century, Celestial Master Daoism was in many contexts already the common property of a variety of southern Daoist movements and practitioners, not a distinct, sectarian movement.

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