

## = Lingbao School =

The Lingbao School ( Simplified Chinese : 灵宝派 ; Traditional Chinese : 靈寶派 ; pinyin : Líng Bǎo Pài ) , also known as the School of the Sacred Jewel or the School of Numinous Treasure , was an important Daoist school that emerged in China in between the Jin Dynasty and the Liu Song Dynasty in the early fifth century CE . It lasted for about two hundred years until it was absorbed into the Shangqing and Zhengyi currents during the Tang Dynasty . The Lingbao School is a synthesis of religious ideas based on Shangqing texts , the rituals of the Celestial Masters , and Buddhist practices .

The Lingbao School borrowed many concepts from Buddhism , including the concept of reincarnation , and also some cosmological elements . Although reincarnation was an important concept in the Lingbao School , the earlier Daoist belief in attaining immortality remained . The school 's pantheon is similar to Shangqing and Celestial Master Daoism , with one of its most important gods being the deified form of Laozi . Other gods also existed , some of whom were in charge of preparing spirits for reincarnation . Lingbao ritual was initially in individual practice , but later went through a transformation that put more emphasis on collective rites . The most important scripture in the Lingbao School is known as the Five Talismans ( Wufujing ) , which was compiled by Ge Chaofu and based on Ge Hong 's earlier alchemical works .

Although Lingbao no longer exists as a distinct movement , it has left influences on all subsequent branches of Taoism . The " yinyang masters " popular in contemporary northern China are defined as Zhengyi daoshi following the Lingbao scriptural tradition .

## = = History = =

The Lingbao School began in around 400 CE when the Lingbao scriptures were revealed to Ge Chaofu , the grandnephew of Ge Hong . Ge Chaofu claimed that the scriptures came to him in a line of transmission going back to Ge Hong 's great @-@ uncle , Ge Xuan ( 164 @-@ 244 ) . Ge Chaofu transmitted the scriptures to two of his disciples , and the scriptures quickly gained immense popularity . In 471 , Lu Xiuqing ( 406 @-@ 477 ) compiled a catalogue of all the Lingbao texts , and also was responsible for reorganizing and standardizing Lingbao ritual . This organization of texts and ritual provided a solid foundation on which the Lingbao School prospered in the subsequent centuries . During the Tang Dynasty , the influence of the Lingbao School declined and another school of Daoism , the Shangqing School , became prominent . Borrowing many Lingbao practices , it was well accepted by the aristocracy and established an influence in court .

## = = Beliefs = =

Some early Lingbao scriptures borrowed so many Buddhist terminological , stylistic and conceptual elements that Zürcher describes them as " Buddho @-@ Taoist hybrids " .

## = = = Rebirth = = =

Many Lingbao beliefs are borrowed from Buddhism . The names of the many different deities and heavens were often given titles based on phonetic transcriptions of Sanskrit . Many Sanskrit terms were borrowed phonetically , but given completely different meanings . One significant concept borrowed from Buddhism was that of reincarnation .

Both Buddhism and the Lingbao School share the idea of the Five Paths of Rebirth ( Gati ) . People were reborn into earth prisons , as a hungry ghost , as an animal , as a man , or as a celestial being . After death , the body would be alchemically refined in the Palace of Supreme Darkness located in the north , and the Southern Palace in the south . The transmutation of the body consisted of two steps ; the yin components of the person were refined in the Palace of Supreme Darkness , followed by the yang components in the Southern Palace . The Lingbao concept of rebirth is a Chinese adaptation of Buddhism , mixing traditional Chinese concepts with newly arrived Buddhist ideas .

### == Cosmology ==

Lingbao cosmology also borrows heavily from Buddhism . Unlike previous Daoist cosmological systems which were divided into four to nine regions , Lingbao cosmology supposed that there were ten regions , an idea borrowed from Buddhism . In addition to the cosmological regions , there were 32 heavens divided into four sectors , each with eight heavens that were placed horizontally on the periphery of the celestial disc . Each of the four sectors was ruled by an emperor and populated by denizens of an earlier cosmic age ( kalpa ) . Like Buddhism , the heavens were divided into the " three worlds " of desire , form , and formlessness . Lingbao cosmology deviated from Buddhist beliefs by proposing that the heavens rotated around a huge mountain known as the Jade Capital , which was the residence of the Celestial Worthy , the Daoist version of the Buddha , and the primordial deity .

Certain traditional Daoist ideas were retained in Lingbao cosmology , such as the idea that the world originated from a type of primordial qi known as yuanqi , and then was divided into heaven and earth . Furthermore , the yuanqi is subdivided into three types of qi that correspond to three deities : the lords of the Celestial Treasure , of the Sacred Treasure and of the Divine Treasure . These three deities later introduced the teachings of the Dongzhen ( Perfect Grotto ) , the Dongxuan ( Mysterious Grotto ) , and of the Dongshen ( Divine Grotto ) . These three teachings form the basis for the later classification of texts in the Daozang .

Apocalyptic notions that appeared in Shangqing Daoism were first developed fully by the Lingbao School . Lingbao cosmology supposed that time was divided into cosmic cycles , which correlated with the Five Phases . At the end of a cosmic era , the god of the colour associated with that era would descend onto earth and reveal a teaching that would save a fixed number of people from death . There were two types of cosmic eras , short ones that were characterized by an excess of yin energy , and long ones that were characterized by an excess of yang energy . At the end of a short cosmic era , the moon was prophesized to produce a flood that would erode the mountains , renew the qi of the universe , and change the rankings of the members of the celestial bureaucracy . At the end of a long cosmic era , evil creatures were unleashed , heaven and earth were turned upside down , and metals and stones melted together . The people who followed the correct teaching revealed by the god of the colour would be gathered up by the Queen Mother of the West and transported to a " land of bliss " that would not be affected by the apocalypse .

### == Pantheon ==

In addition to borrowing deities from the Celestial Masters and the Shangqing School , the Lingbao School also developed its own gods . The supreme god of Lingbao Daoists is known as the Yuanshi Tianzun or the Celestial Worthy of the Original Beginning , who played a similar role to the deified Laozi in the Celestial Masters . According to the scriptures , this god went through a series of kalpa cycles that were given names similar to dynastic names , until emerging at the beginning of the Kaihuang period . The next most important god was Laojun , the deified form of Laozi , who was the Celestial Worthy 's chief disciple . Below these two main gods in the celestial hierarchy were those deities associated with the Southern Palace , where spirits went after death to prepare for rebirth . The head of this group of gods was known as the Perfected of the Southern Extremities . Beneath him was the Director of the Equerry , who was in charge of the life records of the spirits , and Lord Han , who controlled Fengdu , the city of the dead . Below these principal gods in the Lingbao hierarchy were other deities such as the Five Old Men , the Dragon Kings , and the Demon Kings .

Deities were present not only in the heavens , but also in the human body itself . They were responsible for maintaining the body 's five viscera , guarding the registers of life , and regulating the souls . There were five internal deities that were particularly important in Lingbao Daoism . The Great Unity lived in the head , along with Lordling and White Prime , who could descend into the liver and lungs . The Director of Destinies lived in the heart and sexual organs , and finally , the Peach Child lived in the lower dantian . Normally these deities resided in the heavens , but they

could be activated by scriptural recitations to descend into the body .

= = Practices = =

= = = Immortality techniques = = =

Despite a belief in reincarnation , the Lingbao School maintained the traditional Daoist idea that certain techniques could allow an adherent to achieve immortality . One technique was to ingest the essence of the sun and the moon . Practitioners would expose themselves to the celestial bodies at certain times of the month . Closing their eyes , they would visualize that the essences would solidify and enter their bodies . Once in the body , the sun 's essence was matched to the heart and visualized as red , while the moon 's was matched with the kidneys and seen as black . Besides interior meditation practices , immortality could be achieved through the ingestion of potions or talismans .

= = = Rituals = = =

Early Lingbao ritual was mostly done on an individual basis , either in a meditation chamber , or the courtyard of a house . Early practitioners were not professional priests , but rather ' students of the Dao ' . Later on , as the Lingbao movement developed religious institutions and an established clergy , ritual practice became more of a communal rite .

Lingbao ritual shares a great deal with ritual in other Daoist traditions . Like other traditions , Lingbao rituals had a theatrical quality that involved accompanying music , dances , and chants . Lingbao Daoism also shared the multidimensional aspect of Daoist ritual , meaning that it was carried on at several different levels simultaneously . For example , while a ritual was being performed , the priest would repeat the ritual within himself through interior meditation .

There are three categories of ritual in Lingbao Daoism . The first is known as the heavenly Golden Register of Rituals , and is carried out to prevent natural disasters . During the Tang Dynasty , this ritual was carried out in honour of the imperial family , but later it could be performed by anyone . The earthly Yellow Register ritual was performed to ensure the dead was at rest . The final type of ritual , which has not survived , was the human Jade Register , which was performed to ensure the salvation of mankind . Of the rituals that have survived , the Golden Register has assumed the role of the Jade register , ensuring salvation and preventing bad weather .

= = Canon = =

Lingbao scriptures arose as a direct result of the success of earlier Shangqing texts . Lingbao scriptures are all based on a text known as the Text of the Five Talismans ( Wufujing ) , which was compiled by Ge Chaofu between 397 and 402 and borrowed from the work of Ge Hong , his great uncle . Being the most ancient Lingbao text , the Five Talismans provided the framework of the remainder of the Lingbao canon , which was based on the five directions . Because all Lingbao texts descended from the Five Talismans , it was believed that they had been revealed to Ge Xuan , presumably the original owner of the Five Talismans . Ge Xuan is purported to have transmitted the Lingbao texts first to his disciple Zheng Siyuan , who then transmitted it to Ge 's grandnephew Ge Hong ( 284 @-@ 364 ) , who is well known for his alchemical innovations . The claim that the Lingbao texts derive from Ge Xuan , however , was likely a way of legitimizing them through the exaggeration of their antiquity . In reality , they were likely assembled by Ge Chaofu himself . Within a few years of the texts ' dissemination , they had become extremely popular .

The canon itself is a mix of previous Daoist traditions , combining features from the Shangqing School and the Celestial Masters , along with other ancient texts and even some Buddhist ideas . The two most important texts of the canon besides the Wufujing are the Red Book of Five Writings ( Chi shu wupian ) and the Scripture of Upper Chapters on Limitless Salvation ( Wuliang Duren

Shangpin ) . According to Lu Xiujing , who edited the Lingbao Canon , there were a total of 34 texts in the canon , of which three have been lost .

= = Legacy = =

While the Lingbao school did not survive as a distinct entity , its ritual apparatus did , and it forms the basis for present @-@ day Daoist ritual practice . In addition , many of the innovations introduced by the Lingbao School have survived to the present , including its division of the Daozang into three sections corresponding to different teachings , with the Dongzhen corresponding to the Shangqing School , the Dongxuan to the Lingbao School , and the Dongshen to the Sanhuang teaching . The integration of Buddhism within Lingbao practices and beliefs ensured that Buddhist elements would remain an important aspect of later Daoism , and also aided in integrating Buddhism into all levels of society in China .